

2nd Renaissans International Conference on SDGs



Entita: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial

Special Edition, May 2026

ISSN: 2715-7555 (Print), ISSN: 2716-1226 (Online)

DOI: [10.19105/ejpis.v2i.24464](https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v2i.24464)

Cultural Literacy in Literary Learning: Enhancing Students' Figurative Language Analysis through Discovery Learning

Yolandia Dwi Wulansari¹, Ardi Wina Saputra^{2*}

¹SMP Santa Maria Sidoarjo, Sidoarjo, Indonesia

²Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:

Received 04 27, 2026

Revised 05 20, 2026

Accepted 05 22, 2026

Keywords:

Cultural;
Literacy;
Learning;
Figurative;
Language.

Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of the Discovery Learning model in enhancing students' ability to analyze figurative language in short stories. Conducted with 29 ninth-grade students at SMP Santa Maria Sidoarjo during the 2025/2026 academic year, the Classroom Action Research (CAR) design included two cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were gathered through written tests, classroom observations, and documentation to assess students' analytical skills and engagement. Results showed significant improvement in analyzing figurative language, with average scores rising from 48.62 in the pre-cycle to 62.28 in Cycle I and 78.40 in Cycle II, surpassing the minimum mastery criterion. Additionally, the learning process fostered greater student participation and critical thinking during literary analysis. These findings indicate that Discovery Learning is an effective approach for developing literary competence and interpretative skills, while also enhancing cultural literacy in alignment with Education for Sustainable Development goals by promoting critical awareness and engagement with literary texts.

[Penelitian ini mengkaji efektivitas model pembelajaran Discovery Learning dalam meningkatkan kemampuan peserta didik menganalisis majas dalam teks cerpen. Menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK), penelitian melibatkan 29 peserta didik kelas IX-B SMP Santa Maria Sidoarjo pada tahun ajaran 2025/2026 dan dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus yang mencakup perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes tulis, observasi, dan dokumentasi untuk menilai kemampuan analisis dan keterlibatan peserta didik. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan, dengan nilai rata-rata peserta didik meningkat dari 48,62 pada prasiklus menjadi 62,28 pada siklus I dan 78,40 pada siklus II, melampaui kriteria ketuntasan minimal. Proses pembelajaran juga meningkatkan partisipasi dan kemampuan berpikir kritis peserta didik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Discovery Learning efektif dalam mengembangkan kompetensi literasi sastra dan kemampuan interpretatif, serta mendukung pengembangan literasi budaya sesuai dengan tujuan Education for Sustainable Development.]. © The Authors.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



*Corresponding Author:

Ardi Wina Saputra

Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya

Kampus 5, Jalan Manggis no 15-17, Madiun, Indonesia.

Email: yustinusardi@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Literary learning plays an important role in language education because it not only develops students' linguistic competence but also cultivates their sensitivity toward cultural values [1], moral perspectives [2], and human experiences [3]. In the context of Indonesian language education, literature provides a meaningful medium through which students can explore language as a cultural expression. Through literary texts, learners encounter various forms of symbolic language that reflect social realities, emotions, and cultural meanings. Therefore, literary learning is not merely aimed at understanding the content of texts but also at developing students' interpretative abilities and cultural awareness [3].

Short stories are among the most frequently used literary texts in secondary school education due to their concise narrative structure and rich linguistic features [4]. As a form of fictional narrative, short stories present human experiences, social interactions [5], and moral reflections in a compact yet meaningful way. In addition to narrative elements such as plot, character, and setting, short stories also employ distinctive linguistic features that enhance the aesthetic and expressive quality of the text [6]. One of the most prominent linguistic elements in literary works is figurative language, which enables authors to convey meanings beyond literal expressions.

