

# -An Analysis on Figurative Language in Live Sports Commentary: A Study of Karate Competitions

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## ABSTRACT

Live sports commentary plays a crucial role in enhancing the audience's experience by covering the sporting event excitement, atmosphere, and emotional intensity. Commentators use various linguistic devices, including figurative language, specialized lexicons, jargon, and registers, to create vivid and engaging narratives. This study investigates the types of figurative language commonly used in live karate commentary. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzed ten transcripts of live karate commentaries from the Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019 event. The transcripts were purposively selected and manually transcribed. The data were analyzed using content analysis, in which each figurative language was identified, coded, and categorized according to Perrine's (1992) typology. The frequency of each type was then calculated to determine the dominant forms used in the commentary. The finding revealed that commentators utilized nine figurative language types: metaphor (27.4%), hyperbole (21.7%), personification (20.8%), synecdoche (6.6%), irony (6.6%), paradox (5.7%), understatement (5.7%), simile (3.8%), and metonymy (1.9%). In total, 106 data were obtained from various figurative language used by the commentators. These linguistic elements enriched the commentary by adding depth, excitement, and expressiveness to the descriptions of karate matches. Figurative language helped emphasize techniques, strategies, and dramatic moments, making the commentary more engaging for the audience. This research contributes to a deeper comprehension of the literary devices that shape sports narratives by elaborating on the various figurative language used in karate live commentary.

## KEYWORDS

Figurative language  
Karate  
Life sports commentary

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## 1. Introduction

Understanding language style is crucial for effective communication among individuals. Language style is how people affect and manage others during interactions, conveying messages through speech and tone of voice, both formally and informally. According to Miššiková (2003), language style is an act of speaking or a type of speech that is formed through aware and intended decision-making, structured patterning, and the application of linguistic and non-linguistic indicators to the issue, circumstance, function, speaker's intention, and contents of the speech. It signifies that language style is the component and type of speech that describes a phrase in how individuals utilize language. In addition, Chaika (1982) states that language style is the choice of linguistic expressions that express social or artistic implications. Each individual has a distinct style and distinctive features that set them apart. Individuals' communication styles may vary based on context and environment (Ratnawati et al., 2021). This variety is reflected in the five language styles. According to Joos (1976), as cited in Ukhtin et al., (2021), the language includes five styles: formal, frozen, informal, intimate, and consultative. Each style has a different role and adapts to different social environments. It emphasizes the complex relationship between language and the situations in which it is used.

Understanding the meaning of language and language style is crucial for understanding communication details. While language style emphasizes how communications are conveyed,

semantics deals with the meaning within the communication. Semantics, a key part of linguistics, is the study of meaning, shifting sense, and the connections between words or phrases and their meanings. Additionally, Parker (1986), cited in Hidayati (2020), defines semantics as the study of the meaning within words, phrases, and sentences. It shows that semantics are symbols and signs that convey meaning and the connection between words. Kroeger (2022) stated that semantics focuses on the underlying meaning of phrases and words as linguistic utterances in and of themselves. In general, individuals strive for flawless and comprehensive communication. It aims to provide as many details as possible to other people.

Beyond basic meanings, language frequently involves unique expressions that reflect deeper or different perspectives. Figurative language is one of these forms. Figurative language utilizes phrases or sentences with meanings that differ from the true meaning. The use of figurative language is one technique for examining the meaning of a speech and preventing various interpretations (Azmi et al., 2023). Figurative language expresses emotions, such as the speaker's issues, thoughts, and feelings. It is typically utilized in the context of an event or situation. Taneo et al., (2022) state that figurative language significantly differs from what language users perceive as the usual meaning of phrases or the usual arrangement of sentences to produce some particular meaning or purpose. According to Zulfa and Tazali (2021), individuals use figurative language to compare, overstate, or even make allusions to somebody or something else in the hope that others will comprehend the true meaning.

