

An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Airline's Travel Stories

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Abstract

This study addressed the underexplored use of figurative language in travel writing by analyzing 40 travel stories published on Cathay Pacific Airways' official website between 2020 and 2023. The objectives were to identify the types of figurative language and their frequency and to analyze relationships among the six specific types-metaphor, hyperbole, personification, simile, metonymy, and rhetorical questions-across four travel content categories: must-visit attractions, must-do activities, must-eat dining advice, and must-stay accommodations. Using qualitative content analysis, the stories, ranging from 700 to 1,200 words, were selected based on word count and main themes through purposive sampling. Adapting an analytical framework from Perrine (1969), Corbett (1990), McQuarrie and Mick (1996), and prior advertising research, the analysis revealed consistent and diverse usage of figurative language across all travel categories, with metaphor, hyperbole, and metonymy being particularly notable. Numerical analysis showed that metaphor was the most prevalent (47.13% of 1,237 instances), followed by hyperbole (22.55%), metonymy (21.18%), personification (3.56%), simile (2.83%), and rhetorical questions (2.75%). The must-stay category was the most frequently mentioned, followed by must-visit, must-do, and must-eat. Figurative language was essential in vividly describing key attractions, leisure activities, dining experiences, and accommodation atmospheres. Additionally, the study highlighted using personification, simile, and rhetorical questions to guide readers and encourage exploration of the destinations. The study concluded by emphasizing the significance of teaching novice writers the effective use of figurative language and acknowledging the role of cultural differences in interpreting deeper meanings, thus contributing to more engaging and culturally aware travel writing.

Keywords: *figurative language, figurative devices, airline's travel stories, travel writing, application of figurative writing*

1. Introduction

Cathay Pacific Airways (CX), established in Hong Kong in 1946, is a leading premium international airline operating passenger and cargo services to over 92 destinations worldwide through extensive codeshare agreements and joint ventures across continents. CX has consistently ranked among the top 10 airlines globally and has been honored as one of the only ten five-star airlines, winning "World's Best Airline" multiple times by Skytrax (Cathay Pacific Airways, n.d.).

Amidst intense competition, significant shifts in consumer behaviors, and rapid technological advancement, CX has effectively integrated digital platforms into its marketing strategies. In response to challenges such as reduced travel demand and limitations on traditional advertising channels, most airlines, including CX, have increasingly turned to digital platforms for direct marketing to communicate with customers, enhance brand image, and create personalized marketing campaigns, helping them maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving market (Karaağaoğlu, & Çiçek, 2019; Keke, 2024). As part of this strategic shift, the growing importance of travel content writing has become a central element of modern marketing strategies (Basumatary, 2018). According to Keke (2024), digital platforms such as mobile applications, websites, and social media have become essential for airlines' brand promotion and content sharing, including travel stories and detailed insights into airline operations. Airlines strategically utilize these platforms to seamlessly integrate captivating content with high-quality images and compelling videos, targeting to attract new customers and maintain their loyalty.

Travel stories are more than narratives; they serve as gateways that transport readers to distant places, immerse them in cultural experiences, and ignite a passion for travel (Agustina, & Junining, 2015; Mishra, 2014). These narratives act as inspirational sources that turn casual readers into future travelers (Dai, Wang,

& Kirillova, 2022). They blend individual experiences, cultural insights, and emotional connections, guiding readers on virtual journeys to new destinations. Through vivid descriptions of cultural traditions, historical landmarks, local cuisine, natural beauty, and unique architecture, travel stories inspire excitement about travel opportunities and deepen appreciation for diverse cultures. These stories cover several topics and writing styles—from captivating narratives to informative activity guides, unique accommodation insights, and delightful dining experiences. This diversity influences readers' perceptions of destinations, travel planning decisions, and brand engagement.

Beyond travel stories, figurative language plays a distinct role in written expressions. It is often considered a decorative language that adds rhetorical flair to writings or speeches (Burgers, Konijn, & Steen, 2016). Figurative language allows writers to uniquely convey thoughts, helping readers form vivid mental images and stirring emotions beyond literal language. In advertising, its strategic use enhances the effectiveness and attractiveness of advertising content (McQuarrie, & Mick, 1996; Corbett, 1990). Skilled writers and advertisers often use figurative language to create engaging and captivating content that captures consumer interest and encourages deeper interpretation.

Understanding the strategic use of figurative language in travel stories is essential for various audiences. It offers valuable insights for tourism and airline professionals to develop communication strategies and engage customers effectively, helps travel writers improve their storytelling skills, and assists marketers in creating compelling ad copy, slogans, and campaigns that connect with travelers. Moreover, exploring different approaches to travel storytelling supports English language learners and novice writers in improving their skills in creating engaging stories. With CX as a notable case study, analyzing various travel stories with unique writing styles helps us understand how figurative language enhances distinct aspects of travel content. Overall, this analysis deepens our understanding of effective travel writing and offers practical guidance for content creation, marketing strategies, and language education.

While previous research extensively explores figures of speech and figurative language in advertising and travel contexts, various aspects such as persuasive techniques in travel publications, the use of figurative language in in-flight magazine ads, figures of speech in airline ads, the role of figurative language in print accommodation ads, and language styles in hotel ads have been examined. However, there is still a research gap focusing on how major airlines use figurative language in their travel stories to enhance brand storytelling and engagement. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing figurative language types, frequencies, and relationships of these linguistic devices in CX's travel stories as a case study, striving to understand how they enhance travel content and contribute to brand storytelling.

This study intends to answer two primary questions: 1. What are the types and frequencies of figurative language devices used in CX's travel stories, and 2. What are the relationships between figurative language types and the various categories of travel content in CX's travel stories?

2. Objectives

1. To investigate the types and frequencies of figurative language devices used in CX's travel stories.
2. To analyze the relationships between figurative language types and the various categories of travel content in CX's travel stories.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Literature Review

Language in Marketing Travel Destinations

Language in advertising travel destinations serves a persuasive function, aiming to meet consumer needs by showcasing the best features of the destinations, facilities, and services. It carefully selects words, shows respect, and uses expressive language to attract people (Dann, 1996, as cited in Irimiea, 2018). Unlike other industries, tourism heavily relies on information-sharing to influence potential customers and convert them into actual visitors (Jack, & Phipps, 2005). The language of tourism is a subset of advertising language, focusing on presenting the most appealing aspects of destinations (Tengku Sepora, & Rana Hameed Al-Bahrani, 2011).

