

Metaphore in Shirley Jackson's Short Story The Lottery

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of metaphors in The Lottery by Shirley Jackson Short Story and explores the meanings behind the metaphore found in the short story. This research applies a descriptive qualitative method and uses Ullmann's theory, which classifies metaphors into anthropomorphic, animal, abstracting, and synesthetic metaphors. The data were collected from words, phrases, clauses, and sentences containing metaphore identified in the short story. The findings show that three categories of metaphor were identified, namely anthropomorphic metaphor, abstracting metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor, while animal metaphor was not found. The analysis reveals that metaphorical expressions in The Lottery function to represent symbolic meanings related to tradition, social values, emotional atmosphere, and collective behavior. This study concludes that metaphor contributes not only to literary aesthetics but also to strengthening meaning and delivering social criticism in the short story. Therefore, metaphor becomes an important element in helping readers understand deeper meanings conveyed in literary works. Therefore, metaphor plays an important role in enriching literary meaning and strengthening readers' interpretation of The Lottery

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental aspect of human life because it serves as the primary medium through which people communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas. In literary works, language functions not only as a tool of communication but also as a means of artistic expression. Furthermore, language plays an essential role in social interaction, as it contributes to the formation of identity and the development of relationships within society (Ahmadi et al., 2024). Through both spoken and written forms, individuals are able to communicate their intentions, emotions, and perspectives effectively (Ramadhanti & Andriani, 2024). The style of language used in literary works plays an important role in conveying the meaning intended by the author. Every literary text is created with a specific purpose, and language serves as a key medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and messages. According to Ratna (2009), one of the main functions of language style is to create aesthetic value. Through artistic and carefully chosen expressions, authors can enhance the beauty of their works while communicating deeper meanings. One way to achieve this is through the use of figurative language, which allows meanings to be expressed beyond their literal interpretation. Messages can be conveyed either directly through literal language or indirectly through figurative language that requires interpretation. A short story is one of the most popular forms of literary work. According to Abrams (1999), a short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that can generally be read in a single sitting and focuses on a limited number of characters and events. As a literary work, a short story reflects human experiences, emotions, and social realities through imaginative language. Literary works not only serve as entertainment but also provide moral values, cultural insights, and deeper understandings of life. Furthermore, literary works are closely related to language because authors use language as a medium to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings creatively. Through literary language, writers are able to convey meanings beyond the literal level. One of the literary devices frequently used in literary works is figurative language, particularly metaphor. The use of metaphor allows authors to create vivid imagery and communicate complex ideas in a more meaningful way. Therefore, literary works such as short stories provide a rich source for analyzing metaphors and their meanings.

The Lottery is a short story written by Shirley Jackson and first published in 1948. It is considered one of the most influential short stories in modern American literature because of its unexpected ending and strong social criticism. The story portrays a small village that continues an annual tradition called "the lottery," which at first appears to be an ordinary community event but later reveals a disturbing ritual. The story centers on the villagers gathering to conduct the lottery. As the event progresses, readers discover that the selected person will become the victim of a ritual stoning. Through this shocking ending, Jackson criticizes blind obedience to tradition and questions social norms that continue without reflection. The Lottery contains various figurative expressions that contribute to the atmosphere, themes, and emotional impact of the story. Metaphorical language is used to represent fear, social pressure, tradition, and human behavior. Therefore, this short story provides appropriate data for

metaphor analysis based on Ullmann's theory because the figurative expressions help reveal deeper meanings beyond literal interpretation. Metaphor is one of the most important forms of figurative language used in literary works. According to Keraf (2009), metaphor is a direct comparison between two unlike things without using comparative words such as "like" or "as." Similarly, Ullmann (2007) defines metaphor as a transfer of meaning from one object or concept to another based on similarity. Through metaphor, authors can express ideas, emotions, and experiences in a more imaginative and artistic manner. Metaphorical expressions help readers understand meanings beyond literal interpretation and contribute to the aesthetic quality of literary texts. Metaphor has several classifications that have been proposed by scholars. According to Ullman (2007) and Parera (as cited in Hidayah & Oktavia, 2019: 56), metaphors can be categorized into four main types: (1) Anthropomorphic Metaphor, which relates human experiences to parts of the human body; (2) Animal Metaphor, which draws comparisons using animals or plants; (3) Abstracting Metaphor, which represents abstract concepts in more concrete terms or vice versa; and (4) Synesthetic Metaphor, which involves the transfer of meaning from one sensory experience to another.