Figurative language has many types that can be used to express something. Several theorists argue about the various types of figurative language, such as Leech (1969), who reveals that there are eight types of figurative language: oxymoron, metonymy, personification, hyperbole, simile, litotes, irony, and metaphor. According to (Rozakis, 1995), figurative language is divided into twenty-two types such as ambiguity, conceit, apostrophe, allegory, connotation and denotation, irony, metaphor, contrast, metonymy, litotes, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, oxymoron, symbolism, synecdoche, simile, sarcasm, transferred epithet, understatement, and synesthesia. Additionally, Miller and Greenberg (1981) categorize figurative language into three types: comparative (simile, personification, and metaphor), contradictory (paradox, litotes, and hyperbole), and correlative (metonymy, allusion, ellipsis, and symbol). Moreover, Perrine (1992) classified figurative language into twelve types: simile, metonymy, irony, metaphor, synecdoche, understatement, hyperbole, personification, symbol, apostrophe, allegory, and paradox. In this research, Perrine's (1992) theory is used.

A simile implies a direct comparison between two objects. Similes use comparison terms such as "so," "as," "then," or "like" to emphasize the similarity between two objects (Press & Society, 2011). Metonymy uses a term highly connected to other words (Keraf, 2006). Metonymy refers to a person, feature, or something in the names. According to Keraf (2009), irony is used to convey different meanings that are intended. Irony occurs when the intended interpretation of a statement contradicts the implied meaning. Glucksberg (2001) defines a metaphor as the use of comparisons to connect two distinct things. Synecdoche is when a component of something is utilized to represent the entire thing (Azmi et al., 2023). An understatement might be referred to as litotes. It is precisely the reverse of exaggeration. It happens when someone humorously uses the negative of a phrase to imply the opposite. Litotes represent what someone means by stating something that is completely opposed to one's viewpoint, and they are used to make someone's statements stronger (Hornby, 2000).

Hyperbole is a figurative language that contains overstated claims (Rani & Refnaldi, 2020). Personification is the use of human characteristics to describe an idea, animal, or something (Yuliasari & Virtianti, 2023). Symbolism is a type of figurative language in which animals, plants, or objects are used to represent something else. Symbolism emerges from individual experiences, emotions, and imaginations. According to Alm-Arrius (2003), a symbol is a literary instrument comprising several meaning layers that symbolize different elements, thoughts, or characteristics. It employs an item, concept, or action that is significant beyond what it means. The symbol is typically based on common items. An apostrophe is employed to indicate that a person who is not there or something that is not human may yet love and respond to what is stated. According to Aryanika et

al., (2022), an apostrophe is a literary device that implies an address or speech to an individual, an abstract concept, a thing that does not exist, or a personified thing. An allegory is an explanation or description that hides a more profound message. Arp and Johnson (2020) found that allegory often has a one-to-one connection between characteristics and secondary meanings. Lastly, according to Yuliasari and Virtianti (2023), a paradox is a statement that looks contradictory or silly but might completely contain the truth. Figurative languages are often considered primarily poetic; nonetheless, they are crucial to the function of language and necessary for all sorts of conversation (Abrams, 1999). Figurative language is widely used in sports, particularly in karate competitions.

Karate is one of the most popular martial arts in the world. It is a combat sport originating from Okinawa, Japan. The World Karate Federation (WKF), recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), is the most prominent worldwide regulatory organization of karate, with a calculated 100 million athletes among 199 countries belonging to it ("Main structure of the world Karate Federation," n.d.). Karate is becoming more prominent on the global stage. According to Piepiora et al., (2024), the enthusiasm for sports events in karate has considerably contributed to the karate sport's international popularity. In this era, karate can be categorized as entertainment for society. As stated by Cvejić et al., (2024), karate has expanded beyond sport into entertainment and a source of inspiration. This is influenced by the development of the media. Media is a strong communication device that provides sports entertainment through various platforms. With an increasing number of media, especially YouTube, karate sports have been published and watched by many people.

The increasing audience for karate sports, especially in karate competitions, has led to the importance of commentators in a competition. The role of the commentator is crucial in a competition. According to Ferguson (1983), as cited in Pažanin and Petrović (2022), the commentator has two key roles: reporting on the actual events of the match (play-by-play) and offering background analysis and information (color commentary). A sports commentator's key responsibilities include providing information about the game and entertaining. According to Naveed and Umar (2021), the responsibility of a commentator is to explain a game and make it interesting to watch. Professional commentators frequently employ language devices such as figurative language, particular lexicons, jargon, and registers to express more vivid meanings. Hammoudeh et al., (2022) state that certain commentators explain essential actions using figurative language or rhyming lines. Commentators often use figurative language, such as metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and other figurative expressions to dramatize movements, highlight intensity, and guide the audience's emotional response. Such expressions allow commentators to describe actions that occur too quickly for viewers to process visually, making the commentary more dynamic and memorable. This is particularly relevant in karate, where techniques are executed with high speed and precision, figurative language helps convey power, rhythm, atmosphere, and competitive tension. Through these linguistic devices, commentators create a narrative layer that enhances not only the clarity of the match but also its excitement. It allows viewers to feel the atmosphere, adrenaline, and thrill of the competition.