In marketing travel destinations, the language of tourism is central to creating detailed descriptions of potential destinations (Graham, 1996). Language helps shape destination images in consumers' minds, especially by using imaginative language to boost their attractiveness to tourists (Djafarova, & Anderson, 2008). Additionally, Dann (1996, as cited in Irimiea, 2018) emphasizes language's crucial role in tourism, as it influences travel planning and can persuade people to visit destinations. Therefore, strategic language use is essential in attracting visitors.

An Overview of Travel Writing and Travel Stories

Travel writing has maintained its popularity throughout history, adapting to changes in storytelling methods over time (Basumatary, 2018). It covers a variety of genres, including nature writing, adventure writing, exploration writing, and guidebooks (Basumatary, 2018; Hamid, 2022; Mishra, 2014). According to Basumatary's (2018) definition, travel writing involves shared experiences and perspectives gained during journeys. Agustina, and Junining (2015) further characterize it as narratives exploring people, events, sights, and emotions encountered during leisure travel. Moreover, Dabhi, and Shastri (2016) emphasize its direct, personal impressions and cultural value sharing within travel narratives.

Borm (2004) argues that terms like "travel literature" and "travel writing" are interchangeable, covering both fictional and non-fictional texts focused on travel themes. Hamid (2022), on the other hand, notes the use of terms such as "travelogue," "travel record," "travel book," and "travel account," while Basumatary (2018) defines "travel stories" specifically as narratives highlighting the traveler's adventures and explorations.

Travel stories serve as bridges connecting travelers and destinations, blending factual elements, historical context, and emotional expressions related to specific places (Montanari, 2013). Mishra (2014) emphasizes the stylistic significance of integrating these elements effectively, echoing Don's (2009) perspective on descriptive details, characters, and dialogue for vivid storytelling. Also, Mishra (2014) stresses the importance of clear and concise language and the thoughtful use of descriptive adjectives in travel writing.

These stories cover diverse aspects such as activities, cultural encounters, personal experiences, and attractions (Hando, 2013). They include practical advice on accommodations, dining, and transportation (Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schuckert, 2020; Deng, Xu, & Wei, 2021). These stories are often shared digitally through blogs, websites, and social media platforms with multimedia elements to engage a broad audience.

In line with these concepts, this study uses the term "travel stories" to specifically refer to travel content that includes narratives and descriptions in the context of airline storytelling. These stories include various aspects such as activities, cultural encounters, attractions, hotels and accommodations, dining experiences, and personal thoughts related to journeys and destinations. By analyzing figurative language in travel stories, this research aims to deepen understanding of how storytelling enhances destination awareness, engages readers, and supports marketing strategies in modern digital-age travel writing.

Categories of Content in Travel Stories

Travel stories, including various types of content such as newspaper articles, essays, and blogs, significantly influence travelers' perceptions and decisions. Hando (2013) categorizes travel content into five broad categories, while Liu et al. (2020) identify six travel components impacting tourists' destination choices. Deng et al. (2021) further support these findings, identifying six key elements in forming travel destinations that align with travel content categorized by Hando (2013). This connection highlights the dynamic role of travel storytelling in shaping destination choices. Table 1 provides an overview of the similarities and key differences among the classifications of these authors, illustrating the complex interaction of factors involved in travelers' decision-making processes.

Table 1 Comparison of travel content categories by various authors

Author	Key Findings or Aspects
Hando (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destination pieces: Information on destination, atmosphere, and attractions. - Practical advice: Tips, recommendations, and reviews. - Personal experiences: Journeys, festival visits, wildlife sanctuary encounters. - Special interest: Dining experiences, cultural encounters, activity-based vacations. - People stories: Interviews or reports featuring individuals.
Liu et al. (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destination - Transportation - Accommodation - Dining - Attractions - Shopping or leisure activities.
Deng et al. (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism - Accommodation - Food - Shopping - Transportation - Entertainment

As highlighted by the aspects from the comparison presented in Table 1, understanding the factors influencing tourists' decisions in choosing destinations is crucial. Travel stories play a significant role in shaping tourists' perceptions and strongly influencing their choices. Personal experiences, practical advice, and destination insights are primary elements that engage audiences and guide their decisions. Insights from Hando's (2013) classification and empirical studies by Liu et al. (2020) and Deng et al. (2021) emphasize the significance of these elements in effective storytelling and destination marketing. The flexibility in travel storytelling allows writers to blend elements from multiple categories to craft compelling stories. For example, Gilbert's (2006) "Eat Pray Love" seamlessly integrates destination content, individual experiences, and cultural exploration. Similarly, Lonely Planet offers practical guidance while highlighting various travel aspects and interests in its online stories.

Understanding the dynamics of travel storytelling is essential for destination marketing. CX's travel stories primarily feature destination attractions, leisure activities, dining advice, and accommodations, often presented in list and review formats. While the airline's contents occasionally feature people's stories, this study excludes such stories due to insufficient data available for analysis within the specified criteria. Based on this classification and the available data on CX's website, this research thus focuses on four travel content categories: must-visit attractions, must-do activities, must-try dining advice, and must-stay accommodations.

Definitions of Figurative Language

Figurative language is a stylistic device that departs from conventional usage to convey captivating meaning (Corbett, 1990; McQuarrie, & Mick, 1996). It intentionally deviates from standard grammar and syntax rules for specific purposes, enhancing language with style and making expressions more engaging and expressive (Bullinger, 1898; Kennedy, & Gioia, 1995) while conveying truth (Hans, 2018). Perrine (1969) describes it as saying one thing while implying another, using figures of speech to suggest meanings beyond their literal interpretation. Figurative language conveys meaning, evokes imagery, and captivates the audience with vivid and memorable engagement, encouraging in-depth thought and interpretation (Burgers et al., 2016). The extent of its usage depends on the level of variation, which can vary depending on the context and time (McQuarrie, & Mick, 1996).