Figurative language, commonly referred to as figures of speech [7], functions as a stylistic device that enriches literary expression and deepens the emotional and imaginative impact of a text [8]. According to Gorys Keraf, figurative language represents a distinctive way of expressing ideas through language that reflects the writer's personality and creative style [9]. Similarly, Henry Guntur Tarigan explains that figures of speech are rhetorical tools used in both spoken and written language to create persuasive and expressive effects [10]. Through figurative expressions such as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole, literary texts communicate meanings that stimulate readers' imagination and interpretative engagement [10].

In the study of literature, understanding figurative language is essential because it allows readers to interpret the symbolic meanings embedded within literary texts. Nurgiyantoro emphasizes that stylistic elements in literature contribute significantly to the creation of aesthetic and emotional experiences for readers. The use of figurative language helps authors construct atmosphere, strengthen characterization, and intensify narrative conflicts. Consequently, the ability to analyze figurative language becomes an important component of literary competence, enabling students to appreciate literary works more deeply and critically.

However, in classroom practice, many students still experience difficulties in identifying and analyzing figurative language in literary texts. Preliminary observations in Indonesian language classes indicate that students often struggle to distinguish between similar types of figures of speech, such as metaphor and simile or hyperbole and litotes. In many cases, students tend to memorize definitions of figurative language without fully understanding how these expressions function within the context of a literary text [11]. As a result, their analysis of figurative language tends to be superficial and lacks interpretative depth.

This problem is often related to the learning approach used in the classroom. Traditional teacher-centered instruction tends to emphasize explanation and memorization rather than active exploration of literary texts. In such learning environments, students frequently become passive recipients of information instead of active participants in knowledge construction. Consequently, the learning process does not sufficiently encourage critical thinking, analytical skills, or interpretative engagement with literary language [12]. These limitations suggest the need for innovative learning models that actively involve students in the process of discovering and understanding literary concepts.

One instructional approach that can address this challenge is Discovery Learning. Rooted in constructivist learning theory, Discovery Learning emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through exploration, observation, and problem solving. Jerome Bruner, one of the key proponents of this approach, argues that learning becomes more meaningful when students discover concepts independently rather than merely receiving information from teachers. Through guided discovery, students are encouraged to investigate patterns, formulate hypotheses, and develop conceptual understanding based on their own findings.

In the context of literary learning, Discovery Learning provides opportunities for students to actively analyze texts, identify figurative expressions, and interpret their meanings through discussion and collaborative inquiry. The stages of Discovery Learning—such as stimulation, problem identification, data collection, data processing, verification, and generalization—allow students to engage in deeper analytical processes. By participating in these stages, students can

develop higher-order thinking skills, including interpretation, evaluation, and critical reflection on literary language.

Furthermore, integrating literary learning with active pedagogical approaches can contribute to the broader goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD emphasizes the development of critical thinking, cultural awareness, and responsible citizenship in addressing complex social and cultural challenges. Literary texts, as cultural artifacts, offer rich opportunities for students to explore human values, social relationships, and ethical perspectives embedded in language. Therefore, strengthening students' ability to analyze figurative language through discovery-based learning not only enhances literary competence but also supports the development of cultural literacy that is essential for sustainable education. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine how the implementation of Discovery Learning can improve students' accuracy in analyzing figurative language in short story texts.

2. Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) [13] design to improve students' accuracy in analyzing figurative language in short story texts [14] through the implementation of the Discovery Learning model [15]. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it allows teachers to systematically identify learning problems, implement instructional interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions within the classroom context. The research followed the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart [16], which consists of four stages: planning [17], action [18], observation [19], and reflection [13]. These stages were implemented in repeated cycles to ensure continuous improvement in the learning process and students' learning outcomes.

The participants of this study were 29 ninth-grade students of class IX-B at SMP Santa Maria Sidoarjo, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The class was selected because preliminary observations indicated that many students experienced difficulties in identifying and analyzing figurative language in short story texts. The research was conducted over a period of approximately two months, from October to November 2025, during regular Indonesian language lessons. The learning materials used in this study consisted of selected short story texts that contained various forms of figurative language, including metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and other stylistic expressions commonly introduced in the Indonesian language curriculum at the junior secondary school level.