Preliminary Data

Before conducting a detailed analysis, several expressions in *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson were identified as preliminary data for metaphor analysis. These expressions indicate how figurative language contributes to building atmosphere, emphasizing social values, and conveying criticism of tradition and collective behavior in the story. *Example: "Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still continued the annual event. The old black box grew shabbier each year and became a symbol of village tradition."* Based on the excerpt above, several metaphorical expressions can be identified through Ullmann's theory of metaphor. The expression "grew shabbier each year" is categorized as anthropomorphic metaphor because the black box is described as if it experiences aging and physical deterioration similar to a human being. According to Ullmann (1962), anthropomorphic metaphor occurs when human characteristics are assigned to non-human objects. In this context, the black box symbolizes the continuation of tradition and the villagers' attachment to old customs despite gradual change.

Several previous studies have discussed metaphors in literary works. (1) Anone, Putri, and Winarta (2023), in "An Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor in *Dear Evan Hansen: The Novel*," found structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors. (2) Monika (2020), in "Analysis of Metaphor in *A Family Affair* by Kate Chopin," identified conceptual and ontological metaphors, with conceptual metaphors being dominant. (3) Lubis and Bahri (2021) entitled "An Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor in the Drama *Look Back in Anger*." Analyzed Metaphore applied a descriptive qualitative method and used Lakoff and Johnson's (4) S. et al. (2021), in "Conceptual Metaphor about Corona Virus: Cognitive Semantic Analysis," analyzed metaphors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. (5) Khumaira (2019), in "An Analysis of Metaphorical Expressions in Teenager's Fiction Novels," investigated metaphorical expressions in fiction novels. (6) Faizah and Pradita (2024), in "Metaphor in a Short Story of *Sepasang Wajah di Bilik Suara*

by Indra Tranggono: A Stylistic Study,” found anthropomorphic, animalistic, abstraction, and synesthetic metaphors. (7) Karimah et al. (2022), in “An Analysis of Figurative Language in The Tell-Tale Heart,” identified metaphor, hyperbole, simile, and personification. (8) Aulia (2022), in “Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in the Short Stories of Bruce and the Spider,” found conventional and systematic metaphors. Overall, these studies show that metaphors are widely used in literary works to convey deeper meanings and enhance aesthetic value.

Based on previous studies, most research on metaphor has focused on general literary texts, figurative language, and semantic interpretation. Several studies analyzed metaphor as part of stylistic devices, while others emphasized metaphorical meaning in broader literary contexts. However, studies specifically examining metaphorical expressions in short stories using Ullmann’s classification of metaphor remain limited. In addition, previous studies tend to focus on identifying figurative language in general without providing detailed classification of metaphor types. Therefore, this study differs from previous research because it specifically analyzes metaphorical expressions found in Shirley Jackson’s short story *The Lottery* by applying Ullmann’s theory, which classifies metaphor into anthropomorphic, animal, abstracting, and synesthetic metaphor. This study is expected to provide a more focused understanding of metaphor usage in literary texts and demonstrate how metaphor contributes to conveying themes, atmosphere, and social criticism in *The Lottery*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Metaphor is one of the forms of figurative language frequently used in literary works to express meaning indirectly. According to Keraf (2009), metaphor is a direct comparison between two different things without using comparative markers. Metaphor enables authors to create deeper meanings and enrich literary expression. In semantic studies, metaphor is understood as a transfer of meaning from one concept to another based on similarity or association. This study applies Ullmann’s theory of metaphor. According to Ullmann (1962), metaphor is classified into four categories: anthropomorphic metaphor, animal metaphor, abstracting metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor. These categories explain how meaning shifts occur in language and how figurative expressions represent ideas in literary texts.