Functions and Types of Figurative Language

Figurative language serves multiple functions in advertising and literature, enriching communication by adding depth, vividness, and emotional intensity to messages (Corbett, 1990; McQuarrie, & Mick, 1996). In advertising, figurative language enhances persuasion and memorability by capturing audiences' attention through engaging figurative devices and increasing content persuasiveness (Corbett, 1990). Similarly, in literature, it intensifies feeling, adds emphasis, appeals to emotion, and improves the quality of artistic language (Hans, 2018). Perrine (1969) observed that figurative language provides imaginative pleasure,

enhances verse, adds emotional intensity, and allows for concise expression, making it more effective than direct statements in conveying meaning.

Linguists have proposed diverse classifications of figurative language. Perrine (1969) identified 12 types commonly taught in American education, which featured simile, metaphor, and hyperbole. Corbett (1990) explored the concepts of tropes and schemes in modern communication. He expanded his classification to 17 tropes and 27 schemes, classifying tropes as alterations in meaning and schemes as alterations in word order or grammatical structure. Furthermore, McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) framework, notably tailored for advertising and marketing, makes a similar distinction between tropes and schemes. They distinguish 9 types of tropes based on semantic aspects that involve alterations in meaning while identifying 11 types of schemes based on phonological and syntactic features that focus on intentional alterations of word order or grammatical structure. These classifications offer insights into how figurative language enhances communication and engages audiences effectively. Studying figurative language enriches our understanding of language, equipping us with tools for depth, persuasion, and creativity. Table 2 compares diverse types of figurative language classified by various linguists.

Table 2 Comparison of figurative language classifications by various linguists.

Perrine (1969)	Corbett (1990)		McQuarrie and Mick (1996)	
	Tropes	Schemes	Tropes	Schemes
12 types	17 types	27 types	9 types	11 types
Simile	Simile	Parallelism	Ellipsis	Epanalepsis
Metaphor	Metaphor	Antithesis	Metaphor	Antithesis
Personification	Personification	Anastrophe	Epanorthosis	Parison
Metonymy	Metonymy	Parenthesis	Metonym	Chime
Hyperbole	Hyperbole	Anadiplosis	Hyperbole	Anadiplosis
Synecdoche	Rhetorical Question	Alliteration	Rhetorical question	Alliteration
Paradox	Synecdoche	Ellipsis	Paradox	Assonance
Symbol	Pun	Assonance	Pun	Rhyme
Irony	Onomatopoeia	Anaphora	Irony	Anaphora
Allegory	Oxymoron	Epistrophe		Epistrophe
Litotes	Litotes	Antimetabole		Antimetabole
Apostrophe	Etc.	Etc.		

The comparison of figurative language classifications by Perrine (1969), Corbett (1990), and McQuarrie and Mick (1996) reveals both overlaps and differences. Metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole are consistently recognized as core elements across all three classifications, emphasizing their fundamental importance in understanding figurative language. Simile, personification, irony, pun, and paradox are identified in multiple classifications, whereas allegory is more selectively included, primarily appearing in Perrine's (1996) classifications. Additionally, each classification introduces unique elements, such as apostrophes in Perrine's (1996) and onomatopoeia in Corbett's (1990). Notably, while Corbett (1990) categorizes ellipsis under schemes, it is classified as tropes in McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) classification. These differences in theoretical perspectives among linguists highlight the richness and complexity of analyzing figurative language. Moreover, the nuances of these classifications enhance our understanding of how figurative language functions in literature and language studies.

Related Previous Studies

Further analysis of the studies revealed valuable insights into how figurative language influences advertising and its impact on engaging and persuading audiences. Pathumratanathan, and Tapinta (2012) explored figurative language used in English advertisements in in-flight magazines like Sawasdee and Fah Thai. Their analysis of over 170 ads identified standard techniques such as alliteration, metaphor, personification, and rhetorical questions, used effectively in headlines and body text to capture attention and

convey messages. Norasetkosol, and Timyam (2012) focused on persuasive writing techniques in travel magazines, investigating how techniques like personification, metaphor, and simile enhance descriptions of tourist destinations. Their analysis highlighted non-figurative techniques such as positive adjectives and detailed descriptions to make travel stories compelling and credible, appealing to readers' emotions and aspirations.

Similarly, Janmoon (2017) examined figures of speech in advertisements for five-star airlines, analyzing 50 ads to uncover how rhetorical devices like hyperbole and anaphora emphasize airline qualities. Their findings highlighted the crucial role of these techniques in crafting memorable messages that distinguish airline brands in competitive markets, demonstrating the strategic use of figurative language to attract consumers. Laosrirattanachai (2017) also analyzed figurative language in accommodation ads from travel magazines like Condé Nast Traveler and Travel+ Leisure. They found that persuasive techniques such as alliteration and hyperbole are commonly used in headlines and body texts to make hotel offerings stand out and attract potential guests, highlighting the importance of using linguistic strategies for effective hotel advertisements.

In addition, Som-in, and Limsiriruengrai (2019) conducted qualitative research on figurative language in hotel advertisements from Amari Hotels in Thailand. They identified hyperbole as a dominant rhetorical device to persuade potential guests by making hotel features inviting and attractive. This device enhances the appeal of accommodation offerings. Lastly, Aprinica's (2021) investigation into language styles in hotel ads emphasized techniques such as hyperbole, metonymy, and personification to create engaging and persuasive advertisements. These strategies evoke vivid imagery and emotional connections, effectively attracting tourists and enhancing the impact of hospitality marketing efforts.

Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of figurative language in advertising, allowing brands to convey messages, stir emotions, and influence consumer behavior. Using the vividness of figurative language, advertisers can create compelling content that connects with audiences, driving brand success. These studies underscore the significance of using effective figurative language across various product categories in advertising contexts. Table 3 summarizes insights from scholars investigating specific figurative language devices in advertising.

Table 3 Studies on figurative language devices in advertising

Scholars	Types of Figurative Devices							
	HPB	MTP	MTN	PSF	SML	RTQ	Repetition	Alliteration
Norasetkosol, and Timyam (2012)		√		√	√			
Pathumratanathan, and Tapinta (2012)	√	√		√		√		√
Janmoon (2017)	√		√	√				√
Laosrirattanachai (2017)	√	√		√		√	√	√
Som-in, and Limsiriruengrai (2019)	√	√		√				
Aprinica (2021)	√		√	√				

Table 3 presents common figurative language devices used in advertising studies, which enhance the vividness and engagement of content. These devices effectively achieve persuasive communication goals and engaging experiences in both advertising and storytelling.

