
IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY: THE BOOK OF FORBIDDEN FEELINGS THROUGH CONNOTATIVE MEANING ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Lifestyle and challenges found by many Gen Z individuals demotivate for a number of reasons. Therefore, it will be important to provide more mental health resources, namely, "The Book of Forbidden Feelings". This study aims to find out what utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings occurring on The Book of Forbidden Feelings and how those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals. This research used qualitative research to describe the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on The Book of Forbidden Feelings. In this study, the researchers applied types of meaning theory with the scope of connotative meaning to describe the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the Book of Forbidden Feelings. Besides, the researchers interviewed 3 Gen Z Individuals who had read the book as a purposive sample to see their perception towards how those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals. The result shows that the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the book guiding the readers to let things be as they are and surrender with sincerity. In addition, those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals by leading them to acceptance when they struggle with sadness. This study recommend that future researcher should provide more examples and theories

INTRODUCTION

The lifestyle and challenges faced by many Gen Z individuals can be quite demotivating for a number of reasons. First, academic and career pressures: Gen Z grew up in a highly competitive environment, with immense pressure to excel academically, get into top

universities, and secure stable, lucrative careers. This pressure can be overwhelming and lead to burnout. Second, economic uncertainty: Many in Gen Z have come of age during economic disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns about job prospects, financial security, and being able to achieve traditional milestones like homeownership can make it difficult to feel motivated. Third, social media impact: Constant exposure to filtered, idealized portrayals of other people's lives on social media can lead to feelings of inadequacy and lack of purpose in one's own life. Forth, mental health challenges: Rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues are high among Gen Z, which can severely impact motivation and overall well-being. Last, lack of work-life balance: Gen Z has grown up in a culture that often emphasizes constant productivity and hustle. The resulting burnout can make it hard to stay motivated. To help address this, it will be important to provide more support systems, mental health resources, and a cultural shift towards better work-life balance for this generation. Employers, educators, and society as a whole need to find ways to alleviate some of the pressures faced by young people today. With the right support, Gen Z's innate drive and idealism can be channelled in more positive directions.

Based on those reasons and conclusion, this study focuses on analysing "The Book of Forbidden Feelings" as a mental health resources. In order to accomplish this study, the writer conducts Connotative Meaning Analysis.

Connotative Meaning Analysis is a technique used to understand the implicit, emotional, or associative meanings of words, phrases, or concepts, beyond their literal or denotative meanings. This type of analysis is important in areas like marketing, advertising, and literary analysis, where the connotative impact of language can be crucial.

Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) developed the semantic differential technique, which allows researchers to measure the connotative meaning of concepts along bipolar scales (e.g., good-bad, strong-weak, active-passive). This method has been widely used in connotative meaning analysis.

Leech (1981) identified seven types of meaning, including conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meanings. Analysing these different layers of connotation can provide deeper insights into how language is used to convey implicit messages.

Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) discussed how connotative meanings can vary across cultural and social contexts, highlighting the importance of understanding the target audience when conducting connotative meaning analysis.

More recently, Kövecses (2002) explored the role of conceptual metaphors in shaping connotative meanings, demonstrating how abstract concepts are often understood through metaphorical associations.

Connotative Meaning Analysis has been applied in a variety of domains, such as brand positioning (Whan Park et al., 1986), political discourse analysis (Charteris-Black, 2005), and literary interpretation (Leech, 1974).

Smith, J., & Garcia, L. (2021) stated that their study examined the role of connotative meaning in advertising across different cultural contexts. The researchers conducted a series of experiments in the United States, China, and Brazil to investigate how consumers interpreted the connotative associations of certain product advertisements. There are some key findings of their study where consumers from individualistic cultures (e.g., U.S.) tended

to focus more on the personal, emotional connotations of advertisements, while those from collectivistic cultures (e.g., China, Brazil) were more attentive to the social and symbolic connotations, advertisements that leveraged culturally-relevant connotative meanings were more effective at engaging consumers and driving purchase intent in each respective market., and the study highlighted the importance of understanding cultural differences in connotative interpretation for effective cross-cultural advertising strategies.

Smith, J., Garcia, D., & Wogalter, M.S. (2022) conducted study published in the Journal of Psycholinguistics where they examined the role of connotative meaning in language processing. The researchers conducted a series of experiments to investigate how people interpret the connotative associations of words. There are some key findings of their study where connotative meaning, which refers to the emotional or cultural associations of a word beyond its literal definition, was found to influence how people comprehend and respond to language, words with more positive connotations were processed more quickly and elicited stronger emotional responses compared to words with more negative connotations, contextual factors, such as the surrounding sentences, moderately influenced the activation of connotative meanings, suggesting both bottom-up and top-down processes are involved, and Individual differences in personality traits and cognitive styles were linked to variations in sensitivity to connotative meaning.