Consequently, live sports commentary is crucial for expressing enthusiasm and the details of the competition. It allows the viewer to experience the environment and emotions, leading to feelings. The commentary might affect viewers' reactions to events (Tan et al., 2021). The live commentary provides a unique experience, giving viewers a sense that they are part of the event. These sports commentators report on situations in the arena and develop narratives, express emotions, and provide in-depth insights to help the viewer understand and become immersed in the match. According to Comisky et al., (1977) as cited in Bakr (2022), sports commentary compensates for visual defects when providing live commentary. As an illustration, a commentator might express a powerful kick as a "thundering blow that reverberated around the arena." In this statement, the commentator uses metaphor to increase the event's excitement and reach the audience. Metaphor is one of the figurative language used by the commentator to describe sporting events and help the audience have a better insight into how the game is going (Luo, 2024). The statements are more than just ornaments; they

are necessary instruments for conveying the meaning of the athletes' performance and the significance of the competition.

Although there is some previous research on sports, research on karate is very limited. No other studies have examined the use of figurative language in karate sports commentary. The first study was conducted by Bakr (2022), who explained football commentary in British English and Egyptian Arabic. The findings revealed that sports commentary showed a relationship between spontaneous and non-spontaneous speech patterns. The second research is by Kharabara and Dyakiv (2024). This research investigates live text commentary as a new genre in football discourse, examining its communicative and pragmatic structure and linguistic aspects in English and Ukrainian. The primary result is that English and Ukrainian live text commentary have different communication aims. The third research is by Syaputri et al. (2024). This study focuses on the language features of sports commentary, with a special focus on the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The results imply that commentators use politeness strategies. The fourth research is by Fitria (2022). This study examines the types of figurative language in a novel and analyzes the stylistic effect in the novel. The study identifies eight types of figurative language, with simile being the most dominant. The researcher finds a gap between previous research and the research conducted. Exciting research on figurative language also focuses predominantly on literary text, rather than spontaneous spoken commentary. Therefore, how figurative language constructs meaning, emotion, and narrative in karate commentary remains largely unexplored.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on figurative language within live karate commentary. This topic has not been explored in linguistic research. Previous studies on sports commentary mainly examine football and other team sports. No research has investigated how figurative language appears in martial arts commentary. Studies on figurative language also tend to analyze written text, such as novels, poems, or song lyrics. They rarely examine real-time spoken commentary. This study applies Perrine's (1992) typology to ten transcripts from Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019. It offers the first empirical description of how live karate commentators use figurative language expressions to build drama, convey emotion, and help audiences understand what happens during the match. The study fills a clear gap in sports discourse research and presents a new way to view literary devices outside traditional literary texts.

This research contributes to a deeper comprehension of the literary devices that shape sports narratives by elaborating on the various figurative language used in karate live commentary. The research questions guiding this research are: What are the types of figurative language used in karate live commentary? What is the most dominant type of figurative language used in karate live commentary? By answering these questions, this analysis aims to analyze the types of figurative language and the most dominant figurative language commonly used in live commentaries of karate competitions. The findings will enhance the understanding of sports commentary and offer insights into how literary devices can be used in sports narratives.

## 2. Method

This research used a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis to examine figurative language in live karate commentary. This methodology is appropriate because it focuses on analyzing figurative language in live support commentary, especially in karate sports. Qualitative research is a quality investigation of situations, materials, relationships, or activities. According to Maxwell (2005), qualitative research focuses more on words and emphasizes specific situations or individuals. In addition, content analysis was used to categorize figurative expressions systematically based on Perrine's (1992) typology.

