



Figurative Language In Emily Dickinson's Selected Poems

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study is to analysis and describe the types of figurative language found in Emily Dickinson's selected poems. Figurative language deviates from conventional usage by emphasizing changes in the word order or syntactical structure rather than the meaning of the words themselves. Figurative language can be defined as a language style that poets and other artists employ to create literary works of art in an effort to make the language more beautiful. According to Gorys Keraf figurative language is how and the way of expressing thought through language in the unique way that shows the soul and the personality of the author. The theory used in this paper is the theory of Gorys Keraf. The source of the data in this paper include the line , verse, and the stanza of 4 poems from Emily Dickinson entitled *Hope Is The Things With The Feather, A Bird Come Down The Walk, I Heard A Fly Buzz When I Died, and I'm Nobody! Who Are You* . This paper uses a descriptive qualitative method. The figure of speech found in this paper is metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and simile, allusion, synecdoche, alliteration.

Keywords: *Poem, Figurative Language, Types.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a branch of art that uses language as a medium to express

thoughts and works of art in mind and expressed. "Literature is composition

that tells a story, dramatizes a situation, expresses emotions, analyzes and advocates ideas," according to Roberts and Jacobs (2006:2). Literature is an absorption word from Sanskrit "Sastra" which means "text" which contains "guidance" or "teaching". Historically, literature can be divided into two genre, namely: Old literature, in old literature is divided into 2 parts, namely: old poetry and old prose. In the old poetry there are mantras, rhymes, gurindam, seloka, thimbles / proverbs, talibuns, and karma. Whereas in old prose there are myths, legends, fables, sage, parables/tales, framed stories, history/tambo, epics/heroes, and stories of consolation. New literature, in this new literature there are several types, including novels, biographies, short stories, dramas, and songs. Meanwhile, according to the form of literary works are divided into 4 types, namely: prose, folklore, drama, and poetry.

In this section the authors is very interested in discussing poetry which is a part of literary works of art. In today's modern and advanced era, young people and millennials are starting to feel less interested in poetry. Even though poetry is one of the arts that is very important for society, without art life would be colorless. In Emily Dickinson's poem, the authors analyzes and finds out what language styles are used in the poem, and finds out the hidden meaning in the poem. We know that language style is a method used by experts in creating a work, namely to beautify the language and to beautify a work. Where readers will understand the beauty of the language in the literary work. The authors took data from the famous American poet, Emily Dickinson. She is

famous for her poetry which contain many themes of birth and death. She was born on December 10, 1830. Because from a young age, Emily grew up experiencing and witnessing the births and deaths of close people around her, so she poured a lot of her thoughts and experiences into literary works of poetry. This experience and the incident also caused Emily to suffer from trauma and depression. And this is also what made her never recover until she breathed her last breath. In this case it makes the writer interested in discussing this work of poetry. According to Gorys Keraf figurative language is how and the way of expressing thought through language in the unique way that shows the soul and the personality of the author

The background to this research is that the authors wants to see and understand how the poem describes an event and reality that occurred at the time and era of the poet's era. Reading and analyzing poetry is the same as enjoying a work of art which can soothe and refresh the heart and mind. In previous journals that studied and discussed the poetry of Emily Dickinson, they analyzed the language style and imagery in the poetry. This research also discusses language styles and the dominance of language styles found in Emily Dickinson's poetry. This does not mean that this research is plagiarism, but it is supportive research.

The purpose of this study into analysis and describe the kind and the types of figurative language found in Emily Dickinson's selected poems. In this study, the authors only focuses on explaining and describing the types and the kinds of figurative language in Emily Dickinson's selected poems. And the

theoretical significance of this research is to better know and understand the language styles in Emily Dickinson's poetry, and practically it can be used as reference material in learning about the language styles found in poetry.