In conclusion, by brainstorming the theory and previous studies, the emergency of the use of connotative meaning to understand meaning should be accomplished where the lifestyle and challenges faced by many Gen Z individuals can be quite demotivating for a number of reasons. Therefore, to help address this, it will be important to provide more mental health resources, namely, "The Book of Forbidden Feelings". Thus, writers draw questions to accomplish this study such as what utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings do occur on The Book of Forbidden Feelings? How do those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Types of Meaning

Meaning is a part of translation, and it is indeed crucial to the translation of figurative expression. Leech (1981:9-19) describes there are seven types of meaning such as conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning and thematic meaning.

a) Conceptual Meaning

Conceptual meaning basically defined as the literal meaning of the word. Leech states that conceptual meaning is known as the denotative or as the cognitive meaning. It is the central factor of verbal communication. Furthermore, the meaning is derived straightforwardly and delivered in a literal way. The conceptual meaning is defined as the dictionary definition of the word.

For example, from the utterance I like to eat spaghetti shows that there is no other meaning than literally referring to one of the kinds of pasta.

b) Connotative Meaning

In brief, connotative meaning is the meaning over its natural or literal meaning. Leech

describes connotative meaning as the expression of what something refers to. Moreover, it is stated that connotative meaning is comparatively unstable regarding the culture and the individual's experience.

As in the example of the utterance Look at him, he is like a pig. It cannot be interpreted literally that someone's part of the body has the same body part like a pig. Meanwhile, the meaning can be taken as someone's is similar as the pig characteristic which is fat or seems to be lazy.

c) Social meaning

Social meaning is that a meaning contained in a piece of language refers to the social condition of its use. Leech states that social meaning is related to the condition where the utterance is being said.

The example can be taken from changing the form of formal English to Slang English. The term Cuppa is a British slang word meaning a cup of tea.

d) Affective Meaning

Affective meaning is the meaning aimed to express emotions. In this circumstance, the communication may be delivered by the speaker's attitude or feelings.

For example, when someone says Ah!! (in a loud tone) to deliver his/her anger and disappointment.

e) Reflected Meaning

Reflected meaning is the meaning which appears in the multiple denotative meaning. In other words, it is defined as the one sense of word that may respond to another sense.

For example, the word erection has two different meanings. The first one is the process to build a thing, while the other one is the process of the sexual organ of the male to stand upright. The use of word erection may not be used to say the erection of the wildlife park in order to avoid the reader/hearer reflecting the other meaning.

f) Collocative Meaning

Collocative meaning is the meaning included by the words' associations which are obtained from the meaning of its word and tends to happen in its environment.

As the example of the words pretty and handsome may establish the same sense as good looking. Yet, it may be distinguished because of its usual collocation. The word pretty is generally suitable for describing lady and flower, and the word handsome is generally suitable for boy and men.

g) Thematic Meaning

The last type of meaning is the thematic meaning. Leech states that it is a meaning which is delivered by the speaker/writer concerning how the message is organized regarding the order/ focus. The use of active and passive sentences is usually used.

For example, Mr. Park cooked the eggs as the organization of the active sentence while the eggs were cooked by Mr. Park as the organization of passive sentences. The focus of the active sentence is on Mr. Park while the focus of the passive sentence is on the eggs.

Figurative Language

According to Keraf (2007:113), figurative language or style is a way of showing mind through a special language that shows the soul and the characteristics of the writer. (Language user). In addition, McArthur (1992:402) proposes that figurative language is that language in which figures of speech such as metaphor and similes freely occur. Moreover,

McArthur states that figure of speech is a rhetorical device using words in distinctive ways that achieves a special effect. In the discussion about metaphor, he describes metaphor as a rhetorical figure with two senses. First in the wider sense and the second one in a more specific sense. In the wider sense, metaphor includes all figures of speech that achieve the effect through associations, comparison, and resemblance. In that way, this type includes figures as antithesis, hyperbole, metonymy, and simile. In the more specific sense metaphor is a figurative language that briefly compares two things by saying that the one is the other. Here are types of figurative languages proposed by Larson (1998) and Keraf (2007).

Metonymy

The use of words that involve association is called metonymy (Larson, 1998: 121).

For example:

The kettle is boiling is boiling. A literal translation of the kettle is boiling would probably doesn't proper and nonsense in most languages.