The implementation of Discovery Learning in this study followed several instructional stages. First, during the stimulation stage, students were introduced to short story excerpts to stimulate their curiosity about the use of figurative language in literary texts. Second, in the problem identification stage, students were encouraged to identify linguistic expressions in the text that appeared to convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation. Third, during the data collection stage, students worked individually or in small groups to locate examples of figurative language within the short story texts. Fourth, in the data processing stage, students analyzed the characteristics of the expressions and classified them into specific types of figurative language. Fifth, during the verification stage, students discussed their findings with peers and the teacher to confirm the accuracy of their analysis. Finally, in the generalization stage, students drew conclusions regarding the functions and characteristics of figurative language used in the texts. These instructional steps were applied across two cycles of the research process.

Data were collected using several techniques to ensure the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings. First, written tests were administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' accuracy in identifying and analyzing figurative language in short story texts. Second, classroom observations were conducted to record students' learning activities, participation, and engagement during the implementation of Discovery Learning. Third, documentation, including lesson plans, students' worksheets, and classroom photographs, was used to support the research data. The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis was conducted by calculating the average scores of students' test results in each cycle to identify improvements in learning outcomes. Meanwhile, qualitative analysis was applied to interpret observational data related to students' participation and learning behavior during the instructional process.

3. Result

The implementation of the Discovery Learning model in the analysis of figurative language in short story texts was carried out through two cycles of Classroom Action Research. The results of the study were obtained from written tests, classroom observations, and documentation of the learning process. These results were analyzed to determine the improvement in students' ability to identify and analyze figurative language accurately. The findings also describe the development of students' learning engagement during the implementation of Discovery Learning in the classroom. Prior to the implementation of the action, a pre-cycle assessment was conducted to determine the initial level of students' ability in analyzing figurative language in short story texts. The results of the pre-cycle test indicated that the students' average score was 48.62, which was categorized as low compared to the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) set at 75. Only a small number of students were able to correctly identify certain types of figurative language, while most students still struggled to differentiate between various figures of speech. This finding suggested that students had not yet developed sufficient analytical skills in interpreting figurative expressions in literary texts.

Further analysis of the pre-cycle results showed that students commonly experienced confusion when distinguishing between similar types of figurative language. For instance, many students misidentified metaphors as similes because they focused solely on the comparison aspect without recognizing the absence of comparative markers such as "like" or "as." In addition, several students categorized hyperbolic expressions as literal statements due to limited understanding of exaggeration as a stylistic device. These difficulties indicated that students' comprehension of figurative language was still superficial and largely based on memorized definitions rather than contextual interpretation.

In addition to the written test results, classroom observations during the pre-cycle stage revealed that students' participation in literary analysis activities was relatively low. Many students appeared hesitant to express their interpretations of figurative expressions found in the text. The learning process was still dominated by teacher explanations, which limited students' opportunities to actively explore the language used in the literary works. As a result, students tended to rely on the teacher's answers rather than developing their own analytical reasoning.

The first cycle of the research began with the implementation of Discovery Learning as an instructional strategy to encourage students' active involvement in the learning process. During the stimulation stage, students were introduced to selected excerpts from short stories containing various figurative expressions. The teacher guided students to observe unusual or imaginative phrases in the text and encouraged them to predict their possible meanings. This activity was designed to stimulate curiosity and motivate students to examine the text more carefully.

In the problem identification stage of Cycle I, students were asked to identify expressions in the short story that might represent figurative language. Working in small groups, they discussed their observations and listed phrases that they believed contained figurative meanings. This collaborative activity encouraged students to exchange ideas and evaluate different interpretations. Although some students initially found the task challenging, the group discussion gradually helped them develop a better understanding of how figurative language functions within the narrative.

