

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AS SOCIAL CRITICISM IN MEET NITE LIVE'S ECONOMIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The development of digital communication technology has transformed the way media outlets deliver news, including economic news, which is increasingly presented in communicative ways through the use of figurative language. This study aims to describe the forms of figurative language and explain their functions as social criticism in the economic discourse of the *Meet Nite Live* program on Metro TV. The Study used a descriptive qualitative approach with a stylistic perspective. The data source of this study consists of the presenter's utterances in the *Meet Nite Live* program broadcast on Metro TV's YouTube channel throughout 2025. The researcher first identified episodes discussing economic topics, after which several of those episodes were randomly selected as the data source for the study. Data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques and analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that figurative language functions not only as an aesthetic element but also as a communication strategy to simplify economic issues while conveying social criticism. Three main categories of figurative language were identified: comparison, opposition, and emphasis. The comparison category includes personification, simile, metaphor, and allusion; the opposition category includes irony, cynicism, paradox, and antithesis; while the emphasis category includes repetition and hyperbole. The analysis demonstrates that each category serves a different function in constructing social criticism. Comparative figurative language concretizes abstract economic concepts; oppositional figurative language highlights the gap between expectations and socio-economic realities. In contrast, emphatic figurative language strengthens critical messages regarding issues such as unemployment, layoffs, taxation, rising living costs, and economic inequality. These findings indicate that stylistic analysis and social criticism analysis complement each other in explaining how lexical choices, shifts in meaning, and figurative expressions construct meaning and influence public understanding of economic realities.

Keywords: Figurative language, social criticism, media discourse, stylistics, *Meet Nite Live*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital communication technology has significantly transformed the production and dissemination of news. According to Harcup (2023) contemporary journalism has shifted from merely delivering factual information to presenting news in ways that are more engaging, accessible, and responsive to audience needs. This transformation has encouraged television news programs to adopt more interactive and conversational styles while maintaining journalistic credibility. Furthermore, Dai & Wang (2023) argue that language plays a strategic role in digital news communication because it not only conveys information but also shapes public understanding of social realities.

Among various media topics, economic issues receive considerable public attention because they directly influence people's daily lives, including employment, inflation, taxation, purchasing power, investment, and social welfare. Nevertheless, economic news frequently contains technical terminology and abstract concepts that are difficult for general audiences to understand. To bridge this communication gap, journalists and television presenters increasingly employ linguistic strategies that simplify complex information without reducing its substantive meaning. One of the most effective strategies is the use of figurative language, which enables audiences to interpret complex economic phenomena through familiar expressions and everyday experiences (Li & Zhang, 2024).

Figurative language is not merely an aesthetic feature of communication but also an effective linguistic strategy for constructing meaning and influencing audience interpretation. Keraf (2010) classifies figurative language into three major categories: comparison, opposition, and emphasis. Similarly, Tarigan (2009) argues that figurative expressions enhance communicative effectiveness by creating vivid, persuasive, and memorable

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meanings. Accordingly, figurative language has become an important communicative resource for expressing opinions, evaluations, and criticism in public discourse.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in Metro TV's *Meet Nite Live*, a television program that presents economic issues through an interactive and conversational style. Unlike conventional news programs, *Meet Nite Live* combines factual reporting with humor, irony, satire, and other figurative expressions to explain complex economic events in a more accessible manner. Consequently, the program provides a valuable context for examining how figurative language functions as a medium for expressing social criticism in economic discourse.

Previous studies have investigated figurative language from different perspectives. Sardani & Ati (2017) identified figurative language in written news texts but did not examine its function as social criticism. Indrati (2024) analyzed *Meet Nite Live* from the perspective of *newstainment*, focusing on innovation in news presentation rather than linguistic strategies. Li&Zhang (2024) demonstrated that figurative language facilitates public understanding of economic issues, while Burgers, C., Konijn, E. A., & Steen (2016) emphasized its role in shaping audience interpretation through figurative framing. However, limited studies have investigated how figurative language functions as a form of social criticism in televised economic discourse, particularly in *Meet Nite Live*.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach from a stylistic perspective to analyze the use of figurative language as a form of social criticism in the economic discourse of the *Meet Nite Live* program. A qualitative approach was adopted because the study focuses on interpreting linguistic phenomena within their context of use Moleong (2019), while the descriptive method was used to systematically describe the characteristics of the data (Hardani 2020). The stylistic perspective was applied to identify the forms and functions of figurative language in conveying social criticism.