In airline travel stories, which serve a marketing purpose rather than direct advertisements, the figurative language devices may differ from traditional advertising. While alliteration and repetition contribute to phonetic and stylistic effects in direct advertisements like slogans and taglines, their presence in travel stories may be less evident. On the other hand, rhetorical questions are particularly emphasized for their role in engaging readers and highlighting core messages in travel stories. They are strategically used to provoke thought and create a dialogue with the audience, enhancing the overall narrative impact and influencing readers' perceptions of destinations and experiences. Therefore, this study excludes alliteration and repetition from its analysis but includes rhetorical questions along with other figurative devices that strategically enhance travel storytelling. Table 4 below presents brief explanations and simple sentence

examples of six common figurative language devices analyzed in this study, which will serve as a reference for understanding their application in airline travel stories.

Table 4 Common figurative language devices and examples

Types	Explanations and examples
Hyperbole	A commonly used figure of speech involves using exaggerated terms to emphasize or create a heightened effect (Corbett, 1990). Examples: <i>“The hotel’s buffet had a million delicious dishes to offer its guests.”</i>
Metaphor	A figure of speech involves an implied comparison between two unlike things sharing a common quality or characteristic to create vivid imagery or convey deeper meanings (Corbett, 1990). Example: <i>“The journey was a rollercoaster of emotions.”</i>
Metonymy	A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is substituted with another closely related or associated word or phrase to indirectly suggest or imply the intended meaning (Corbett, 1990). Example: <i>“He enjoyed the hustle and bustle of the Big Apple on his solo adventure.”</i>
Personification	A figure of speech that involves attributing human qualities or abilities to abstract concepts or inanimate objects to evoke emotional responses in writing. (Corbett, 1990). Example: <i>“The wind sang through the darkness of the forest.”</i>
Simile	A figure of speech that involves a direct comparison between two unlike things sharing a common quality, typically using words like "like" or "as" to make the comparison clear and vivid (Corbett, 1990). Example: <i>“The hotel’s suite was grand like a palace.”</i>
Rhetorical question	A figure of speech in which a question is asked not to receive an answer but to make a point indirectly to guide the audience towards a specific reaction or understanding. (Corbett, 1990). Example: <i>“Who could resist the allure of a sunset over the ocean?”</i>

These figurative devices enrich the language of airline travel stories, making them more engaging and persuasive for readers. By studying how these devices are strategically employed, this research reveals how airlines effectively convey their brand stories and shape travelers’ perceptions and decisions.

3.2 Research Methodology

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this study draws from established classifications and theoretical perspectives, including Perrine (1969), Corbett (1990), and McQuarrie and Mick (1996), as well as frameworks used in previous studies. This framework was adapted to identify and analyze six common types of figurative language prevalent in airline travel stories: hyperbole (HPB), metaphor (MTP), metonymy (MTN), personification (PSF), simile (SML), and rhetorical questions (RTQ).

These devices were selected for their relevance in enhancing story engagement and persuasive communication within travel stories. Examples of each device were analyzed within the context of travel stories retrieved from CX’s official website. By employing this adapted analytical framework, the study explored how figurative language enhances the storytelling strategies used by airlines, aiming to deepen our understanding of how they strategically communicate with their audiences.

Samples and Data Collection

This study analyzed 40 travel stories from the “Inspiration” category on CX’s official websites, published between 2020 and 2023. The stories were evenly distributed across four travel categories: must-visit attractions, must-do activities, must-eat dining advice, and must-stay accommodations. Each story, varying in length from 700 to 1,200 words, was selected based on specific criteria, including its word counts and main travel themes. Despite variations in individual story lengths, the total word counts across the categories were generally similar. This range ensured sufficient text for capturing multiple examples of figurative language and analyzing how it vividly describes travel experiences. The word count of each story was manually verified using Microsoft Word software to ensure accuracy and consistency with the study’s criteria.

The analysis exclusively focused on written texts, omitting captions, pictures, and visual images to emphasize linguistic devices. The study analyzed six figurative language devices—hyperbole, metaphor,

personification, metonymy, simile, and rhetorical questions-for their effectiveness in product advertisements (Pho-Klang, 2020) and their roles in shaping tourism advertising (Djafarova, 2017). Guided by an adapted analytical framework from influential linguists' classifications and prior research, the analysis integrated insights from Perrine (1969), Corbett (1990), McQuarrie and Mick (1996), and current studies, emphasizing their foundational relevance to this study.

Idioms were excluded from this study due to their distinct characteristics, despite their symbolic meaning. For instance, "Thanks a million" is an idiom expressing gratitude with exaggeration, whereas "I've told you a million times" illustrates hyperbole, emphasizing the frequency of an action with exaggeration. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the specific use of these six figurative language devices within airline travel stories, ensuring a detailed examination while maintaining analytical clarity and specificity.

Data Analysis Procedures

In the subsequent data analysis phase, specific codes were assigned to all six figurative language types: hyperbole (HPB), metaphor (MTP), metonymy (MTN), personification (PSF), simile (SML), and rhetorical questions (RTQ). These codes were consistently applied during the coding process to label instances of figurative language.

Comprehensive coding training sessions followed an initial study involving two coders with backgrounds in linguistics. They independently evaluated a sample of the data to ensure consistency and mutual agreement. Discrepancies were resolved through thorough discussions, aiming for an 80% consensus rate. The remaining 20% resulted from different interpretations of data or coding criteria. For example, one coder categorized "paradise resorts" as hyperbole, emphasizing the exaggerated qualities of the resorts, while another coder interpreted it more literally. These discussions were crucial in achieving a final agreement.

The analysis systematically identified figurative language types in each story, documented them, and calculated their frequency. Furthermore, specific examples of sentences that contain figurative language were analyzed to explore their relationships with travel-related content.

4. Results

4.1 The types and frequency of figurative language devices in CX's travel stories.

The study analyzed 1,237 English figurative devices across four travel content categories: must-visit, must-do, must-eat, and must-stay. Table 5 displays the type and frequency of figurative language devices across all travel categories, addressing research question 1.