2. METHOD

The research applied descriptive qualitative method by source the data was obtained. As stated by The qualitative descriptive method, according to Sugiyono (2016:9), is a research technique built on the post-positivist philosophy that is employed to study the conditions of natural objects (as opposed to experiments) in which the researcher serves as the primary instrument. Triangulation (combination) is a strategy used in data gathering; inductive/qualitative data analysis is used in data analysis; and the findings of qualitative research prioritize meaning over generalization. The goal of qualitative descriptive research is to extensively examine a person, a group, or an event in order to describe, illustrate, explain, and provide a more thorough response to the issues under investigation. To collect data, the authors carried out procedures and steps such as: The source of the data in this study is Emily Dickinson selected poem entitled *Hope Is The Things With The Feather, Because I Could Not Stop For Death, A Bird Come Down To Walk, I Heard A Fly Buzz When I Died, and I'm Nobody! Who Are You*. The procedures of the data collection is first selecting the Emily Dickinson selected poems then collecting and analyzing data after reading to those poem. The procedures of the data analysis the writer did some step as first reading to the Emily

Dickinson poems to understand the lyrics, second is learning all the sentence of the lyrics, third is identifying and describing the types of figure if speech in the poem lyrics, and Identifying the dominant types of figure of speech in the poems, and the last give the conclusion and suggestion.

3. THEORITICAL OF THE RESEARCH

3.1. Figurative language

Figurative language is a literary device that enhances the meaning of a text through the use of expressive and imaginative elements. Writers employ various forms of figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism, to go beyond the literal meaning of words. This technique adds depth and richness to the language, allowing readers to engage more deeply with the text.

a. Metaphor and Simile

Metaphors and similes are two powerful forms of figurative language. A metaphor directly equates one thing with another, creating a symbolic connection to convey a deeper meaning. For example, saying "time is a thief" metaphorically suggests that time steals moments from our lives. Similes, on the other hand, compare two unlike things using "like" or "as," providing a vivid and imaginative image. An example could be "as brave as a lion."

b. Personification

Personification involves attributing human characteristics to non-human entities or abstract concepts. This figurative language creates a more relatable and vivid image. For instance, when describing the wind as "whispering through the trees," the writer personifies

the wind, giving it human-like qualities of speech.

c. Symbolism

Symbolism is another crucial aspect of figurative language, where an object, person, or situation represents something beyond its literal meaning. Authors use symbolism to convey complex ideas or emotions indirectly. An example could be a dove symbolizing peace or a red rose representing love.

Figurative language serves as a powerful tool for writers, enabling them to create more evocative and nuanced expressions. Through metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism, authors can craft a rich tapestry of meaning that resonates with readers on emotional and intellectual levels. By employing these techniques, writers enhance the depth and impact of their work, making it more engaging and memorable for the audience.

3.2. Previous Research

There are several studies that contributed to the development of this article, but there are fundamental differences between the studies, both in the formal material objects and approaches used. Article analyzed by Putri, Yulika, and Gani(2024) discussed about The Meaning of the Tawan Basi in Vehicles: Case Study of the Nagari Silantai Community Sumpur Kudus District Sijunjung Regenc. then article written by Muqarramah, Gani, & Septriani, (2024) discussed about Impact of Changing Rubber Plantations to Palm Oil Plantations in Nagari Manganti, Sumpur Kudus District, Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatra Province. Last article written by Cahyani, Gani,& Endrizal (2024) discussed about The

Meaning of Traditional Tasapo Treatment in the Community of Nagari Aie Tajun Lubuk Alung District, West Sumatera

4. DISCUSSION

In Emily Dickinson's poetry, there are many meanings that the author wants to convey through his poetry and uses figurative language and language styles to beautify and beautify his writing and work. In this research, the author focuses on analyzing and finding out the types of language styles found in Emily Dickinson's poetry, which many people may not yet know. In this discussion the author takes 5 poems as data to be studied, namely *Hope Is The Things With The Feather, Because I Could Not Stop For Death, A Bird Come Down To Walk, I Heard A Fly Buzz When I Died, and I'm Nobody! Who Are You* .