During the data collection stage, students analyzed the selected short story texts more systematically by identifying examples of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole. Each group was assigned the task of recording their findings and explaining the reasons behind their classifications. The teacher provided guidance when necessary but encouraged students to rely primarily on their own analytical reasoning. This stage allowed students to engage more deeply with the literary text and develop analytical skills through exploration.

The data processing and verification stages involved group presentations and class discussions. Each group presented the figurative expressions they had identified and explained their interpretations to the class. Other students were invited to respond, question, or provide alternative interpretations. Through this interactive process, students began to recognize patterns in figurative language and understand the characteristics that distinguish one type of figure of speech from another. This stage also provided opportunities for students to refine their analytical conclusions.

At the end of Cycle I, a written test was administered to evaluate students' progress in analyzing figurative language. The results indicated a noticeable improvement in students' performance. The average score increased to 62.28, which represented a significant improvement compared to the pre-cycle score of 48.62. Although the class average had not yet reached the minimum mastery criterion, the improvement suggested that the Discovery Learning approach had begun to positively influence students' analytical abilities.

Observation data from Cycle I also revealed improvements in students' learning engagement. Students appeared more willing to participate in group discussions and express their interpretations of figurative expressions found in the texts. Compared to the pre-cycle stage, a greater number of students actively contributed ideas during classroom discussions. However, some students still relied heavily on the opinions of more confident peers, indicating that further instructional support was needed to strengthen their independent analytical skills.

Based on the reflection of Cycle I, several improvements were made for the implementation of Cycle II. The teacher provided additional examples of figurative language and more structured guidance during group discussions. Students were also encouraged to explain not only the type of figurative language but also its meaning and function within the context of the story. This approach aimed to deepen students' interpretative understanding rather than focusing solely on classification. During Cycle II, the Discovery Learning activities were implemented with greater emphasis on critical interpretation. In the stimulation stage, students were presented with more complex literary passages containing multiple figurative expressions. They were encouraged to analyze how these expressions contributed to the emotional atmosphere and narrative meaning of the text. This activity helped students understand that figurative language plays a significant role in shaping the aesthetic and expressive qualities of literary works.

The group discussion activities in Cycle II showed a noticeable increase in students' confidence and analytical depth. Students were able to identify figurative expressions more accurately and provide clearer explanations regarding their meanings. Many students demonstrated improved ability to distinguish between similar figures of speech, such as metaphor and simile, as well as hyperbole and litotes. The collaborative discussions also encouraged students to justify their interpretations using textual evidence from the short stories.

At the end of Cycle II, a final written test was conducted to measure students' learning outcomes. The results showed a substantial improvement in students' ability to analyze figurative language in short story texts. The class average score increased to 78.40, exceeding the minimum mastery criterion of 75. A majority of students successfully identified and interpreted figurative expressions in the text, indicating that their analytical competence had significantly improved compared to the initial stage of the research.

Table 1. Average Score

Stage	Average
Pre Cycle	48,62
Cycle 1	62,28
Cycle 2	78,40

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Discovery Learning contributed positively to the improvement of students' figurative language analysis skills. The model encouraged active participation, collaborative discussion, and deeper engagement with literary texts. Through the stages of discovery-based learning, students were able to construct their own understanding of figurative language and apply this knowledge more accurately in analyzing short story texts. These results suggest that Discovery Learning can serve as an effective instructional approach for enhancing literary analysis skills in Indonesian language education.

4. Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Discovery Learning significantly improved students' ability to analyze figurative language in short story texts. The gradual increase in students' average scores from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II indicates that the learning intervention had a positive impact on students' analytical competence [20]. Initially, many students struggled to identify and interpret figurative expressions accurately. However, after participating in discovery-based learning activities, students showed greater ability to recognize figurative language and explain its meaning within the context of the text.