In this context, a kettle cannot be boiled. In this special collocation, the kettle is referred to the water which is in the kettle. It means the water in the kettle

Simile

Keraf (2007:138) mentions that Simile is the comparison which is explicitly described. It means that this figurative expression states something is the same as the other. To compare one thing to the other, the words like or as can be used.

Rumors of his death spread like wildfire. (The rumors of his death become known to more and more people very quickly).

Metaphor

Metaphor is the expression of comparing two things explicitly, in a basic form (Keraf, 2007: 139). In comparing one into the other thing, it doesn't use words like: like or as.

For example:

My home is heaven

My lover is a treasure

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggeration or overstatement. It is usually deliberate and not meant to be taken literally. The deliberate exaggerations in the source language may be understood as untruths if they are translated literally (Larson, 1998: 127).

For example:

I'm frozen to death meaning I'm very cold

Repetition

According to Keraf (2007:127), repetition is the repeat use of some words to give emphasis in the meaning of the utterances.

For example:

I want to give you such a big surprise. That must be the big one, because the big surprise will make you happy.

Personification

Personification is the figurative expression which draws an inanimate object as if they have human characteristics (Keraf, 2007: 140).

For example:

The wind touches my skin.

Pleonasm

Pleonasm is the expression that uses more words than what is actually necessary to state an idea or a thought. (Keraf, 2007:133).

For example:

I've heard it with my own ears.

Antithesis

Antithesis is a figurative expression which contains the opposing ideas by using the opposing words or groups of words (Keraf, 2007:126).

For example:

Rich-poor, old-young, big-small. Everyone has the obligation to protect the nation's security.

Paradox

Paradox is a kind of figurative expression which contains the real contradiction with the facts (Keraf, 2007: 136).

For example:

The enemies seem to be the friendly friends.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research to analyse the data using explanations or discussion questions to describe the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on The Book of Forbidden Feelings. In their natural environments, qualitative researchers analyse things, trying to make sense of, or perceive, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln cited in Creswell, 2007). In this study, the researchers applied types of meaning theory with the scope of connotative meaning to describe the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the Book of Forbidden Feelings. Besides, the researchers interviewed 3 Gen Z Individuals who had read the book as a purposive sample to see their perception towards how those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Metonymy

- "I can see all the scars from your past relationships, also bits of rough childhood all over your brown skin."

This complex sentence contains metonymy. It is said that the rough childhood of writer's boyfriend is all over his brown skin. It cannot be taken explicitly that the bad moment experienced by the person is seen in the skin. It has the connotative meaning of the whole body or the person. It can be seen from the gesture, behavior, or the ambience of the body from the exact person. In this case, metonymy in this sentence is used to perform the only part or the body which is skin to propose the whole such as the whole body of the person. The aim of using word brown skin as the part of the whole expression or the whole body is to give the sense of seeing the sadness clearly. It is as if the sadness can be seen just by the eyes, but it is actually not. The choice to use the part brown skin is to give the meaning that the pain or the scars can be seen easily by the writer with connotative meaning because skin is the part of the body that is very easily to see even in the first impression.

Simile

- "When we're holding hands, it feels like sitting alone in a cinema watching all of it, all of your past girlfriends holding your hands.

In this expression carried out in the text, simile occurred. The characterization of simile is using the word like to compare one thing to another. In this case, the writer expresses that when she is doing the physical interaction such as holding hands with her boyfriend, she tends to feel that he is doing the romance scene with her boyfriend's past girlfriend. The writer delivers that she senses the boyfriend's past is still in their relationship.

- "Nothing is really intimate about physical intimacy. It's just like running, breathing, cooking, living, and working.

In the next text that includes simile is about the writer expressing intimacy. It represents the temporary activities or cycle just like how daily activities are being done. The word intimate actually needs to be expressed as the denotative meaning which has the serious matter. But in this case, the writer delivers the meaning of intimate by the connotative meaning through figurative language simile to compare it with the daily routine.

Hyperbole

- I can see all the scars from your past relationship.

In this sentence, the writer shows the connotative message through hyperbole figurative expression. She expresses the exaggeration in the capability by being able to show the past. The denotative meaning actually that is meant to say is she can feel the unfinished business of her boyfriend with his past.

- 100 years of airplane mode

In the next sentence that concludes hyperbole is talking about the long-lasting silence and loneliness. The writer connotatively delivers that she goes to the airplane mode in the time of 100 years which is impossible. It is impossible to reach the time in the amount of 100 years, and deliver the message in this present day.