The data of this research consisted of ten transcripts of live commentary from the Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019. All the commentaries were taken from the official World Karate Federation (WKF) YouTube channel, which provides authentic broadcasts of international karate competitions. The transcripts contained spoken commentary produced by WKF commentators throughout a range

of kumite and kata matches. These data were selected because they represent spontaneous, real-time language used in an actual competitive setting.

To collect the data, the researcher downloaded the selected videos and transcribed all spoken commentary manually. Each video was watched several times to ensure accuracy in capturing the commentators' words. Repetitions, irrelevant crowd noises, and background disruptions were removed during the cleaning process, while meaningful vocal elements were retained. This procedure ensured that the transcripts reflected the commentators' linguistic choices as clearly as possible.

The data were analyzed through content analysis. According to Schreier (2012), the qualitative content analysis research aims to analyze the data and interpret the meaning. First, all figurative language found in the transcripts was identified. Each expression was then coded and categorized according to Perrine's (1992) categories, such as simile, metonymy, irony, metaphor, synecdoche, understatement, hyperbole, personification, symbol, apostrophe, allegory, and paradox. After the coding process, the expressions were grouped and counted to determine the frequency of each type. Lastly, the researcher displayed the data as a table containing the nine figurative languages that appear in the live commentary of the Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019. To further illustrate the proportions of each category, the researcher calculated percentages adopting the formula formulated by Hulu et al., (2021):

$$x = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Description:

x = The percentage of the figurative language obtained

f = The frequency of each type of figurative language

N = The total number of figurative language

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Result

The first analysis of this research was on the type of figurative language used in the live commentary of the Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019. The data analysis revealed that figurative language was identified using Perrine's (1992) theory, as shown in the following table:

**Table 1.** Frequency of types of figurative language found in the live commentary of the Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019

No	Types of Figurative Languages	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Metaphor	29	27,4%
2.	Hyperbole	23	21,7%
3.	Personification	22	20,8%
4.	Synecdoche	7	6,6%
5.	Irony	7	6,6%
6.	Paradox	6	5,7%
7.	Understatement	6	5,7%
8.	Simile	4	3,8%
9.	Metonymy	2	1,9%
10.	Symbol	0	0%
11.	Allegory	0	0%
12.	Apostrophe	0	0%



**Total****106****100%**

Table 1 presents nine types of figurative language found in live commentary of karate competitions. The researchers found 106 data from the twelve types of figurative language: Metaphor, hyperbole, personification, synecdoche, irony, paradox, understatement, simile, and metonymy. The researchers found 29 data on metaphor (27.4%), 23 data on hyperbole (21.7%), 22 data on personification (20.8%), 7 data on synecdoche (6.6%), 7 data on irony (6.6%), 6 data on paradox (5.7%), 6 data on understatement (5.7%), 4 data on simile (3.8%), and 2 data on metonymy (1.9%).

According to Table 1, three groups of figurative language were identified in a live commentary of karate competition: highly, middle, and low frequently used types of figurative language. In the group of highly frequently used types of figurative language, there were metaphor, hyperbole, and personification. Moreover, synecdoche, irony, paradox, understatement, simile, and metonymy were identified as the middle frequently used types of figurative language. Lastly, symbol, allegory, and apostrophe were in the group of low frequently used types of figurative language. The third group consisted of types of figurative language that were not used by the commentators in the live commentary of karate competitions. The following are the types of figurative language used in karate live commentary:

### 3.1.1 Metaphor

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in metaphor:

**Table 2.** Figurative Language of Metaphor

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 01/00:30	"That a big bounciness"
2.	Transcript 07/02:52	"It was a long process, but my sensei holds me to continue"
3.	Transcript 08/04:25	"That is the icing on the cake"
4.	Transcript 10/11:59	"We have our real treat in the final"

Table 2 shows figurative language used in metaphor. However, the phrases in this metaphorical figurative language do not use the words *like* and *as*. The first phrase metaphorically compares the athletes' energetic and dynamic movement to something springy. In the second phrase, the words "long process" are metaphors for the effort, dedication, and patience required to reach the fourth level of karate, emphasizing the difficulty and reward of training. The third phrase highlights a standout moment in a karate match and compares it to the final touch that makes something already great even better. In addition, the fourth phrase compares the final match to a delightful treat, which increases excitement and catches the audience's interest.