The improvement observed in this study can be explained through the principles of constructivist learning theory [21] that underpin the Discovery Learning model. Constructivism emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interaction with learning materials and experiences. In the context of this study, students were not merely given explanations about figurative language but were encouraged to explore literary texts and discover examples of

figurative expressions independently. This process allowed students to develop a deeper conceptual understanding of figurative language rather than relying solely on memorized definitions.

Another factor contributing to the improvement in students' learning outcomes was the collaborative nature of the discovery learning activities. During group discussions, students exchanged ideas, compared interpretations, and evaluated different viewpoints regarding the figurative expressions found in the short story texts. This collaborative interaction supported the development of analytical thinking and interpretative reasoning [22]. By discussing their findings with peers, students were able to clarify misconceptions and refine their understanding of various types of figurative language.

The findings also show that Discovery Learning encourages greater student engagement in literary learning. In traditional teacher-centered instruction, students often play a passive role in the learning process, which may limit their opportunity to develop analytical skills. In contrast, the discovery-based learning activities implemented in this study required students to actively read, analyze, and interpret literary texts. This active involvement increased students' motivation and curiosity, making the learning process more meaningful and interactive.

The improvement in students' ability to distinguish between different types of figurative language represents an important development in their literary competence. Before the intervention, students frequently confused similar figures of speech, such as metaphor and simile or hyperbole and litotes. Through the discovery learning activities, students were gradually able to identify the distinctive characteristics of each type of figurative language. This improvement indicates that students developed a more systematic understanding of stylistic elements in literary texts.

In addition to improving analytical skills, the learning process also enhanced students' appreciation of literary language. By examining figurative expressions within the context of short story narratives, students began to recognize how language can create imagery, emotion, and deeper meaning in literary works. This realization helped students understand that figurative language is not merely a decorative element but an essential component that contributes to the aesthetic and expressive qualities of literature.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that Discovery Learning can enhance students' higher-order thinking skills. The stages of discovery-based learning—such as identifying problems, collecting information, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions—encourage students to engage in critical and reflective thinking processes. These processes are particularly important in literary analysis, where interpretation and reasoning play a central role in understanding the meaning of a text.

Furthermore, the integration of literary analysis with active learning strategies contributes to the broader goal of developing students' cultural literacy. Literary texts, including short stories, often reflect social experiences, cultural values, and human perspectives embedded in language. By analyzing figurative language in literary works, students are indirectly exposed to cultural meanings and symbolic representations present in the narratives. This process helps students develop greater awareness of how language functions as a medium for expressing cultural ideas and social realities.

From the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the findings of this study also highlight the role of literary learning in fostering critical and reflective thinking. ESD emphasizes the importance of developing learners who are capable of understanding complex social and cultural issues. Through the analysis of figurative language in literary texts, students practice interpreting symbolic meanings and evaluating different perspectives. These skills are essential for cultivating thoughtful and responsible individuals who can engage with diverse cultural and social contexts.

Overall, the discussion of the findings indicates that Discovery Learning provides an effective pedagogical approach for improving students' figurative language analysis skills while also supporting broader educational goals. The active and collaborative nature of discovery-based learning encourages deeper engagement with literary texts and promotes the development of analytical, interpretative, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, integrating Discovery Learning into literary instruction can serve as a meaningful strategy for enhancing both students' literary competence and their cultural understanding in the context of sustainable education.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to improve students' ability to analyze figurative language in short story texts through the implementation of the Discovery Learning model. The results of the classroom action research indicate that the use of Discovery Learning contributed positively to students' analytical

skills in identifying and interpreting figurative expressions. The improvement in students' learning outcomes was reflected in the increase in the average score from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II, demonstrating that the learning intervention was effective in enhancing students' understanding of figurative language within literary texts.

The findings also show that the Discovery Learning approach encourages students to become more actively involved in the learning process. Through stages such as observation, problem identification, data collection, analysis, and conclusion, students were able to construct their own understanding of figurative language. This process helped students move beyond memorizing definitions and develop a deeper ability to interpret figurative expressions in the context of short story narratives. As a result, students' analytical accuracy and confidence in literary analysis improved significantly.

