

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

To promote a product, a seller needs to make the product known to their target audiences. A product needs to be communicated well if the seller wants to attract the audience's interest; this is where advertising shines. Nowadays, it is common for people to find advertisements. However, "advertising is so familiar to modern readers that it may seem odd to ask what an advertisement is. Although advertising is all around us – perhaps because it is all around us – we don't often pause to think about its nature as a form of discourse" (Goddard, 2002, p. 5).

Advertising, as stated by Goddard (2002), is used by creators to talk with their audience. As mentioned by Goddard (2002), an advertisement can be considered as an attention-seeking device, which is why the language used needs to be something that could make the audiences "more favourably disposed in general terms to the advertised product or service" (Goddard, 2002, p. 9).

Even so, advertising is not limited to promoting goods or services. It can also promote information, for example, by using infomercials. Infomercials or informative commercials, according to Miller (2011), are a type of video marketing that could provide useful information for the audience while promoting goods or services. Miller (2011) explains that this type of video has these characteristics: (1) videos that are interesting, useful, or entertaining, (2) provide value to the viewers, and (3) lead the viewers to the promoted goods or services.

Some game developers often employ this type of advertising approach. For example, the Chinese game developer MiHoYo has videos called *Special Program* to promote their game's update. Their *Special Program* videos fulfill the characteristics of infomercials. In the *Special Program*, players could receive information about the game's incoming updates and in-game incentives from developers.

Usually, the *Special Program* consists of several segments hosted by the voice actors of the game's character. To do this, the voice actors are visualized as an animated chibi of the characters they voiced. Several segments from the *Special Program* are the voice actor skits, the trailer for future events, a preview of future characters or enemies, and gift codes. These

segments can help players prepare for upcoming events and stories, while any audience interested in trying the game can download it through the links in the video description. Through the *Special Program*, developers could communicate indirectly with their players. Players could give feedback and the developer prepared future updates according to the players' reception.

The writer chooses to analyze the *Special Program* from both games because of these reasons. First, the *Special Program* is not just a promotion but also something that the developer uses to connect with their players, especially for the global players. From the *Special Program*, players can see what the developers are planning to create in the future, the process of making the game, and their insights on the future of their games. The developer can also see the players' reactions to their decisions and improve the game based on the players' reception.

Second, the *Special Program* for *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail* is available in four languages, each with famous voice actors in the gaming or anime industry who could provoke the audience's interest. With different combinations of hosts and guests as the speakers, each *Special Program* has a unique approach to communicating the information to the audience.

Genshin Impact and *Honkai: Star Rail* has gained worldwide popularity following its successful release. The same developer develops both games, but the two have very different themes. According to the official *Genshin Impact* YouTube channel description, *Genshin Impact* is an open-world adventure role-playing game (RPG) developed and published by HoYoverse (*Genshin Impact*, n.d.). Since *Genshin Impact* is an RPG, players can pick one of the twin Travelers, Aether and Lumine. As the Traveler, players will go through their adventure to uncover the world of Teyvat while trying to find the Traveler's missing twin.

Following its release, many people have reviewed and shared their thoughts on the popularity of this game. Messner (2020) said *Genshin Impact* is the unexpected best game in 2020. In his review, Messner (2020) also mentions how the developer creates a distinct exploration system, making the game unique from other famous games that use a similar adventuring system. Another reason why *Genshin Impact* is popular is because of its stunning graphics, even on smartphones. This can be seen in one of *Genshin Impact's* achievements in the Apple Design Awards in 2021, where *Genshin Impact* won the Visuals and Graphics category (Apple, 2021).

Honkai: Star Rail, on the other hand, according to their official YouTube channel, is a space fantasy RPG game developed and published by HoYoverse in 2023. Like *Genshin Impact*, *Honkai: Star Rail* is also an RPG game where players can pick one of the Trailblazers, Caelus or

Stelle. In *Honkai: Star Rail*, players will explore space as the Trailblazer and save planets from destruction throughout their journey.

Following the success of its predecessor, *Honkai: Star Rail* manages to outperform *Genshin Impact* in terms of revenue. According to FoxData Official (2023), in May 2023, a month after its release, *Honkai: Star Rail* generated \$116 million in revenue, while *Genshin Impact* earned \$54 million in the same month. *Honkai: Star Rail* won several awards after its release, such as the iPhone Game of The Year category in the App Store Awards 2023 (Apple, 2023).

Genshin Impact and *Honkai: Star Rail* are also known for their unique themes. *Genshin Impact* has more artistic, adventurous fantasy elements than *Honkai: Star Rail*. On the other hand, *Honkai: Star Rail* leans more towards a realistic sci-fi space fantasy theme that often incorporates popular references. *Genshin Impact* frequently used creative descriptions and language to elaborate on their fantasy world, while *Honkai: Star Rail* used a more direct and known language.

The writer chooses to analyze videos from *Genshin Impact* and *Honkai: Star Rail* for several reasons. First, the popularity of both games could give the writer relevant data. As these are recent and popular games, analyzing them may provide different results from previous studies with different or similar subjects.

The second reason is the content of the video, which focuses on promoting the game's future updates and events. As stated above, the Special Program is a type of marketing, and the hosts usually have an exciting skit to maintain the audience's interest. The writer wants to see if any figurative language is used in the video. The writer also wants to know if there are similarities or differences between the figurative language used in the two games.