The data source of this study consists of the presenter's utterances in the *Meet Nite Live* program broadcast on Metro TV's YouTube channel throughout 2025. The researcher first identified episodes discussing economic topics, after which several of those episodes were randomly selected as the data source for the study. The research data comprised words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and utterances containing figurative language. The data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques Mahsun (2019) by watching the broadcasts, transcribing the presenters' utterances, and classifying the data based on their forms and contexts of use.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, M.B., Huberman (2020), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the condensation stage, the data were selected and classified into the categories of comparison, opposition, and emphasis. The data were then presented in the form of analytical descriptions supported by excerpts from the program and subsequently interpreted to explain the forms and functions of figurative language as social criticism in economic discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that figurative language in the *Meet Nite Live* program functions not only as an aesthetic element in presenting economic news but also as a discursive mechanism that frames, simplifies, and evaluates complex economic issues. The figurative language used forms a system of representation that links economic information to broader social meaning. This study identifies three main categories of figurative language: (1) comparison, (2) opposition, and (3) emphasis. The research data are presented below.

Comparison-Based Figurative Language in *Meet Nite Live*

Comparison-based figurative language on Metro TV's *Meet Nite Live* program is used to simplify complex economic concepts into more concrete forms. The use of these figures of speech functions not only as an aesthetic element but also as a communication strategy in media discourse to enhance audience understanding of the information conveyed. According to Keraf (2010) comparison-based figurative language is used to equate one thing with another to provide a clearer picture and reinforce the intended impression. The types of comparison-based figurative language found are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Comparison-Based Figurative Language

No	Type	Main Function
1	Personification	Attributing human qualities to abstract concepts
2	Simile	Explicit comparison using a comparative word
3	Metaphor	Implicit comparison without a comparative word
4	Allusion	Indirect reference to a proverb/event

Table 1 shows four types of comparison-based figurative language found in the data: personification, simile, metaphor, and allusion. Each type performs a different function in helping audiences understand economic issues through more concrete depictions that are closer to everyday experience.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that attributes human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract concepts (Tarigan 2009). In line with this view, Priyanti et al. (2023) state that personification depicts a non-living entity as though it possesses human abilities. This can be seen in the following data.

"Donald Trump come back bukan cuma jadi presiden, tetapi menyeret ekonomi ke arena pertempuran."

(Judul: Gara-Gara Trump, IHSG Merah Kayak "Sambal Mertua", Meet Nite Live, 8 April 2025)

"Donald Trump's comeback is not merely about becoming president again, but about dragging the economy into a battlefield."

(Title: Because of Trump, the Jakarta Composite Index Turns Red Like 'Mother-in-Law's Sambal,' Meet Nite Live, 8 April 2025)

The personification is realized through the linguistic unit "menyeret ekonomi" (dragging the economy). Lexically, the verb *menyeret* (to drag) refers to pulling a person or object by force from one place to another. Such an action can only be performed on a concrete entity capable of physical movement. Contextually, however, the economy is an abstract concept that cannot literally be dragged. The meaning therefore shifts from the literal domain of physical movement to the conceptual domain of economic conditions affected by political decisions. By assigning a human-like experience to the economy, the presenter transforms an abstract economic process into a concrete image that is easier for audiences to understand.

From the perspective of social criticism, the personification "menyeret ekonomi" (dragging the economy) represents criticism of the significant influence of political power on societal economic stability. The expression implies that the political decisions of a particular figure may bring broad consequences for market conditions and public life. Therefore, personification functions as a rhetorical strategy to simplify complex economic issues while emphasizing criticism of the relationship between politics, power, and social welfare.

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that explicitly compares two things using a comparative word, such as like, as, or similar expressions Keraf (2010). In line with this view, Mariani Sinabutar et al. (2019) explain that a simile is a form of figurative language that explicitly compares two different entities to highlight a particular similarity. Therefore, similes establish similarities between two concepts through explicit comparison markers, thereby enabling readers or listeners to understand the intended meaning more easily. The use of simile is found in the following data.