Table 5 Distribution of figurative language types across travel categories

Categories of Travel Content	Words counts	Types of Figurative Language						Total
		HPB	MTP	MTN	PSF	SML	RTQ	
Must-stay accommodations	9,348	72	188	67	15	11	8	361
Must-visit attractions	9,255	72	158	71	15	6	11	333
Must-do activities	9,227	65	127	57	9	9	9	276
Must-eat dining advice	9,264	70	110	67	5	9	6	267
Frequency of Occurrence		279	583	262	44	35	34	1,237
Percentage (%)		22.55	47.13	21.18	3.56	2.83	2.75	100

As shown in Table 5, metaphors emerged as the most prevalent type, constituting 583 occurrences (47.13% of the total instances), followed by hyperbole at 279 occurrences (22.55%) and metonymy at 262 occurrences (21.18%). Personification, similes, and rhetorical questions contributed 44 occurrences (3.56%), 35 occurrences (2.83%), and 34 occurrences (2.75%), respectively. Across the four travel categories, must-stay exhibited the highest overall frequency of figurative language use, with 361 occurrences, followed by must-visit with 333 occurrences, must-do with 276 occurrences, and must-eat with 267 occurrences. Metaphors, hyperbole, and metonymy consistently ranked among the top three prevalent types across all categories.

The analysis reveals remarkable patterns in travel stories across various categories. Metaphors were the most common figurative language, followed by hyperbole and metonymy. This consistent prevalence suggests that metaphors, hyperbole, and metonymy are widely used in travel descriptions and experiences to convey vivid imagery and nuanced meaning. While metaphors remained dominant across all categories, their frequency varied slightly, emphasizing metaphorical language in specific contexts, such as accommodations descriptions. However, hyperbole and metonymy, though less common than metaphors, also contribute uniqueness to travel writing. Hyperbole emphasizes the exceptional qualities of attractions or accommodations, bringing excitement and appeal to the story, and metonymy provides concise and vivid descriptions, as seen in must-visit attractions, must-eat dining advice, and must-stay accommodations.

In addition, must-stay accommodations used figurative language the most frequently, indicating a preference for using figurative devices to evoke the atmosphere and unique character in accommodation descriptions. Nevertheless, despite their lower prevalence compared to the top three, personification, simile, and rhetorical questions contribute to the diverse range of figurative language used in travel writing, adding depth and richness to the portrayal of travel experiences. These findings highlight the significance of figurative language in enhancing the descriptive quality and emotional connection of travel content across distinct categories, enriching the readers' engagement and immersion in the story.

4.2 Relationships between figurative language types and the various categories of travel content in CX's travel stories.

In this section, the exploration investigates how various types of figurative languages are used across diverse travel categories, addressing research question 2.

4.2.1 Figurative language in must-stay accommodations

Figurative language adds depth to descriptions of captivating hotel experiences. The following excerpts use metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and simile to emphasize significance, create vivid imagery, and enhance the fascination of the accommodations.

Excerpt 1: *"This was among Jaipur's first havelis to be turned into a boutique hotel, where visitors can experience a slice of royal living<MTP> as they inhabit the former living quarters of Rajasthan royalty in the pink city."*

The statement uses a metaphor to describe a boutique hotel in Jaipur. It compares the hotel to "a slice of royal living," suggesting that staying there gives guests a taste of the luxurious lifestyle once enjoyed by the Rajasthan royalty, making their overall experience impressive and more memorable.

Excerpt 2: *"City lights dance<PSF> on the water, and chessboard-tiled floors offer a striking contrast to the golden candlelight that illuminates the space."*

Personification is evident in the clause, "City lights dance on the water," suggesting that human qualities are given to things that are not human. Here, it makes the city lights seem like they can dance, creating a lively and dynamic image. This personification makes the scene more vibrant and energetic as if the lights are gracefully moving in rhythm over the water.

Excerpt 3: *"Underpinning the resort's appeal are the five-star wellness facilities at every turn<HPB>: from gorgeous villas and a selection of fine-dining restaurants to a heavenly spa."*

The hyperbolic statement "five-star wellness facilities at every turn" exaggerates the abundance of luxurious amenities within the resort. While not intended to be taken literally, it implies that these facilities are available throughout the resort. This exaggerated language vividly describes a resort with plenty of high-end wellness offerings, making it more attractive and luxurious.

Excerpt 4: *"Her trademark ski goggles are almost as famous as<SML> her crab omelette."*

The statement contains similes that playfully compare the level of fame of her trademark ski goggles to that of her crab omelet, highlighting the writer's intention to emphasize both items as iconic and well-known in their respective contexts, aiming to make readers appreciate their unique qualities.

4.2.2 Figurative language in must-visit attractions

Figurative language vividly describes must-visit places and attractions in travel stories, captivating readers' imaginations. The following excerpts illustrate how figurative language devices enhance descriptions, creating immersive experiences beyond physical portrayals.

Excerpt 5: *"The mountainous peaks were transformed into more than 1,000 islets, that now create a picturesque **playground** <MTP> for sightseeing boat tours."*

The metaphorical phrase "a picturesque playground" paints a lively picture of the islets, suggesting they are more than just scenic spots but vibrant destinations ideal for sightseeing boat tours. It captures the idea that these places are beautiful and offer enjoyable experiences for visitors to explore and appreciate.

Excerpt 6: *"People think of Hong Kong as a shopping town, but it's really a city **bursting** <HPB> with amazing food and world-class culture."*

The hyperbolic term "bursting" exaggerates the abundance of amazing food and culture in Hong Kong, emphasizing its richness and variety. The phrase "world-class culture" further enhances the positive portrayal of Hong Kong, highlighting its high-quality cultural offerings.

Excerpt 7: *"**The Lion City** <MTN> is known for year-round sunshine – but the slightly cooler winter months are the perfect time to explore the outdoors."*

In this statement, "The Lion City" serves as a metonymy to connect the term "The Lion City" to Singapore, highlighting how it symbolizes the city-state's identity and characteristics based on its Malay name, "Singapura," which means "Lion City." This use of metonymy helps evoke the essence of Singapore as a place known for year-round sunshine and encourages exploration during the slightly cooler winter months.