Anthropomorphic Metaphor

Anthropomorphic metaphor refers to the transfer of human characteristics, emotions, physical conditions, or behaviors to non-human objects, natural phenomena, or abstract ideas. According to Ullmann (1962), this type of metaphor appears because humans naturally understand unfamiliar concepts by projecting their own experiences onto surrounding objects. Anthropomorphic metaphor is frequently used in literary works because it creates stronger emotional connection and symbolism. Through this metaphor, objects or concepts become more vivid and meaningful. Authors often employ anthropomorphic metaphor to transform ordinary descriptions into symbolic representations. *Example: “Mr. Summers arrived carrying the black box and placed it carefully in the center of the square. The villagers looked at the old object that seemed to carry the memory of previous ceremonies.”* The expression “carry the memory”

illustrates anthropomorphic metaphor because the black box is represented as if it possesses the human ability to remember. Literally, objects cannot store memory independently. This metaphor strengthens the symbolic function of the black box as a representation of tradition and continuity.

Animal Metaphor

Animal metaphor occurs when characteristics associated with animals are transferred to describe human behavior, personality, objects, or ideas. According to Ullmann (1962), humans frequently use animal imagery because animal characteristics are culturally associated with particular meanings such as bravery, loyalty, aggression, or fear. Animal metaphor allows authors to simplify complex human experiences by connecting them to familiar animal behavior. This metaphor often appears in literary texts to strengthen characterization and symbolic meaning. Although *The Lottery* does not strongly employ animal metaphor, the concept can be illustrated through a hypothetical literary expression: *Example: "The villagers gathered in the square and waited quietly for the ceremony to begin. Some of them looked uncertain and avoided direct conversation with others. During the waiting process, they moved cautiously and huddled together like frightened birds, avoiding unnecessary attention."* The expression "huddled together like frightened birds" illustrates animal metaphor because human behavior is represented through characteristics associated with animals. In this case, villagers are metaphorically associated with frightened birds to emphasize feelings of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. According to Ullmann (1962), animal metaphor occurs when characteristics commonly attributed to animals are transferred into human behavior to strengthen meaning and emotional effect. The image of frightened birds creates stronger visualization of vulnerability and social tension.

Abstracting Metaphor

Abstracting metaphor occurs when abstract ideas, emotions, values, beliefs, or concepts are represented through concrete and observable forms. According to Ullmann (1962), abstract concepts are often difficult to understand directly; therefore, metaphor allows these ideas to become more visible and meaningful. This category is commonly found in literary works because literature frequently explores emotions, traditions, dreams, memory, and social values. Through abstracting metaphor, readers can interpret invisible concepts through concrete imagery. *Example: "The villagers continued the ceremony although many details had changed over time. The old black box remained a visible symbol because tradition held its place in the village."* The expression "tradition held its place" is categorized as abstracting metaphor according to Ullmann (1962). Abstracting metaphor occurs when an abstract concept is represented through a more concrete and observable form. In this excerpt, tradition is treated as if it physically occupies a position and remains present within the village. Literally, tradition does not possess physical existence or spatial position. However, through metaphorical transfer, the abstract concept becomes more concrete and easier for readers to interpret.

Synesthetic Metaphor

Synesthetic metaphor refers to the transfer of perception from one sensory domain into another sensory experience. Ullmann (1962) explains that this metaphor occurs when sensations such as sound, sight, touch, taste, or movement interact to produce stronger imagery. Synesthetic metaphor is widely used in literary texts to create atmosphere, emotional effect, and aesthetic experience. By combining sensory perceptions, authors encourage readers to imagine situations more vividly. *Example: People gathered quietly in the square while children played nearby. Around them, the silence felt unusually heavy before the ceremony began.* The expression “silence felt unusually heavy” represents synesthetic metaphor because auditory experience is transferred into physical sensation (weight). This metaphor intensifies tension and emotional atmosphere. Overall, Ullmann’s theory provides a framework for understanding how metaphor operates not only as figurative language but also as a tool for constructing meaning in literary works.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research was chosen because the study focused on interpreting meanings and identifying metaphorical expressions found in literary texts rather than measuring numerical data. According to Moleong (1988), qualitative research aims to understand social and linguistic phenomena through descriptive interpretation. The source of data in this study was the short story *The Lottery* written by Shirley Jackson. The short story was selected because it contains figurative expressions that contribute to meaning construction and social criticism within the narrative. The data of this study consisted of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences containing metaphorical expressions found in the short story *The Lottery*. The data were identified and classified according to Ullmann’s theory of metaphor. The data were collected through documentation techniques. Several steps were conducted: Reading the short story thoroughly, identifying metaphorical expressions, marking relevant quotations, classifying the data into metaphor categories, and organizing the selected data for analysis. The data analysis was conducted through several stages: (1) interpreting metaphorical expressions based on context, (2) classifying metaphor according to Ullmann’s categories (anthropomorphic, animal, abstracting, and synesthetic metaphor), (3) describing the metaphorical meaning, (4) drawing conclusions based on the findings. The identified metaphorical expressions were classified into four categories proposed by Ullmann (1962), namely anthropomorphic metaphor, animal metaphor, abstracting metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor. This classification was used to determine the dominant metaphor type and explain how metaphor contributes to meaning in the short story.