"Saya mau kasih informasi untuk para pencari cuan yang masih berjuang mencari kerja, karena di negara ini cari kerja mirip jomblo pengangguran usia 40-an, banyak saingan."

(Judul: Siap-Siap Pedagang Toko Online Bakal Kena Pajak)

"I want to share some information for the cuan-seekers still struggling to find a job, because in this country, looking for a job is like being a single, unemployed person in your forties, a lot of competition."

(Title: Online Shop Sellers Are About to Be Taxed, Meet Nite Live, 27 June 2025)

This utterance. The simile in the utterance is indicated by the expression "similar to an unemployed single person in their 40s." The use of the comparative marker *similar to* explicitly establishes a comparison between

two different situations, namely the difficulty of finding employment and the condition of an unemployed single person in their 40s. Lexically, the phrase *similar to* denotes resemblance or similarity between two entities. Meanwhile, the expression *an unemployed single person in their 40s* refers to an individual who is unmarried, unemployed, and in an age group that is often perceived by society as having increasingly limited opportunities.

From the perspective of social criticism, this simile criticizes employment challenges in Indonesia. The comparison between job seekers and “an unemployed single person in their 40s” highlights the difficulty of obtaining jobs, intense competition, and limited opportunities. Thus, simile functions not only to simplify economic issues but also to strengthen criticism of complex labor conditions.

Metaphor

According to Tarigan (2009) a metaphor is a form of implicit comparison between two different things. Sari (2024) meanwhile, explains that a metaphor is a figure of speech that expresses a comparison indirectly, without using an explicit comparative word. A metaphor thus presents a relationship of similarity in meaning through a direct equation between two different objects or concepts. Data illustrating the use of metaphors are presented below.

"PT Sanken Indonesia yang memanaskan suasana dengan menutup pabriknya dan membuat hampir 1.000 karyawan harus mendinginkan diri dan pikiran di luar sana, bahkan pabrik bulu mata di Garut pun ikut menutup mata terhadap nasib pekerjaannya di tengah badai PHK."
(Judul: Pekerja Resah Ada Badai PHK di Bulan Penuh Berkah, Meet Nite Live, 4 Maret 2025)

"PT Sanken Indonesia heated things up by closing its factory and forcing nearly 1,000 employees to cool off out there on their own, while even an eyelash factory in Garut turned a blind eye to the fate of its workers amid the storm of layoffs."
(Title: Workers Anxious as a Storm of Layoffs Hits in the Month of Blessings, Meet Nite Live, 4 March 2025)

The metaphor in the utterance is indicated by the linguistic expression *"storm of layoffs."* Lexically, the word *storm* refers to a natural phenomenon characterized by strong winds, often accompanied by heavy rain, that can cause widespread destruction. In contrast, *layoffs* refer to the termination of employment relationships between workers and companies. In this context, however, the word *storm* is no longer interpreted literally as a natural phenomenon. Instead, it represents the occurrence of large-scale layoffs with far-reaching consequences for society. Thus, the meaning shifts from the domain of natural phenomena to the socio-economic domain, emphasizing the magnitude of the impact and the difficulty of avoiding the wave of layoffs.

From the perspective of social criticism, this metaphor criticizes the economic uncertainty and vulnerability experienced by workers due to widespread layoffs. By transforming the concept of a natural “storm” into a representation of massive job losses, the presenter emphasizes that layoffs have become an economic threat affecting workers’ livelihoods and social stability. Thus, metaphor functions not only as a stylistic device but also as a medium for expressing criticism of labor conditions and economic instability.

Allusion

According to Tarigan (2009) allusion is a figure of speech that conveys an implicit reference to a particular figure or event. In line with this view, Tuharea, Nur Farsah Meilinia Setya Yuwana Sudikan (2023) state that allusion is a figure of speech that connects something to a figure, event, or expression already widely known to the public. Mariani Sinabutar et al. (2019) meanwhile, state that allusion is an indirect reference to a figure, event, place, text, myth, or cultural phenomenon outside the text itself, so that readers gain additional meaning when they recognize the reference. The use of allusion thus relies on shared knowledge between speaker and reader so that the referenced meaning can be understood. Allusion is found in the following data.