Figure of Speech In Emily Dickinson's Selected Poems

1. Figure of Speech in "*Hope Is The Things With The Feather*"

Hyperbole :

1. "*And sweetest in the gale is heard*"
(1st Lane, 2nd Stanza)

it means that in the strong storm she can taste the sweetness and this is an exaggeration, it is impossible for birdsong to sound melodious in a strong storm. Also in the first lane the third stanza there is a hyperbole "I've heard it in the chilliest land, And on the strangest sea" In the passage the author expresses this by exaggerating, by making a comparison when birds are between the south pole and the ocean. It is impossible for us to directly hear the sound of birds chirping so far away. The author



expresses his feelings by exaggerating when he hears the birds chirping.

2. *"I've heard it in the chilliest land - And on the strangest Sea -"* (1st and 2nd line, 3rd stanza)

In the lyrical part of this poem there is also a hyperbolic figure of speech, namely the author states that he can hear the bird from the blood of the ice-sea land and also from the vast ocean which is a symbol of his hope. This passage clearly contains hyperbolic figures of speech where it is impossible for humans to hear something at such a long distance and it is absolutely impossible to hear it clearly.

Metaphor :

1. *"And sings the tune without the words"* (3rd line 1st stanza)

The lyric fragment of this poem contains a metaphorical figure of speech, where the author writes that the bird sings a tune without words or lyrics. The metaphor of singing means the birds chirping which is so very melodious that it can only be done with tune and without lyrics.

2. *"Hope" is the thing with feathers"* (1st line 1st stanza)

In this poem there is also a metaphor where the author expresses and describes her hopes like a bird and also she described all the things she faced or the challenges in achieving her hopes as natural elements such as seas, ice land and oceans.

Personification:

1. *"And sings the tune without the words"* (3rd line 1st stanza)

This lyric fragment contains a personification figure of speech, namely

where the author reveals that the bird sings in tune without words. Only humans can be said to sing. So it seems as if the bird is singing like a human, whereas the bird is actually singing melodiously like singing.

2. Figure of Speech in "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died"

Hyperbole

1. *"I heard a Fly buzz - when I died"* (1st line, 1st stanza)

In the line above, fragment of this poem there is a hyperbolic figure of speech where the author describes an exaggerated situation or exaggerates something, or it can also be said that something is impossible or impossible because a dead person can no longer hear.

Synecdoche

1. *"The Eyes around - had wrung them dry."* (1st line, 2nd stanza)

In the line above, the author states part of something, namely "eyes" is mentioned as a room full of many people.

Simile

1. *"The Stillness in the Room -"*
"Was like the Stillness in the Air" (2-3rd line, 1st stanza)

In the line above, the author describes a comparison between stillness in a room and stillness in an air, where in the stillness of a room there is not a single sound that can be heard, only the sound of the wind in the air, calm and not noisy.

Irony

1. *"Was like the Stillness in the Air –
"
"Between the Heaves of Storm –"*
(3-4th line, stanza 1)

In this section contains a figure of speech of irony where two things are inversely proportional. Because the stillness in this line says something with a different meaning or purpose than what is contained in the series of words.

Metaphore

1. *"The Eyes around – had wrung
them dry."*
(1st line 2nd stanza)

In this poem fragment there is also a metaphorical figure of speech where the author describes the people around him as eyes, because eyes around depicts the people around him and they are tired of crying over him is a metaphor for their dry tears.

2. *"Between the light – and me –"*
(2nd line, 4th stanza)

In this poem there are also metaphors because the metaphor of light and me describes life and death

3. *"And then the Windows failed –
and then"
"I could not see to see –"*
(3-4th line, 4th stanza)

This line is a metaphor for the relationship between life and death, where the broken window indicates that he cannot see and return to his life.