RESULTS

Table 1. Classification of Metaphore Types in *The Lottery*

No	Types of Metaphor	Number of Selected Data
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1	Anthropomorphic Metaphor	2
2	Animal Metaphor	0
3	Abstracting Metaphor	2
4	Synesthetic Metaphor	2
	TOTAL	6

The table above presents selected metaphorical expressions discussed in this study. Each category contains representative data analyzed based on Ullmann's theory. Animal metaphor was not identified in the short story.

DISCUSSION

Anthropomorphic Metaphor

Data 1 : "Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still continued using it. The black box grew shabbier each year, yet no one wished to replace it." The expression "grew shabbier each year" is categorized as anthropomorphic metaphor according to Ullmann's theory. Anthropomorphic metaphor occurs when human characteristics are transferred to non-human objects. In this excerpt, the black box is represented as if it experiences aging and gradual physical decline like a human being. This metaphor does not merely describe the condition of the object but also symbolizes the persistence of tradition within the village. Although the box physically deteriorates, the villagers continue preserving it. Therefore, the metaphor reflects resistance to change and blind adherence to social customs. *Data 2 : "Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they continued the annual tradition without questioning its meaning."* The phrase "forgotten the ritual" is categorized as anthropomorphic metaphor because ritual, which is an abstract social practice, is treated as something possessing existence that can be remembered or forgotten. According to Ullmann (1962), assigning human-like qualities to abstract concepts allows authors to strengthen symbolic meaning. In this story, Jackson uses this metaphor to emphasize that tradition continues even when people no longer understand its original purpose. The metaphor supports the central criticism of unquestioned social conformity.

Animal Metaphor

After examining *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson, no clear examples of animal metaphor were identified in the short story. Several metaphorical expressions were found; however, they were classified into anthropomorphic, abstracting, and synesthetic metaphors rather than animal metaphor. According to Ullmann's theory, animal metaphor occurs when characteristics commonly associated with animals are transferred to describe humans, objects, or abstract ideas. In *The Lottery*, no metaphorical expressions containing animal imagery were found to function symbolically or represent other meanings. Therefore, this study did not identify sufficient evidence to classify any expression as animal metaphor. Instead, Shirley Jackson tends to emphasize social tradition, collective

behavior, emotional atmosphere, and symbolic representation through other categories of metaphor. These findings indicate that metaphorical expressions in *The Lottery* are used more frequently to construct social criticism and deepen thematic meaning rather than employing animal-related imagery.

Abstracting Metaphor

Data 1 : "Many of the original ritual procedures had gradually disappeared, and some traditions had changed over time. In several villages, the lottery had been allowed to lapse, but in this village the event continued every year." The expression "the lottery had been allowed to lapse" is categorized as abstracting metaphor according to Ullmann's theory. Abstracting metaphor occurs when an abstract idea or concept is represented in a more concrete form. In this expression, the lottery is not merely understood as an annual event but is represented as if it possesses continuity and can weaken or disappear over time. Literally, a tradition cannot physically lapse; however, Jackson transforms the abstract concept into something observable and dynamic. This metaphor emphasizes that traditions survive not because of inherent power but because communities continue maintaining them. *Data 2* : "The old black box remained an important symbol in the village because it represented values and customs passed from generation to generation. For the villagers, the tradition represented by the black box remained meaningful despite changes over time." The expression "the tradition represented by the black box" is categorized as abstracting metaphor because an abstract cultural concept is transformed into a concrete object. According to Ullmann (1962), abstracting metaphor allows abstract ideas to become easier to understand through physical representation. In this excerpt, tradition is symbolized by the black box, allowing readers to visualize something that normally cannot be physically seen. This metaphor strengthens the symbolic function of the black box and highlights how traditions continue to influence social behavior even when their original meaning becomes unclear.