"Kita lanjut bahas negosiasi tarif Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat yang prosesnya melebihi drama Korea. Banyak plot twist dan penuh emosi, seperti kata pepatah, sudah jatuh tertimpa tarif, eh, tangga."
(Judul: Negosiasi Tarif Trump RI-AS, Masih Belum Ada Perubahan Tarif?? Meet Nite Live, 23 April 2025)

"Let's move on to discuss the tariff negotiations between Indonesia and the United States, a process that has outdone a Korean drama. Lots of plot twists, full of emotion — as the saying goes, already fallen and then hit by a tariff... oh sorry, a staircase."
(Title: Trump Tariff Negotiations Indonesia-US, Still No Change in Tariffs??, Meet Nite Live, 23 April 2025)

The allusion is realized through the linguistic *unit* "sudah jatuh tertimpa tarif, eh, tangga" (already fallen and then hit by a tariff... oh, a staircase). This expression is a modification of the well-known Indonesian proverb "sudah jatuh tertimpa tangga" (already fallen and then hit by a staircase). Lexically, the proverb refers to a situation in which a person experiences one misfortune after another, causing an already difficult condition to become even worse. In this utterance, however, the word *tangga* (staircase) is deliberately replaced with *tarif* (tariff) to fit the context of tariff negotiations between Indonesia and the United States. Despite this lexical modification, the expression remains easily recognizable because it preserves the structure of a proverb that is deeply embedded in Indonesian culture.

Contextually, the expression no longer refers to an individual's literal misfortune but instead portrays an economic condition facing multiple and successive pressures due to tariff policies. The meaning therefore shifts from personal adversity to the socio-economic domain, where tariff policy is conceptualized as an additional burden that exacerbates existing economic problems. The modified proverb thus represents the accumulation of economic pressures arising from international trade negotiations.

From the perspective of social criticism, this allusion criticizes tariff policies and prolonged negotiations that create uncertainty for society and economic actors. By modifying the proverb "sudah jatuh tertimpa tangga" into "sudah jatuh tertimpa tarif," the presenter conveys criticism indirectly while highlighting tariffs as an additional economic burden. Thus, allusion functions not only as a stylistic device but also as a medium for expressing criticism of trade policies.

Opposition-Based Figurative Language

According to Keraf (2010) opposition-based figurative language uses a contrast in meaning, a clash, or a deviation between expectation and reality to assert a particular idea. In line with this view, Tarigan (2009) states that opposition-based figurative language is used to produce an effect of emphasis through a clash of meanings, thereby making the message conveyed more forceful. In the *Meet Nite Live* program, opposition-based figurative language is used to criticize various economic and social issues in society. Based on the analysis, the forms of opposition-based figurative language found include irony, sarcasm, paradox, and antithesis, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of Opposition-Based Figurative Language

No	Type	Main Function
1	Irony	Meaning contrary to the actual intent
2	Cynicism	Direct and critical mockery
3	Paradox	A logical contradiction within a single utterance
4	Antithesis	Juxtaposition of two opposing concepts

These four types of opposition-based figurative language are used predominantly to convey social criticism of various economic issues discussed on the *Meet Nite Live* program.

Irony

According to Tarigan (2009) irony is a figure of mockery that conveys a meaning contrary to the speaker's actual intent, thereby producing an indirect critical effect. In line with this view, Yanti&Yulianto (2021) state that irony shows a contrast between the literal meaning of an utterance and the meaning the speaker actually intends to convey. This view is reinforced by Dynel (2017) who explains that irony is an utterance that conveys implicit meaning through a clash between what is said and the reality intended. Irony thus exploits a mismatch between literal meaning and the speaker's intent to convey criticism or evaluation indirectly.

"Mereka ikut dalam rantai konsumsi dan distribusi, tetapi kontribusinya bukan hanya nol, melainkan minus."

(Judul: Saatnya Memasak! Ada Bu Kades Jual Posyandu Sampai Investasi Sarang Pungli Rackets, Meet Nite Live, 1 August 2025)

"They take part in the chain of consumption and distribution, but their contribution is not merely zero, it is negative."

(Title: Time to Cook! A Village Head's Wife Sells Posyandu Supplies and Even Invests in Extortion Rackets, Meet Nite Live, 1 August 2025)

The irony in the utterance is indicated by the expression *"its contribution is not merely zero, but negative."* Lexically, the word *zero* denotes the absence of value or result, whereas *negative* refers to a value below zero. In economic discourse, *contribution* is generally understood as a positive role or input that supports economic activities. However, in this utterance, the expression *"its contribution is not merely zero, but negative"* is not intended as a mathematical calculation but rather as an evaluative statement regarding the presence of thugs, who not only fail to provide any benefit but instead impose costs and losses on economic activities.