Excerpt 8: *"**How many times have you said, "I really need a holiday", recently?** <RTQ> Well, now is your chance."*

The writer aims to connect with the listener's frequent desire for a holiday. By posing a rhetorical question (RTQ) that does not require an answer, they emphasize the universal desire for a break. The use of RTQ prompts the listener to consider acting on this desire, suggesting that the present moment is ideal for planning their next trip.

4.2.3 Figurative language in must-do activities

Figurative language adds depth to descriptions, enhancing readers' understanding and engagement. The following excerpts highlight the use of various figurative language devices to emphasize contrasts, enhance attractions, and convey significance within travel stories.

Excerpt 9: *"Evergreen Park is a sprawling **green lung** <MTP> boasting large grassy fields that are perfect to fly kites, play frisbee, go for a jog, or enjoy a picnic."*

The metaphor "green lung" indeed emphasizes the irreplaceable role of Evergreen Park as a source of fresh air, essential just as lungs are vital for breathing. It highlights the park's significance as a recreational space and a crucial natural environment that contributes to the community's well-being and quality of life by providing fresh air and greenery.

Excerpt 10; “*Set on the Yarra River, its colourful slides, swings, tunnels and climbing frames offer endless hours of entertainment. <HPB>”*

The hyperbolic expression “endless hours of entertainment” vividly exaggerates the playground’s appeal, suggesting endless fun and enjoyment. This phrase emphasizes the diverse activities available, from colorful slides to swings, tunnels, and climbing frames, ensuring that visitors will find plenty to engage and entertain themselves with along the scenic Yarra River.

Excerpt 11: “*A large part of its fame lays at the hands<MTN>of Jim Thompson, a former Second World War spy from America who later landed in Thailand and revitalised the silk industry.*”

In this excerpt, using “hands” as a metonymy symbolizes Jim Thompson’s key influence and contribution to the fame and revitalization of the silk industry. Here, “hands” metonymically signifies a person’s power, influence, or responsibility.

4.2.4 Figurative language in must-eat dining advice

Figurative language makes discussions about dining experiences more interesting by highlighting their importance, popularity, and cultural impact. The following examples show how these figurative devices make descriptions of dining experiences more engaging, capturing readers’ attention and creating vivid images.

Excerpt 12: “*Read any guidebook or food blog and you will find Din Tai Fung is potentially the most significant ambassador<MTP>of Taiwanese food culture.*”

The indirect comparison or metaphor of Din Tai Fung as a significant ambassador of Taiwanese food culture in global contexts suggests that the restaurant plays a crucial role in promoting and introducing Taiwanese culinary traditions to a wider audience.

Excerpt 13: “*Where the smell of grilled pork and freshly baked French baguettes permeates every street food stall<HPB>.*”

The phrase “permeates every street food stall” vividly describes how the strong smell of food fills the entire area, even though it might not be in every stall. This exaggerated description, or hyperbole, emphasizes the intense aroma of grilled pork and freshly baked baguettes throughout the area.

Excerpt 14: “*When a dish<MTN>has an entire street named after it, it’s safe to say it’s a city-wide specialty.*”

In this statement, “dish” serves as a metonymy, representing the broader food culture of a specific cuisine. It includes not just one food item but the entire dining experience of the city. Referring to a street name after the dish demonstrates that it emphasizes the food culture more than the dish itself.

4.2.5 Combination use of figurative language

In literature, authors use figurative devices like hyperbole, metaphor, and personification to add depth and impact to their writing. These devices help them express ideas and emotions in creative and imaginative ways. The following excerpt shows how authors combine these figurative devices to create vivid images that capture readers’ attention.

Excerpt 15: “*Some say you can still hear the wails of prisoners<HPB> as you walk through the cell blocks<MTN>— and hear a distance banjo echoing from the showers<HPB>, played by the spirit of Al Capone. <PSF>”*

The writer creates a scary atmosphere using hyperbole, metonymy, and personification. Exaggerating the cries of prisoners, even when there are none, makes the prison feel more frightening. Also, mentioning hearing a banjo played by Al Capone’s spirit adds to the creepiness. Referring to “cell blocks” to

represent the whole prison and personifying the banjo as played by Al Capone's spirit intensifies the mystery of the scene. Together, these literary techniques make the scene chilling and disturbing.

5. Discussions

This study identified various figurative language elements in CX travel stories across four travel categories. The presence of metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, and personification in this study aligns with findings from Pathumratanathan, and Tapinta (2012), Norasetkosol, and Timyam (2012), Janmoon (2017), Laosrirattanachai (2017), Som-in, and Limsiriruengrai (2019), and Aprinica (2021). These elements consistently appear in various studies, emphasizing their frequent use in creating compelling stories in airlines, travel magazines, and accommodation advertising. While these symbolic language elements are frequent across studies, their focus varies. For example, Janmoon (2017) emphasizes metaphors in airline advertisements, whereas Laosrirattanachai (2017) focuses on accommodation advertising. This study connects these contexts, providing insights into how travel stories utilize these figurative elements.

The alignment of this study's findings with previous research highlights the consistent use of figurative language elements in travel-related contexts. Hyperbole is frequently used in airline and hotel advertisements, as well as in airline travel stories. This frequent use is likely due to hyperbole's effectiveness in capturing attention by emphasizing attractive features or benefits. Likewise, metonymy and personification in travel stories align with accommodation advertising, providing engaging descriptions of accommodations that appeal to potential customers. Aprinica's (2021) study also identifies hyperbole, metonymy, and personification as prevalent language styles, closely align with figurative language elements observed in this study. This flexibility emphasizes their role in crafting effective tourism advertising. By focusing on airline travel stories, this study fills a gap in travel advertising research and offers valuable insights into the use of figurative language across diverse travel content categories.

In descriptions of must-stay accommodations, metaphors are prominently used alongside hyperbole, metonymy, and personification to emphasize the hotels' serene environments and luxurious features. Metaphors, in particular, may vividly describe the unique qualities of these accommodations and surroundings, potentially making them more attractive. On the other hand, dining advice mainly focuses on practical details about taste, texture, and presentation. This emphasis on providing clear and direct language for conveying dining experiences, rather than relying on figurative language that attributes human-like qualities, possibly explains why dining advice uses less personification than other categories. In addition, the use of rhetorical questions in dining advice is limited, as it typically aims to provide factual descriptions rather than prompting the reader to reflect or think further; overuse could interrupt the flow and lead to a loss of clarity in conveying culinary details.