Synesthetic Metaphor

Data 1: "The villagers gathered in the square and waited for the ceremony to begin. During the gathering, soft laughter ran through the crowd, creating a calm atmosphere before the event started." The expression "soft laughter ran through the crowd" is categorized as synesthetic metaphor according to Ullmann's theory. Synesthetic metaphor occurs when one sensory experience is transferred into another sensory domain. In this expression, laughter belongs to auditory sensation, but it is described as if it possesses movement across physical space. Literally, sound cannot move in the same way an object does. Jackson uses this metaphor to create stronger imagery and emphasize the spread of collective emotion among the villagers. This metaphor contributes to the ironic atmosphere of the story because the pleasant and relaxed interaction contrasts with the violent event that occurs later.

Data 2 : "Before the drawing began, villagers quietly stood in place and exchanged short conversations. Around them, there was a murmur of conversation among the villagers while everyone waited for the ceremony." The expression "there was a murmur of conversation among the villagers" is categorized as synesthetic metaphor because auditory experience is emphasized to strengthen sensory and emotional perception. According to Ullmann (1962), synesthetic metaphor

transfers sensory impressions in order to create more vivid literary expression. In this excerpt, the sound of conversation is not merely background information but becomes an element that builds emotional tension. Jackson uses this metaphor to present a peaceful social atmosphere which later becomes sharply contrasted with the tragic ending of the story. Therefore, the metaphor strengthens the irony and emotional impact of the narrative. Based on the analysis, metaphorical expressions in *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson can be interpreted through Ullmann's classification of metaphor. The findings indicate that three categories of metaphor are represented in the short story, namely anthropomorphic metaphor, abstracting metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor, while animal metaphor was not identified.

Anthropomorphic metaphor appears through expressions that assign human characteristics to objects and abstract concepts. Through this category, ordinary objects become symbolic elements that carry broader meanings. In *The Lottery*, anthropomorphic metaphor contributes to portraying the continuity of tradition and the villagers' attachment to inherited customs. Abstracting metaphor is used to represent ideas that cannot be physically observed, such as tradition and ritual. By transforming abstract concepts into more concrete representations, the story allows readers to understand how social values continue to influence behavior. These metaphorical expressions support Jackson's criticism toward traditions that are maintained without questioning their meaning. Meanwhile, synesthetic metaphor contributes to creating atmosphere and emotional experience in the story. Through sensory transfer, descriptions become more vivid and strengthen readers' interpretation of tension and irony throughout the narrative. The absence of animal metaphor indicates that Shirley Jackson tends to emphasize symbolic representation through social and emotional experiences rather than through animal imagery. Overall, metaphor in *The Lottery* functions not only as aesthetic language but also as a literary strategy for constructing meaning and delivering social criticism.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study analyzed metaphorical expressions found in *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson using Ullmann's theory of metaphor. Based on the analysis, three categories of metaphor were identified in the selected data, namely anthropomorphic metaphor, abstracting metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor. Animal metaphor was not identified in the short story. The analysis demonstrates that metaphor contributes significantly to constructing meaning and strengthening literary expression in *The Lottery*. Through metaphorical language, Shirley Jackson presents ideas related to tradition, conformity, social values, and collective behavior in a more symbolic and meaningful way. The findings also show that metaphor serves not merely as decorative language but as an important element in communicating emotional atmosphere and social criticism. Therefore, Ullmann's theory remains relevant in explaining meaning transfer and metaphorical representation in literary texts. This study is expected to contribute to literary and semantic studies, especially in understanding metaphorical expressions in short stories. Future researchers are encouraged to

examine metaphor using different literary objects and broader theoretical perspectives.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has limitations; therefore, further research on the topic of metaphor in Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery" is necessary to refine the study and broaden the reader's understanding.

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