Thus, the meaning shifts from the quantitative domain to the evaluative domain. The terms *zero* and *negative*, which are lexically used to express numerical values, are recontextualized as evaluative judgments concerning the social and economic impact of a particular group. This semantic shift reinforces the contrast between the expectation that every actor in the distribution chain should create added value and the reality that of thugs instead increase distribution costs, disrupt business activities, and impose burdens on society.

From the perspective of social criticism, this irony criticizes thuggery in economic activities. The expression *"its contribution is not merely zero, but negative"* suggests that such groups do not provide benefits but instead create economic burdens and disrupt business activities. Thus, irony functions not only as a figure of speech but also as a rhetorical strategy to criticize harmful social practices.

Cynicism

According to Tarigan (2009) cynicism is a figure of speech that conveys doubt, mockery, or distrust toward a person's sincerity or a particular condition. In line with this, Tiorida (2024) explains that cynicism is used to convey criticism directly, reflecting an attitude of distrust or disappointment toward a given condition. Cynicism can therefore be understood as a figure of speech containing a sharp, direct rebuke toward behavior, events, or conditions considered to deviate from expectations or prevailing norms.

"Pajak dipungut terus, tetapi rakyat jarang diurus. Itu bukan pajak, melainkan pemalakan."
(judul :Pedagang Online Bakal Dipajaki, Hingga 'Second Account' Medsos Bakal Dibatasi?
Meet Nite Live, 18 July 2025)

"Taxes keep being collected, but the people are rarely taken care of. That's not taxation — that's extortion."
(Title:Online Sellers to Be Taxed, While Social-Media 'Second Accounts' May Be Restricted?,
Meet Nite Live, 18 July 2025)

The cynicism in the utterance is indicated by the expression *"it is not taxation, but extortion."* Lexically, *taxation* refers to the compulsory levy imposed by the government on individuals and businesses under statutory regulations to finance public administration and promote public welfare. In contrast, *extortion* refers to the unlawful act of obtaining money or property through coercion for personal gain. In this context, however, the term *extortion* is not used in its literal criminal sense but rather as an evaluative expression criticizing tax collection practices that are perceived as being inadequately matched by the provision of public services. Thus, the meaning shifts from the domain of criminal law to the domain of social evaluation of public policy.

From the perspective of social criticism, the expression *"it is not taxation, but extortion"* directly criticizes tax management that is perceived as unfair. The term *"extortion"* intensifies the criticism by suggesting that tax collection burdens citizens without providing adequate public benefits. Thus, cynicism functions not only as a figure of speech but also as a rhetorical strategy to question the fairness of public policies.

Paradox

According to Tarigan (2009) a paradox is a figure of speech that contains a contradiction with commonly understood facts or logic. In line with this view, Keraf (2010) states that a paradox is a figure of speech that presents a contrast that appears to contradict reality but in fact contains a certain truth. Paradox can thus be understood as a figure of speech that presents two contradictory states to assert a particular meaning. An excerpt containing a paradox is presented below.

"Berangkat kerja bukannya kerja, tetapi makan biaya, dapatnya cuma lelah."
(Judul: Pekerja Boncos Gegara Ongkos, Utang pun Bikin Dompot Kejang [Workers Losing
Money over Transport Meet Nite Live, 6 August 2025)
*"You go off to work, but instead of working, you just burn through your wages and end up with
nothing but exhaustion."*
(Title:Workers Left in the Red Because of Commuting Costs, Debt Even Makes the Wallet
Convulse, Meet Nite Live, 6 August 2025)

Paradox in the utterance is indicated by the expressions *"going to work not to work, but to spend money"* and *"all you get is exhaustion."* Lexically, *working* refers to an activity undertaken to earn income and improve one's standard of living, whereas *to spend money* means to incur or consume financial resources. These two concepts are inherently contradictory because work is generally expected to generate economic benefits rather than create additional expenses. Likewise, the outcome of working is commonly expected to be income or improved well-being, not merely physical exhaustion.