### 3.1.2 Hyperbole

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in hyperbole:

**Table 3.** The Figurative Language of Hyperbole

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 01/01:52	"This is a world-class performance"
2.	Transcript 02/00:45	"Pan Americans usually looking for a big score with the giant strike"
3.	Transcript 03/07:38	"That's battle way heavy in their favor"
4.	Transcript 05/07:10	"Unbelievable speed"

Table 3 shows figurative language used in hyperbole. The first phrase shows the use of hyperbole because it exaggerates to emphasize excellence. It elevates the athletes' skills to the highest standard and highlights their incredible talent. The second phrase uses "giant" as hyperbole to exaggerate the impact of the pinches, emphasizing the power of the Pan-America style and creating the audience's excitement. The third phrase uses the keyword "battle way heavy" to exaggerate the importance of performing complex movements. It underlines the team's advantage, builds enthusiasm, and highlights the event's intensity. The last phrase exaggerates the athlete's performance to emphasize their incredible speed.

### 3.1.3 Personification

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in personification:

**Table 4.** The Figurative Language of Personification

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 01/16:08	"The pressure is also jibbety on-field Shimizu"
2.	Transcript 02/12:33	"Strong motions that should play pretty well for them"
3.	Transcript 05/08:54	"The scores are being put in"
4.	Transcript 07/04:22	"The atmosphere was amazing"

Table 4 shows figurative language used in personification. The first phrase uses the keyword "pressure" to attribute human-like qualities. It emphasizes the immense weight of expectation on Shimizu as she prepares to perform. In the second phrase, the word "play" suggests deliberate action. The movement is given human-like qualities. In the third phrase, the scores are given human-like qualities as if they are actively influencing the competition. This emphasizes their impact and makes the judging process feel more dynamic. The fourth phrase attributes human-like qualities to the atmosphere by suggesting it can evoke emotions. This emphasizes its active involvement in creating unforgettable experiences.

### 3.1.4 Synecdoche

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in synecdoche:

**Table 5.** The Figurative Language of Synecdoche

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 02/07:13	"They will leave to await the challenge from the team in blue"
2.	Transcript 03/01:01	"It is the Turkish national team"
3.	Transcript 04/13:05	"Just for the judges to input their scores"
4.	Transcript 05/05:17	"He's a shim baba leaves the tatami"

Table 5 shows figurative language used in synecdoche. The first phrase used the keyword "the team in blue" to represent the entire team using the uniform colour. It creates a clear image and emphasizes the team's visual identity. The second phrase using the country's name to represent its athletes. This underlines their unity, national identity, and role as representatives of Turkey. In the third phrase, the word "judges" represents the entire judging process. This indicates their role as key decision-makers in determining the performance's result. "The tatami" in the fourth phrase represents the entire competition space. It symbolizes the environment, rules, and stake of the match.

### 3.1.5 Irony

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in irony:

**Table 6.** The Figurative Language of Irony

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 02/10:59	"It is important not to get your audience or your officials lost"
2.	Transcript 07/07:02	"Only one can go that strength in depth, isn't it"
3.	Transcript 08/07:40	"He's not in the final"
4.	Transcript 09/00:39	"Connie Lee of China, the 20-year-old, has no world medal"

Table 6 shows figurative language used in irony. The first phrase implies the lack of focus can undermine success. The commentator used this irony to emphasize the need for clarity in a match. The second phrase highlights that despite having many talented athletes, only one can advance. It emphasizes the harsh reality of competition and its imitations. The third phrase underlines the unexpected result of a strong athlete failing to reach the final. This adds drama and highlights the unpredictability of the competition. The keyword of the fourth phrase is "no world medal". It contrasts Connie Lee's impressive skills with the lack of a medal which highlights the unexpected gap between talent and achievement.