The findings from this study enhance our understanding of how figurative language is employed in travel stories, offering insights that can assist marketing professionals in creating more engaging and persuasive travel content. Moreover, these results can guide advertising strategies to ensure they are informative and avoid misleading consumers. However, focusing solely on a single airline is a limitation, suggesting a need for future research to explore figurative language across multiple airlines and sectors within the travel industry.

In summary, while specific applications may vary, the consistent use of figurative language devices across studies underscores their essential role in capturing audience attention, evoking emotions, and effectively conveying complex ideas or messages across various advertising mediums and genres within the travel industry.

From Implications to Applications

Figurative language in travel stories serves to captivate readers and immerse them in vivid experiences. Metaphors, hyperbole, metonymy, personification, similes, and rhetorical questions are essential tools writers employ to paint scenes and evoke emotions, thus enriching the storytelling experience.

Metaphors vividly represent places and enhance descriptions of must-stay accommodations. Examples from travel stories illustrate how phrases like "a sanctuary of tranquility" evoke a sense of peace and luxury while "the pinnacle of luxury on four wheels" emphasizes comfort and style in mobile hotels.

Hyperbole effectively enhances the portrayal of luxurious experiences in travel stories. A phrase like "unbeatable views of Mount Fuji" highlights stunning landscapes, enticing travelers with breathtaking beauty. In descriptions of "must-visit attractions," hyperbole is prevalent due to the unique qualities of these

experiences, such as natural landscapes, iconic landmarks, and cultural significance. Examples such as “dazzling emerald rice terraces” or “a secluded paradise with untouched coral reefs” illustrate the effectiveness of hyperbole in evoking awe and fascination.

Additionally, the data suggests that metonymy frequently symbolizes associations in travel descriptions. For instance, referring to a hotel area as “Wall Street” evokes images of a financial district, suggesting a business-centric environment. Similarly, referring to the famous Hanoi restaurant “Bun Cha Obama” suggests outstanding cuisine, a lively cultural ambiance, and memorable dining experiences. Metonymy effectively highlights local culture and unique dining opportunities, enriching destination descriptions.

Furthermore, personification animates non-living elements in travel stories, connecting guests to accommodations on a personal level. Phrases like “City lights dance on the water” and “The walls begin to speak” breathe life into rooms and surroundings, transforming each hotel into a memorable chapter in the traveler’s journey.

While simile and rhetorical questions, though less common, play a significant role in enhancing travel stories. Simile enhances descriptions by directly comparing elements, while rhetorical questions add stylistic effects. These literary techniques offer writers diverse ways to create engaging stories that appeal across various travel categories and effectively connect with readers.

A Guide to Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Metonymy, Simile, and Rhetorical Questions

This discussion explores how figurative language enhances writing by adding depth, vividness, and creativity to descriptions. Beginners may find these devices challenging but breaking them down into specific words or phrases that convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation can offer clarity. The aim is to provide practical insights and exercises to improve writing skills, regardless of the writer’s experience.

Exploring Direct Metaphor

Metaphors are powerful tools that connect different ideas, adding depth to writing. Imagine a busy street described as a “river of humanity.” Understanding how direct metaphors function becomes clearer when examining this specific example.

Example 1 “*A bustling street is a river of humanity.*”

1. Identify the subject: Choose something you want to describe metaphorically, such as a bustling street.
2. Choose what to compare it to: Consider what the subject reminds you of or what qualities it shares with something else. In this case, a bustling street is likened to a river.
3. Create the comparison: Use “is” or “are” to state the comparison between the subject and the chosen thing. Try to be creative and use vivid language to convey deeper meaning or imagery. For example, describing the bustling street as “a river of humanity” emphasizes the abundance and flow of people. Like a river flowing with water, the street is full of people moving around, showing how busy and active it is.

When creating metaphors, it is essential to select comparisons that vividly capture the intended meaning and enhance the reader’s understanding. Keep your metaphors unique and engaging and avoid clichés or overused comparisons.

Embracing Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an intentional exaggeration to emphasize a point, adding excitement and intensity to language. Writers can create hyperbole by using modifiers to transform simple statements such as “The Sunset was beautiful” into vivid and exaggerated expressions, which can evoke strong emotions and create a more powerful impact on the reader.

Example 2 “*The sunset was the most breathtaking spectacle the world had ever seen.*”

1. Identify the subject: Choose a main point for the hyperbolic statement, such as “the sunset.”
2. Choose what to exaggerate: Consider what qualities or aspects of the subject can be exaggerated for effect. In this case, it might be the beauty or magnificence of the sunset.

3. Create the exaggeration: Use strong language and descriptive words to emphasize the intended effect. For example, use superlative adjectives to describe a sunset as “the most breathtaking spectacle the world had ever seen” to exaggerate the beauty and emphasize the unparalleled nature of the sunset.

When using exaggeration, writers should ensure that it complements the message and fits the writing tone while maintaining the balance between creativity and clarity.

Exercising Metonymic Creativity

Metonymy involves representing a broader concept using a specific, closely related element. For instance, a writer can describe the Sky Bar by referencing the entertainment industry centered in Hollywood, Los Angeles.

Example 3 “*Head to the Hollywood-starring Sky Bar for dizzying rooftop views.*”

1. Identify the subject: Choose a specific entity for analysis, such as the “Sky Bar,” a famous establishment in Hollywood.
2. Identify the descriptive term: Use the compound adjective “Hollywood-starring” to describe the Sky Bar, implying its association with glamour, fame, and celebrity presence. This suggests that the Sky Bar is upscale and frequently visited by celebrities.
3. Apply the descriptive term in context: The sentence “Head to the Hollywood-starring Sky Bar for dizzying rooftop views” effectively emphasizes the Sky Bar’s famous reputation by using the term “Hollywood-starring.” This highlights its luxury and suggests a high-end atmosphere associated with glamour and celebrity culture.

When using metonymy, writers must ensure that descriptive terms accurately describe the subject and contribute to the overall message or tone while avoiding excessive use, which can weaken their impact.