In the context of this utterance, however, these expressions are not intended to suggest that a person literally does not work. Rather, they describe a situation in which transportation costs, living expenses, and other work-related expenditures consume nearly all of a worker's earnings. Consequently, employment no longer provides significant economic benefits but instead leaves workers with nothing but physical fatigue. Thus, the meaning shifts from the conventional relationship between work and income to a paradoxical economic reality in which people work without experiencing an improvement in their standard of living.

From the perspective of social criticism, this paradox criticizes the rising cost of living and declining purchasing power that prevent work from ensuring economic well-being. The expressions *"going to work not to work, but to spend money"* and *"all you get is exhaustion"* highlight the imbalance between workers' efforts and the benefits they receive. Thus, paradox functions not only to create contradiction but also to criticize economic conditions that burden society.

Antithesis

Based on the view of Aristotle as cited by Green (2023) antithesis is a figure of speech that presents words or ideas in opposition within parallel structure, thereby producing a strong contrast and reinforcing the intended meaning. Furthermore, according to Keraf (2010) antithesis juxtaposes two opposing ideas, conditions, or concepts within a single utterance to reinforce the intended meaning. The following excerpt from *Meet Nite Live* illustrates the use of antithesis.

"Lihat dompet ngakak, lihat saldo ngakak, lihat cermin nangis."

(Judul :Demi Instastory, 'Rohana & Rojali' ke Mall Tapi Gak Beli, *Meet Nite Live*, 25 Juli 2025)

"Look at your wallet, you laugh; look at your balance, you laugh; look in the mirror, you cry."

(Title:For the Sake of an Instagram Story, 'Rohana & Rojali' Go to the Mall but Don't Buy Anything, *Meet Nite Live*, 25 July 2025)

The antithesis in the utterance is indicated by the word *"laugh"* and *"cry,"* which are arranged in parallel within a single utterance. Lexically, *laugh* refers to expressing amusement or happiness through laughter, while *cry* refers to shedding tears as an expression of sadness, disappointment, or suffering. These two words represent contrasting emotional states, thereby creating an antithetical relationship.

The word *laugh* in the utterance does not refer to genuine happiness but rather represents cynical laughter when observing an empty wallet or a very low bank account balance. Conversely, *cry* does not merely refer to the physical act of shedding tears but represents frustration and disappointment toward the economic conditions experienced by individuals. Thus, meaning shifts from literal emotional expression to the representation of socio-economic conditions faced by society. The contrast between *laugh* and *cry* is used to illustrate the gap between the image people attempt to present and their actual economic reality.

From the perspective of social criticism, this antithesis criticizes the tendency of people to maintain an idealized image on social media despite financial difficulties. The contrast between *"laugh"* and *"cry"* highlights the gap between social appearance and economic reality. Therefore, antithesis functions not only to create contrast but also to convey criticism of contemporary social and economic condition.

Emphasis-Based Figurative Language

According to Tarigan (2009), emphasis-based figurative language is used to reinforce or assert an idea leaving a stronger impression on readers or listeners. In line with this view, Keraf (2010) states that emphasis-based figurative language is used to enhance the expressive force of a statement through various forms of stress, making the message conveyed more effective and attention-grabbing. Emphasis-based figurative language can thus be understood as the use of linguistic elements to reinforce meaning, highlight a particular idea, and produce a persuasive effect on the audience. The types of emphasis-based figurative language are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Types of Emphasis-Based Figurative Language

No	Type	Function
1	Repetition	Emphasis through reiteration

Repetition

Tarigan (2009) states that repetition is an emphasis-based figure of speech realized by repeating a sound, syllable, word, or part of a sentence considered important to stress the idea being conveyed. In line with this view, Keraf (2010) states that repetition is the successive repetition of the same linguistic element to reinforce meaning and capture the attention of the reader or listener. Repetition can thus be understood as a figure of speech that exploits the repetition of a particular element to assert a message and strengthen its rhetorical effect within an utterance. Data containing repetition are presented below.

"Bayangin, udah capek-capek kerja, pulang-pulang cuma bisa beli kuota dan mi instan. Minya dilihatin doang, sisa dua bulan, kuotanya dipakai lihat orang makan. Kenyang, kenyang, kenyang digital."