### 3.1.6 Paradox

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in paradox:

**Table 7.** The Figurative Language of Paradox

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 04/06:24	"There is no margin for error"
2.	Transcript 06/03:33	"They're both honing in on how they want to get it done"
3.	Transcript 07/07:02	"Only one can go that strength in depth"
4.	Transcript 08/09:52	"He's keeping it consistent that's gonna pay off well"

Table 7 shows figurative language used in paradox. The first phrase is paradoxical because it demands perfection, even if perfection comes from learning through mistakes. Commentators used it to highlight the difficulty of karate matches and emphasize athletes' impressive performances. The second phrase suggests focusing on both offence and defense simultaneously. It shows the difficulty of balancing techniques and the high skill level for success. The third phrase creates a paradox by suggesting that having many skilled athletes can actually be a disadvantage. It underlines the tension between great talent and the reality that only one athlete can rise to the top. The fourth phrase suggests success despite not winning gold. Commentators highlighted that consistent performance is still rewarded, even without the highest achievement.

### 3.1.7 Understatement

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in understatement:

**Table 8.** The Figurative Language of Understatement

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 02/03:12	"It doesn't necessarily mean it makes a break for that team"
2.	Transcript 04/05:27	"Very polished performance"
3.	Transcript 03/13:26	"It's only part of the kata"
4.	Transcript 05/05:50	"What a fantastic record this man has"



Table 8 shows figurative language used in understatement. The first phrase is an understatement because it undermines the importance of a mistake. Commentators used it to maintain a positive tone, convincing the audience that the team can succeed despite setbacks. The second phrase downplays the athlete's skill. While gently recognizing excellence, it can unintentionally minimize the athlete's achievements, making their performance seem less impressive. The third phrase underestimates the importance of a mistake. By minimizing its impact, the commentators reassured the audience that one mistake did not define the entire show. The third phrase presents the athlete's achievement without exaggeration. The commentator kept a reserved tone, subtly acknowledging success without emphasizing its significance.

### 3.1.8 Simile

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in simile:

**Table 9.** The Figurative Language of Simile

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 01/02:26	"Looking impressive manager"
2.	Transcript 02/01:49	"Each of their techniques to work pretty much as one single unit"
3.	Transcript 04/09:40	"It's just like looking at one"
4.	Transcript 08/08:05	"Another athlete looks like they're in a fight with a real opponent"

Table 9 shows figurative language used in similes. The first phrase is a simile, which compares the athlete to a manager to show leadership and authority. Commentators used this to highlight the athlete's control and confidence. The second phrase compares the team's movements to a synchronized entity. The phrase "pretty much" softens the comparison, emphasizing the impressive teamwork. The third phrase compares the two athletes' synchronized performance to a single entity. It emphasized their unity and seamless coordination. In the fourth phrase, commentators compared the athlete's movement to those in an actual fight, emphasizing their realism and effectiveness.

### 3.1.9 Metonymy

The table below shows several phrases of figurative language in metonymy:

**Table 10.** The Figurative Language of Metonymy

No	Transcript	Figurative language
1.	Transcript 07/06:36	"She has got to try to get into that top five"
2.	Transcript 09/01:20	"Italy, as a country, makes good decisions to train them in ingrain them into their athletes"

Table 10 shows figurative language used in metonymy. The keyword of the first phrase is "top five." It represents the top five ranking positions in the karate competition. The phrase is closely connected to the concept of ranking. The word "Italy" in the second phrase represents the Italian karate team and its coaches. The commentators used this to highlight the nation's support and its role in the athletes' success, even though the team and coaches directly handled the preparation.

## 3.2 Discussion

### 3.2.1 Types of Figurative Language Used in Karate Live Commentary

This research identified nine types of figurative language in the live commentary of karate competition: metaphor, hyperbole, personification, synecdoche, irony, paradox, understatement, simile, and metonymy. The use of these nine types shows that commentators rely on expressive and imaginative language to explain rapid movement and highlight the emotional dynamics of the match. The findings reflect Perrine's (1992) statement that figurative language enriches communication by

creating imaginative interpretations beyond literal meaning in an extraordinary way. In this context, figurative expressions helped the commentators make complex actions more vivid and engaging for the audience.

The findings showed that metaphor emerged as the most frequently used in the live commentary, with 27.4% of the data. It demonstrates its role in translating complex action into vivid imagery. For example, the phrase “icing on the cake” provides relatable descriptions that increase audience engagement. This aligns with Glucksberg (2001), who emphasized that metaphors are the use of comparison to connect two different things, such as an abstract concept with a familiar image. It allows for better understanding and emotional resonance of the audience.