Breathing Life into Writing with Personification

Personification gives life to non-human entities with human-like qualities, making the scenes more interesting and relatable. It creates a sense of connection and captivation among readers. For instance, in the sentence “The lights of the city paint a pretty picture of the night sky,” the lights are personified as painters, adding color and beauty to the sky.

Example 4 “*The lights of the city paint a pretty picture of the night sky.*”

1. Identify the subject: Choose a non-human entity for the personified statement, such as “the lights of the city.”
2. Choose what to personify: Consider which qualities or aspects of the subject can be used for effect. In this case, it might be the ability of the lights to “paint” to transform the night sky.
3. Create personification: Use vivid language and modifiers to assign human-like qualities using verbs commonly associated with human actions to animate the non-human subject. For example, describing the lights as “paint a pretty picture of the night sky” personifies them, suggesting an active role in shaping the atmosphere and enhancing the beauty of the night sky.

When using personification, the writer should ensure that it adds to the description and deepens and intensifies the imagery. It should help readers understand or feel more connected to the scene. Keep the personified qualities consistent throughout the writing to avoid confusion.

Captivating Simile

Similes involve comparing two distinct entities using “like” or “as” to highlight their similarities. It is used to enhance descriptions, making them more vivid, and to clarify complex ideas for better understanding. Here is how to form a simile in a sentence.

Example 5 “*Rising like a needle over the Auckland skyline.*”

1. Identify the comparison: Begin by recognizing the use of “like,” which indicates that a comparison is being made in the sentence.

2. Determine the objects of comparison: In this elliptical sentence, “rising” represents the action of the first object, while “a needle” serves as the second object being compared.
3. Explore the effect of the comparison: This comparison vividly portrays the first object as tall and slender as a needle. By using a familiar and relatable image, the comparison helps readers visualize effectively and understand the height and appearance of the object.

When using similes, writers should ensure their comparisons vividly paint a picture and convey the intended message or tone without overusing them, which can weaken their effectiveness.

Provoking Inquiry Through Rhetorical Questions

A rhetorical question is an inquiry that does not require a direct response but aims to emphasize a particular point or prompt critical thinking. The use of such questions is often to encourage readers to reflect on specific concepts or themes. For instance, consider the rhetorical question “Flying during the festive season?” in the following example.

Example 6 “*Flying during the festive season?*”

1. Purpose: Consider the purposes for using a rhetorical question in writing, whether to emphasize a point, spark reflection or stir emotions.
2. Topic selection: Choose a relevant topic that fits your purpose and appeals to your audience. For instance, if you are writing about holiday travel, the question “Flying during the festive season?” could engage and prompt readers to think about their travel experiences.
3. Question crafting: Write your rhetorical question with clarity and conciseness. Ensure it encourages readers to think without needing a direct response to invite readers to reflect on the challenges or joys of traveling during holidays.

In crafting a rhetorical question, writers should carefully consider its placement and frequency within their writing to ensure that they enhance the story and capture the reader’s interest, as excessive use of rhetorical questions can lessen its powerful impact.

Cultural Sensitivity in Figurative Language Usage

Robo’s (2020) study states that culture and language are closely connected. Culture communicates through various social activities such as festivals, art, music, and stories, while language uses words to express and verbalize shared human experiences. Understanding this connection highlights the importance of cultural awareness when using language beyond its literal meaning. Figurative language, which relies on creative expressions and contextual meanings, reveals this connection. Moreover, misunderstandings can arise since figurative language depends on context rather than literal interpretation, necessitating cultural awareness to grasp its complete meanings (Robo, 2020). Therefore, understanding language and cultural context is essential for clear, concise, and effective communication.

It is crucial to understand cultural sensitivity in travel writing (Basumatary, 2018), especially when using language that goes beyond its literal meaning in Thai, Chinese, and Japanese cultures. In Thai culture, the expression “Krathong of hope floated through the night” stems from the Loy Krathong festival, which symbolizes letting go of bad luck or negative thoughts and welcoming hope and good luck (Mongkolrat, n.d.). Writers should clarify that a Krathong is a traditional Thai floating basket representing these ideas.

Similarly, in Chinese culture, Dragon Boat races, a significant part of the Dragon Boat Festival, symbolize more than just competition—they embody teamwork, strength, and honor for the ancient poet Qu Yuan (He, Guoqin, & Wu, 2017). Describing the dragon boats as “vessels of ambition and determination, racing down the river with passion” helps readers understand their cultural significance.

In Japanese folklore, the paper crane symbolizes honor, loyalty, good fortune, and long life, and it has become a symbol of hope and peace. Folding a thousand origami cranes is believed to bring good luck and grant wishes (Central Michigan University, 2022). Writers can describe them as “Paper cranes soaring high, embodying Japan’s hope for harmony.” Explaining these meanings ensures clear communication and respect for cultural traditions.

In conclusion, cultural differences significantly influence the construction and understanding of figurative language across diverse linguistic contexts (Kabra et al., 2023). Exploring cultural symbols through

figurative language enriches travel stories, making them more engaging and meaningful. Understanding the cultural context behind language helps writers create stories that connect deeply with readers. Additionally, integrating insights from various cultural backgrounds makes stories inclusive and raises cultural awareness. Mastering figurative language techniques allows writers to vividly describe scenes, capturing the interest of diverse audiences and strengthening their connection with travel stories.

6. Conclusion

In CX's travel stories, figurative devices like metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, personification, simile, and rhetorical questions are skillfully used to create vivid imagery, immerse readers in local experiences, add a supernatural touch, exaggerate beauty, emphasize essential elements, portray dining experiences, and promote shared appreciation. These devices are frequently employed throughout CX's travel stories. This nuanced use of figurative language has important effects on travel writers and marketers, helping them create more engaging content. However, maintaining cultural sensitivity to include and connect with diverse audiences requires extensive investigation to ensure understanding and respect in writing.

This study uncovers the complex language use in CX's travel stories, offering insights into the strategic use of figurative language for brand communication and audience engagement, emphasizing its role in shaping the storytelling landscape and enhancing reader experience in travel stories. Future research could explore how diverse readers interpret linguistic devices in travel stories while considering cultural nuance, examine figurative language in innovative storytelling techniques, and compare branding strategies across airlines for valuable insights within the scope of travel communication.

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