(Judul: Darurat Pekerjaan Layak, Valentinus: Kerjanya Berlebih, Gajinya Tidak Ada Lebihnya Meet Nite Live, 15 July 2025)

"Imagine, after working so hard, all you can afford when you get home is data credit and instant noodles. You stare at the noodles, two months left, and you spend your data watching other people eat. Full, full, digitally full."

(Title: Decent Work Is in Crisis, Valentinus: Working Overtime, but the Pay Has No Extra at All, Meet Nite Live, 15 July 2025)

The repetition in the utterance is indicated by the expression *"full, full, digitally full."* The word *full* is repeated three consecutive times to emphasize the central idea being conveyed. Lexically, *full* refers to the state in which hunger has been satisfied after consuming food. However, in this utterance, the word *full* no longer denotes the actual fulfillment of nutritional needs. Instead, the phrase *"digitally full"* suggests that the sense of satisfaction is derived merely from consuming digital content, such as watching other people eat on social media, without being able to satisfy one's own need for food.

Thus, the meaning shifts from the biological domain to the symbolic domain. The meaning of *full* changes from a physical condition resulting from eating to a representation of illusory satisfaction obtained through the consumption of digital content. The repetition of the word *full* reinforces the irony that people's basic needs remain unmet, even though they are constantly exposed to representations of luxury and consumption through digital media.

From the perspective of social criticism, this repetition criticizes economic conditions in which people work hard but still struggle to fulfill their basic needs. The expression *"full, full, digitally full"* highlights the gap between virtual lifestyles on social media and actual economic realities. Thus, repetition functions not only to emphasize meaning but also to criticize low worker welfare, rising living costs, and the illusion of digital satisfaction amid economic hardship.

Hyperbole

According to Tarigan (2009) hyperbole is a figure of speech that contains a statement exaggerated beyond actual reality to emphasize the idea being conveyed. In line with this view, Keraf (2010) states that hyperbole is a figure of speech that expresses something in an exaggerated way so as to produce a stronger effect on readers or listeners. This view aligns with that of Burgers, Brugman, Renardel de Lavalette, et al. (2016) who define hyperbole as an expression more extreme than the actual state it refers to. Hyperbole can thus be understood as a figure of speech that exaggerates a condition, action, or event to reinforce meaning and capture the audience's attention. An excerpt containing hyperbole is presented below.

"Para pejuang job fair yang tidak pernah lelah berdarah-darah menaruh lamaran, meski jarang mendapat panggilan."

(Judul: Syarat Usia Hilang, Panggilan Kerja Jarang-Jarang Meet Nite Live, 3 June 2025)

"The tireless warriors of job fairs, bleeding themselves dry submitting applications, even though callback are rare."

(Age Requirement Lifted, Job Callbacks Still Few and Far Between, Meet Nite Live, 3 June 2025)

The hyperbole in the utterance is indicated by the expression *"bleeding while submitting job applications."* Lexically, the word *bleeding* refers to the physical loss of blood resulting from an injury or wound. However, in

this context, the expression is not intended to suggest that job seekers literally suffer physical injuries when applying for jobs. Rather, *bleeding* is used figuratively to represent the immense struggle, as well as the considerable investment of time, energy, mental effort, and emotional resilience required to secure employment. Thus, the meaning shifts from the physical domain to the socio-psychological domain, transforming a literal bodily condition into a symbol of the prolonged and demanding struggle involved in seeking employment.

From the perspective of social criticism, this hyperbole criticizes the increasingly competitive labor market and limited employment opportunities. The expression “bleeding while submitting job applications” emphasizes the struggles of job seekers facing intense competition, age restrictions, and limited access to employment. Thus, hyperbole functions not only to strengthen the emotional impact of the message but also to highlight broader issues of employment inequality and social welfare.

Social Criticism in the Media Discourse of *Meet Nite Live*

Social criticism in *Meet Nite Live* is constructed through of figurative language as a strategy for conveying messages rather than through direct statements. The linguistic analysis demonstrates that figurative language functions not merely as a stylistic feature but also as a means of constructing critical meanings concerning various economic issues. This finding is consistent with Fairclough (1992) view that media discourse not only reflects social reality but also shapes the way society understands that reality through language. By shifting meaning from the lexical to the contextual level, complex economic issues are presented in a more concrete, communicative, and accessible manner, enabling audiences to understand them more easily.