Figure of Speech in I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Personification

1. *" To an admiring Bog"*
(4th line, 2nd stanza)

To admiring bog – Emily Dickinson used "Frog" to symbolize individuals who constantly seek public attention or

recognition. "Bog", then, represents a society that wants to be impressed by these people. Dickinson compares society to a "Bog", which implies a critique of constant self-promotion. She argues that the attention gained through such behavior may be superficial. Furthermore, the admiration generated from self-promotion may ultimately be meaningless.

Synecdoche

1. *" like a frog To tell one's name the
livinglong june"*
(2-3rd line, 2nd stanza)

like a frog To tell one's name the livinglong june - This is a symbol that depicts a situation that has the bad value of self-exaltation, such as frogs that sound in a certain month to show themselves.

The phrase "livinglong June" emphasizes the constant and uninterrupted nature of the action, which parallels the continuous sound of frogs throughout the month.

Simile

1. *" How public, like a frog"*
(1st line, 2nd stanza)

How public, like a frog - The comparison of being "How public" or a public figure to a frog shows that the speaker views the pursuit of fame as a meaningless and constant need to draw attention to oneself, like the constant croaking of a frog.

The phrase "like a Frog" - is a specific and vivid image that makes the speaker's criticism of the desire for public recognition more real and relatable.

Allusion



1. *I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you
know!*

(1-4 line, 1st stanza)

I'm Nobody! Who are you? - This is a simple yet powerful statement that the speaker is not an important person or of high social status. The speaker distances himself from the social norms of his time by declaring himself a nobody.

Are you nobody too? - The speaker stated that they made a couple, the duo 'Nobodies'. The phrase "our couple" emphasizes the sense of friendship and solidarity between the speaker and the reader. Then there's pair of us ! - declaring the identity of their partner has a conspiratorial tone. It gives the impression that their shared status as 'Nobodies' is a secret that must be kept. Don't tell they'd advertise you now - The exclamation mark in "Don't tell!" implies a sense of urgency or excitement. The phrase "You know!" at the end of this line gives the poem a conversational and somewhat intimate tone. It is as if the speaker and the reader are co-conspirators in a mutual respect for anonymity and privacy.

3. Figure of Speech in A Bird Came Down The Walk

Personification

1. *"He drank a dew from a
convenient grass"*

(1st line, 2nd stanza)

because in this line it is said that what is meant is the bird that drinks the dew that comes from the grass in the morning,

where we often see the dew that is in the morning on the grass.

Simile

1. *"They looked like frightened
beads, i thought"*

(3rd line, 3rd stanza)

because in this line the author says that the beetle that is about to cross or walk is like a beautiful bead that is scared because of the beetle.

Alliteration

1. *"A bird came down the walk"*

(1st line, 1st stanza)

Alliteration is used throughout A Bird Came Down the Walk to create sounds that imitate the characteristics the poet is describing. this is seen after the bird's departure when the speaker compares the flight of the bird to the ocean

Metaphore

1. *"Than oars divide the ocean"*

(1st line, 5th stanza)

In this line there is an analogy that says that the paddle splits the sea where the paddle should not be able to split the vast ocean.

5. CONCLUSION

After analyzing and describing the types of figurative language in Emily Dickinson's selected poems the researcher conclude that: There are several types of figure of speech found in Emily Dickinson's selected poems, of the four poems that have been analyzed, each poem has figurative language namely metaphorical, hyperbola, simile, personification, synecdoche, irony, allusion, and alliteration figurative language. The author of this poem expressed her thoughts and experiences into poetry form about what kind of life she had experienced. The way the author

expresses her thoughts into art with literature style aims to beautify a literary work. So that readers can understand and interpret the contents of the poem and can also enjoy and feel the art contained in the poem, namely the language style. The most dominant type of figure of speech found in Emily Dickinson's selected poems is the type of metaphorical figure of speech. The author's expresses her feelings by pouring it into her poems, and the researcher has described the types of figure of speech contained in the lyrics of the poems and have found the most dominant type of figure of speech.

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