In addition to improving analytical competence, the learning activities also contributed to the development of students' appreciation of literary language. By examining figurative expressions within short stories, students gained a better understanding of how language can convey imaginative meanings, emotions, and cultural perspectives. This experience supports the development of cultural literacy, which is an important component in literary learning and plays a meaningful role in fostering students' awareness of language as a cultural expression.

Based on these findings, the Discovery Learning model can be recommended as an effective instructional strategy in teaching literary analysis, particularly in the study of figurative language in short stories. The model not only enhances students' analytical skills but also encourages active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative learning. Therefore, integrating discovery-based learning approaches in language and literature education can contribute to the development of meaningful learning experiences that support broader educational goals, including the promotion of cultural awareness and sustainable learning practices.

References

- [1] S. L. Linkon, *Literary learning: Teaching the English major*. Indiana University Press, 2011.
- [2] N. I. Hali, "The Actualization of Literary Learning Model Based on Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence.," *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 42–48, 2017.
- [3] P. Anders and K. Spinner, "Literary learning," *Film Education Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 159–174, 2019.
- [4] H. D. Septika and K. H. Prasetya, "Local Wisdom Folklore for Literary Learning in Elementary School," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 13–24, 2020.
- [5] W. Wiyatmi, M. Suryaman, E. S. Sari, and N. Dewi, "Ecofeminist Pedagogy in Literary Learning to Cultivate Environmental Ethics Awareness.," *Journal of Turkish Science Education*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 252–265, 2023.
- [6] K. Puolakka, "Learning from literary experience," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 56–73, 2022.
- [7] B. Dancygier and E. Sweetser, *Figurative language*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- [8] R. W. Gibbs Jr and H. L. Colston, "Figurative language," in *Handbook of psycholinguistics*, Elsevier, 2006, pp. 835–861.
- [9] R. P. Honeck and R. R. Hoffman, *Cognition and figurative language*. Routledge, 2018.
- [10] D. Gentner and B. F. Bowdle, "Convention, form, and figurative language processing," in *Models of figurative language*, Psychology Press, 2001, pp. 223–247.
- [11] R. M. Roberts and R. J. Kreuz, "Why do people use figurative language?," *Psychol. Sci.*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 159–163, 1994.
- [12] R. J. Kreuz and R. M. Roberts, "The empirical study of figurative language in literature," *Poetics*, vol. 22, no. 1–2, pp. 151–169, 1993.
- [13] S. Kemmis, "Action research as a practice-based practice," *Educ. Action Res.*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 463–474, 2009.
- [14] T. Siregar, "Classroom action research-based learning innovations: Kemmis and McTaggart models," 2025.
- [15] S. P. Purohman, "Classroom action research alternative research activity for teachers," *Research gate*, 2018.
- [16] S. Kemmis, "What is to be done? The place of action research," *Educ. Action Res.*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 417–427, 2010.
- [17] S. Kemmis, "Action research and the politics of reflection," in *Reflection*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 139–164.
- [18] H. Altrichter, S. Kemmis, R. McTaggart, and O. Zuber-Skerritt, "The concept of action research," *The learning organization*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 125–131, 2002.
- [19] S. Kemmis, "Action Research in Retrospect and Prospect.," 1980.
- [20] I. Leibbrandt, "Literary learning: A proposal for using literature for the acquisition of emotional competencies," *Journal of Literary Education*, no. 6, pp. 132–151, 2022.
- [21] F. Hakemulder, O. Fialho, and P. M. Bal, "Learning from literature," *Scientific approaches to literature in learning environments*, vol. 24, pp. 19–37, 2016.
- [22] B. Hutchings and K. O'rouke, "Problem-based learning in literary studies," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 73–83, 2002.