Each category of figurative language contributes differently to the construction of social criticism. Comparative figures of speech, such as metaphor, personification, simile, and allusion, make abstract economic issues more tangible by relating them to experiences familiar to everyday life. Figures of opposition, including irony, cynicism, paradox, and antithesis, highlight the contrast between expectations and reality, thereby reinforcing criticism of public policies and socio-economic conditions. Meanwhile, emphatic figures of speech, such as repetition and hyperbole, intensify the critical message by emphasizing the severity of problems faced by society, including unemployment, layoffs, the rising cost of living, and economic inequality.

These findings indicate that linguistic analysis and social criticism analysis are complementary. Linguistic analysis explains how figurative meanings are created through lexical choices and semantic shifts. In contrast, social criticism analysis explains how those meanings are employed to evaluate economic conditions and public policies. Consequently, figurative language in *Meet Nite Live* serves not only to enhance communicative effectiveness but also to function as an effective medium for conveying social criticism in contemporary economic discourse.

Figurative Language as a Strategy for Simplifying Economic Issues

The presentation of economic issues in *Meet Nite Live* demonstrates that figurative language functions as a strategy to bridge abstract economic concepts with everyday experiences. Technical economic terms are reconstructed through more concrete expressions, making them easier for audiences to understand. Through semantic shifts, meanings extend beyond the lexical level to represent broader social and economic realities.

This function can be seen in the metaphor “storm of layoffs” in the utterance “workers’ fate amid the storm of layoffs” (*Meet Nite Live*, 4 March 2025). The word storm shifts from referring to a natural phenomenon to representing large-scale layoffs that create serious social impacts. Similarly, the personification “dragging the economy into a battlefield” (*Meet Nite Live*, 8 April 2025) transforms the abstract concept of economic conditions into a concrete image of the impact of political decisions on society.

Each category of figurative language contributes differently to simplifying economic issues. Comparative figures, such as metaphor and personification, make abstract concepts more understandable by relating them to familiar experiences. Opposition-based figures, such as cynicism in “That’s not taxation, that’s extortion” (*Meet Nite Live*, 18 July 2025), highlight the gap between public expectations and economic realities. Meanwhile, emphasis-based figures, such as repetition in “full, full, digitally full” (*Meet Nite Live*, 15 July 2025), strengthen critical messages by emphasizing social and economic difficulties.

These findings show that linguistic analysis and social criticism analysis are complementary. Linguistic analysis explains how meaning is constructed through lexical choices and semantic shifts, while social criticism analysis reveals how these meanings are used to evaluate economic conditions and public policies. Therefore, figurative language in *Meet Nite Live* not only simplifies complex economic information but also functions as an effective medium for conveying social criticism.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that figurative language in the economic discourse of *Meet Nite Live* functions not only as a stylistic element but also as a strategy for constructing and conveying social criticism. Three categories of figurative language were identified, namely comparison, opposition, and emphasis. Comparison-based figurative language, including personification, simile, metaphor, and allusion, simplifies abstract economic issues by transforming them into concrete representations related to everyday experiences. Opposition-based figurative language, including irony, cynicism, paradox, and antithesis, highlights contradictions between social expectations and economic realities, thereby strengthening criticism of policies and social conditions. Meanwhile, emphasis-based figurative language, including repetition and hyperbole, intensifies critical messages by emphasizing the difficulties experienced by society, such as unemployment, layoffs, taxation issues, and economic inequality.

The findings further demonstrate that linguistic analysis and social criticism analysis are interconnected in interpreting media discourse. Linguistic analysis reveals how figurative meanings are constructed through lexical choices, semantic shifts, and rhetorical structures, while social criticism analysis explains how these linguistic strategies represent evaluations of economic conditions and public policies. The interaction between both analyses shows that figurative language enables complex economic issues to be communicated in a more accessible form while simultaneously expressing critical perspectives toward social realities.

Therefore, figurative language in *Meet Nite Live* serves a dual function: simplifying economic information for audiences and functioning as a rhetorical medium for delivering social criticism. This study contributes to stylistic and media discourse studies by demonstrating that figurative expressions in contemporary economic news are not merely decorative features but also meaningful linguistic strategies that shape public understanding of economic realities.

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