The third reason is the hosts and guests of the *Special Program*. In each video, especially in *Genshin Impact*, the hosts vary based on the game's update and the availability of the voice actors. In *Honkai: Star Rail*, there is one host and various guests. The different combinations of hosts and guests may give different results from previous studies.

The writer wants to analyze figurative language because, according to Harris (2018), rhetorical devices are commonly used to create narrative works to add a more interesting and intricate touch. Harris (2018) explains rhetoric as a tool that makes writing clearer, more attractive, and more effective. Harris (2018) classifies rhetorical devices into 10 devices: balance, emphasis, transition, clarity, syntax, figurative language, restatement, sound, drama, and word play. Out of 10 rhetorical devices, the writer focuses on one device: figurative language.

According to Harris (2018), figurative language is commonly used to enhance creative works or to clarify something by comparing it with something familiar. Harris (2018) describes 11 categories of figurative language: simile, analogy, metaphor, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, allusion, eponym, apostrophe, and transferred epithet. The writer also chooses to analyze figurative language because in the study conducted by Gail and Anmarie (1999), paper advertising that used rhetorical devices was more effective. However, with the improvement of technology, there are many different forms of advertising. The writer wants to see if different types of rhetorical devices are used in other advertisements.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this study, the writer aims to identify and compare the figurative language used in *Genshin Impact's and Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program videos*. Below are the research questions:

- a. What types of figurative language are used in the *Genshin Impact's Special Program Videos*?
- b. What types of figurative language are used in the *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program Videos*?
- c. What are the similarities and differences between the figurative language used in *Genshin Impact's and Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program videos*?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study has three purposes. The first purpose of this study is to find out the types of figurative language used by the speakers in *Genshin Impact's Special Program videos*. The second purpose is to discover the types of figurative language used by the speakers in *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program videos*. Finally, the last purpose is to find the similarities and differences between the figurative language used in *Genshin Impact's and Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program videos*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

From this study, the writer aims to give readers a further understanding of the use of figurative language in advertising, specifically in-game advertising. The writer hopes that readers may have a better understanding of the use of this figurative language and may implement it to create more effective advertising. The writer also aims to contribute to the study of figurative

language in advertising. The writer hopes to provide further information from this study for future research on similar topics.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is Rhetoric, focusing on the figurative language used by the speakers in *Genshin Impact's* and *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program videos*. The first limitation is that all videos must be in English, or the speakers must speak English. Videos that have the developers as the speaker are not included since the speaker usually uses Chinese. This is because there is a possibility that any figurative language might be lost due to translation.

Since both games were released in different years, the number of *Special Program* videos available from both games differs significantly. Therefore, the following limitation is that the *Special Program* videos picked from both games are limited to versions 1.0 to 1.6. This is because, at the time of this study, the *Special Program* from *Honkai: Star Rail* for versions 2.0 and above are still incomplete.

After that, the videos are chosen based on the number of likes. As Miller (2011) states in his book, the more likes a video can get, the better it promotes the goods or services. Therefore, the four most liked videos are chosen as they can showcase how good the video's promotion is. Finally, the last limitation of this study is the exclusion of video trailers or previews. Some trailers and previews in the *Special Program* have incomplete conversations or voice lines. Hence, the writer excluded the trailers or previews to avoid misunderstanding due to the lack of context.

Four videos from *Genshin Impact's Special Program* fulfilled these limitations. The four videos are,

- *Version 1.3 Special Program | Genshin Impact* (Genshin Impact, 2021a),
- *Version 1.4 Special Program | Genshin Impact* (Genshin Impact, 2021b),
- *Version 1.5 Special Program | Genshin Impact* (Genshin Impact, 2021c), and
- *Version 1.6 Special Program | Genshin Impact* (Genshin Impact, 2021d).

While from *Honkai: Star Rail's Special Program* videos, four videos fulfilled these limitations. The videos are,

- *Honkai: Star Rail Version 1.2 "Even Immortality Ends" Special Program* (Honkai: Star Rail, 2023a),

- *Honkai: Star Rail Version 1.3 "Celestial Eyes Above Mortal Ruins" Special Program* (Honkai: Star Rail, 2023b),
- *Honkai: Star Rail Version 1.4 "Jolted Awake From a Winter Dream" Special Program* (Honkai: Star Rail, 2023c), and
- *Honkai: Star Rail Version 1.6 "Crown of the Mundane and Divine" Special Program* (Honkai: Star Rail, 2023d).

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

- a. Figurative language: "The intended meaning does not coincide with the literal meanings of the words and sentences that are used" (Glucksberg, 2001, p. v)
- b. Utterance: "An utterance is a natural unit of speech bounded by breaths or pauses." (Glossary of Linguistic Terms, n.d.)

1.7 Organization of the Study

The writer presents the study in five chapters. The first chapter of this study is the introduction, which consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, the definition of the key terms, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature, which consists of a review of related theories and a review of related studies. The third chapter is the method. In this chapter, the writer discusses the approach of the study, data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter is about the findings and discussion. In the last chapter, the writer presents the conclusion of the study and the writer's recommendation for further study. The writer also includes references and appendices.