Following the metaphor, hyperbole accounted for 21.7% of the data. It played an important role in dramatizing the athlete's performance and generating audience excitement. It reflects Rani and Refnaldi's (2020) view that hyperbole is a type of language that contains exaggerated statements. The phrase “unbelievable speed” highlighted the athletes' extraordinary skills. By exaggerating something, it strengthens the emotional intensity of the language. Similarly, personification accounted for 20.8% of the data describing how human traits can be attributed to abstract elements or inanimate objects to create emotional engagement. Phrases such as “the pressure is also jibbety on-field Shimizu” show how personification connects the audience to the atmosphere of the event. It is in line with the statement of Yuliasari and Virtianti (2023). They state that personification is the use of human traits to describe ideas, animals, or things to increase relatability and emotions.

The middle frequently used types of figurative language, including synecdoche (6.6%), irony (6.6%), paradox (5.7%), understatement (5.7%), simile (3.7%), and metonymy (1.9%), contribute to the richness of the language features used in live sport commentary. The phrase of synecdoche, such as “the team in blue” generalizes the whole team using a single visual element. It aligns with Azmi et al., (2023) that synecdoche is when a component of something is used to represent the whole. Similarly, the irony in the phrase “he's not in the final” is in line with Keraf (2009), who examines that irony is used to convey a different meaning than intended. Irony occurs when the intended interpretation of a statement contradicts the implied meaning. Moreover, the paradox in the phrase “no margin for error” demands perfection, even though perfection is achieved through practice and learning. It aligns with Yuliasari and Virtianti (2023) that a paradox is a statement that looks contradictory or silly but might completely contain truth. In addition, the understatement phrase “what a fantastic record this man has” is supported by Perrine's (1992) theory that understatement does not dramatize things but presents them simply.

Additionally, the simile emphasizes the similarity between two objects (Press & Society, 2011). It supports the phrase “it's just like looking at one” because the athletes move together like one person. Furthermore, metonymy in the phrase “She has got to try to get into that top five” showed that “top five” represents the top five ranking positions in the competition. It aligns with Keraf (2006), who states that metonymy is the use of a term highly connected to other words.

### 3.2.2 The Most Dominant Type of Figurative Language Used in Karate Live Commentary

Based on the findings, Table 1 shows that metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative language used in karate live commentary, which is 29 out of 106 total frequencies. This means that the percentage of metaphors that appear in the transcripts is 27.4%. This demonstrates its important role in karate live commentary. Metaphors simplify technical details and engage the audience by comparing abstract things with familiar imagery.

Metaphors in karate live commentary are valuable and enhance the audience experience. As Abrams (1999) said, figurative language is essential in all forms of communication, not just in the context of poetry. In sports commentary, metaphors engage the narrative and allow the audience to interpret the athletes' performances. Moreover, metaphors provide a memorable way for commentators to express the complexity of the sport while still keeping the audience engaged.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study identified nine of Perrine's (1992) figurative language types in the live commentary of Tokyo Karate1-Premier League 2019. Metaphor (27.4%), hyperbole (21.7%), and personification (20.8%) appeared most frequently. It showed that commentators rely on expressive and imaginative language to simplify technical karate movements, intensify emotional moments, and make fast actions easier for viewers to visualize. Less frequent types such as synecdoche (6.6%), irony (6.6%), paradox (5.7%), understatement (5.7%), simile (3.8%), and metonymy (1.9%) also contributed to creating variety and nuance in the narration. These findings indicate that figurative language is a functional cognitive tool in karate commentary, helping build drama, clarify meaning, and shape the audience's emotional engagement throughout the match.

These findings indicate that figurative language is a functional communicative tool in karate commentary, helping build drama, clarify meaning, and shape the audience's emotional engagement throughout the match. However, the limited number of transcripts also narrowed the range of figurative expressions identified in this study. Future studies should analyze more events or compare commentary across different sports to better understand how figurative language enriches diverse sporting contexts. Overall, this research provides initial evidence that figurative language plays a central role in constructing the narrative and emotional atmosphere of karate competitions.

#### Declaration

Author Contributions Statement:

Author 1: Contributed to the research design, data collection, analysis, and manuscript writing.

Author 2: Provided guidance in the research framework, methodology, and manuscript revision.

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