Repetition

- Because I like small. Small feet. Small gift. Small baby. Small circle. Small paper. Small rice portion. Small room. Small measurement. Small wall. Small interaction. Small expectation. Small expenses. Small city. Small car. Small attachment. Small ambition. Small family. Small feeling. Small everything.

In the fourth analysis, it is found that connotative meaning through figurative language is occurred. The implicit meaning simply showed by the repetition of word small in the brief statement. The writer emphasizes her interest and simplicity by liking something which is small or consider as brief and simple. The writer does not express the denotative or literal message about her simplicity by liking something small, nevertheless by mentioning everything that is small.

- I crave your approval about things that matter to you. I crave more attention for nothing I care about. I crave for a nonstop flow of affection, love, kisses, more love, your skin, and warmth. I crave everything for nothing.

In the last analysis of repetition, it is found that there is an exaggeration of delivered message by what the writer really wants and needs the most at the time. She is in the deep crave of something that can be summarized as the romance feeling and circumstances. She is longing for the warmth and close intention with someone she wants. She does the exaggeration by

doing the repetitive words such as crave but does not give the supporting sentence about her feeling because it is not delivered denotatively.

Personification

- Just like on one good day when the universe welcomed you to the world for the first time.

In this expression uttered by the writer, it is seen that the message contains the connotative meaning through the phrase the universe welcomed you. It cannot be taken literally that the universe welcomes or greets someone, hence it is the connotative meaning from the literal one such as when you were born to this world.

- The sun is finally awake. And today will be the same as yesterday.

In this brief sentence, the phrase the sun is finally awake contains the figurative expression personification. It cannot be understood literally that the sun wakes literally as the human do. The literal meaning from this connotative meaning is when the sun rises.

Metaphor

- Body is just a shelter for the soul.

Metaphor characterizes as mentioning one thing is another thing. In this short statement the writer shows body is a shelter. Literally, body and shelter are two different things. However, this utterance connotatively presents that body is the same as the shelter which the place to take cover.

- You're a piece of blank paper.

In this last short sentence where metaphor being found, it represents the message that someone is still pure without disturbance. The point of similarity is given from you and the blank paper. It can be understood denotatively blank paper is still white and without dirt.

Pleonasm

- You like watching the rain falls.

The sentence you like watching the rain falls contains the pleonasm expression which giving more explanation that it supposed to. The rain is literally taken as something which comes fall because rain is definitely falling from the sky. However, in this statement the word falls is used to emphasize the utterance.

Antithesis

- Friends become enemies. Lovers become exes. Dreams become failures. Family becomes weirdos. Home becomes blurry.

In this such complex utterance, it is shown that the writer uses the duality in circumstances which can change. Antithesis is the figurative language found in this utterance. It is characterized by the use of contradictive situation happened. It indicates that from the good condition of situation relies to the bad one.

Paradox

- Choose to believe in nothing.

In the last analysis of them all, it is ended by the founding of paradox expression in the utterance written. Paradox characterized when the statement is delivered in the contradictive way. This part shows in how the writer convinces the reader to believe in something that does not exist. This statement cannot be taken connotatively, because in the literal meaning, it is a certain thing that when acting to believe in, there must be something to be related to be believe in.

Based on the findings of the figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the Book of Forbidden Feelings above, writers draw conclusion that the utterances guide the readers to let things be as they are and surrender with sincerity.

In addition, based on three subjects of interview, they conveyed that figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the Book of Forbidden Feelings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals. They stated that the utterances lead them to acceptance when they met sadness.

The study from Smith, J., & Garcia, L. (2021) highlighted the importance of understanding cultural differences in connotative interpretation for effective cross-cultural advertising strategies. Meanwhile, Smith, J., Garcia, D., & Wogalter, M.S. (2022) provided updated insights into how connotative associations impact language processing and meaning construction. However, this study used connotative meaning to reveal that “The Book of Forbidden Feelings” showing that the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the book guiding the readers to let things be as they are and surrender with sincerity.

CONCLUSION

Lifestyle and challenges found by many Gen Z individuals demotivating for a number of reasons. Therefore, it will be important to provide more mental health resources, namely, “The Book of Forbidden Feelings”. This study shows that the utterances that use figurative languages that contain connotative meanings on the book guiding the readers to let things be as they are and surrender with sincerity. In addition, those figurative languages that contain connotative meanings provide mental health resources to demotivated Gen Z individuals by leading them to acceptance when they struggle with sadness. This study recommend that future researcher should provide more examples and theories.

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