

An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in William Shakespeare's Poems

Nida Wafa Nafilah¹, Encep Rustandi²

¹Universitas Kebangsaan Republik Indonesia| nidanawafil@gmail.com

²Universitas Kebangsaan Republik Indonesia | enceprustandi@ukri.ac.id

Abstract. Poem is one of the popular literary works that is loved by many people because of its beautiful language and the deep meaning of it. In poem, there are words or sentences that has a poetic meaning. Many poets write poems that have hidden or unreal meanings in it, and it is called figurative language. With figurative language applied in the poem, some people do not understand what the idea behind it. Therefore, this research aimed is to analyze the type of figurative language used in William Shakespeare's poems and to reveal the function of figurative language dominantly used in William Shakespeare's poems. The titles of the 7 William Shakespeare's poems were "Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?", "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds", "Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore", "When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes", "All the World's Stage", "That time of year thou mayst in me behold", and "The Rape of Lucrece". Results showed six types of figurative language used in William Shakespeare's poems: 167 personification, 163 metaphor, 73 simile, 33 hyperbole, 18 metonymy, and 3 litotes.

Keywords: Figurative language; Poem; William Shakespeare

1. Introduction

Language is an instrument for human beings to communicate and interact with each other. To interact with each other while carrying out daily activities, language becomes very important and fundamental, because people will understand what other people want to convey their purpose of communication by using language. Furthermore, communication with each other can be done not only by talking but also by writing. For example, in the literature field, one of the writings that from time to time, becomes one of the objects to convey the ideas, emotions, and desires of the author is called a literary work. Sudjiman (1986) stated in Fitriani (2016) that literary works are types of spoken and written work that have many benefits and may be recognized by their characteristics. Literary works are characterized by beauty, artistry, and originality in terms of content and expression.

Literary works are divided into three parts such as drama, prose, and poetry. Drama is a literary work that contains dialogue and performance. While prose can be interpreted as a literary work that is not bound by strict rules, it is referred to as a free essay, inversely proportional to poetry. Poetry can be called poetry if it is bound by some rules, as Wirjosoedarmo states in Pradopo (2005:5) that poetry is a bound essay, bound by (1) Several lines in each stanza (couplet/strofa, syllable essay), (2) several lines with many words, (3) several syllables per line, (4) rhymes, and (5) rhythms. Poets used to impose restrictions on their poems according to the existing rules. Sometimes, in conveying the message in poetry, the poet uses beautiful words that have an unreal meaning. Words that contain such implied or unreal meanings are called figurative language. According to Dancygier and Sweetser

(2014:1), figurative language is considered to be a component of what gives a text its unique aesthetic value and helps it express an idea in a particular language. Poetry is a literary work with beautiful words and phrases. Poets often frame the idea they want to convey in an unusual way, using figurative language. By using figurative language, the poets become freer in choosing words to express their intentions and making the reader more interested in the poem. Therefore, to classify the figurative language in a poem written by a poet, it must use the study of linguistic. Semantic is the area of linguistic that studies about meaning. Semantics focuses to examining the true meaning of phrases, units of words, clauses, and sentences. Therefore, the meanings contained in figurative language and its types in poetry can be examined using semantic studies.

There are several previous studies about figurative language. The researcher makes several previous studies as references in terms of the type of poetry analyzed in the research, the types of figurative language studied in the research, and the research methods used in the study.

The first study was done by Rinda Sonia (2020), entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Poetry Entitled Mending Wall by Robert Frost". The type or form of poem she analyzes in her research is blank verse. She analyzes types of figurative language and what is the figurative language dominantly in a blank verse poem titled "Mending Wall" by Robert Frost and what its function is.

The second study by Syahril Nur (2014), entitled "Figurative Language and Imagery Analysis in William Shakespeare Sonnet" discussed about what types of figurative language and imagery that were found in William Shakespeare sonnets. The form of poems he analyze is sonnet.

The third study by Syafitri and Marlinton (2018) discussed about types and meanings of figurative language used in Edgar Allan Poe's poems. Another previous study was done by Anggia Murni (2020). In her research, she analyzes figurative language that occurs in some poetry of Maya Angelou. Looking at some of the research topics above that have succeeded in analyzing figurative language in the poems using semantic studies, the researcher will analyze and classify the figurative language found in William Shakespeare's poems.

Although it makes the poetry really poetic, sometimes figurative language also has an unreal meaning, so that the reader misinterprets or does not understand the true meaning that the author wants to convey through figurative language, so that the meaning of the author becomes blurred. From the phenomena about figurative language above, this research will focus on analyzing figurative language that appear in William Shakespeare's poems.

2. Methods

This research will use a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the figurative language as the approach of this research. According to Cresswell (2014), qualitative research is a study to comprehend a group's or person's meaning whose purpose is to investigate human and social problems. Qualitative research explains a phenomenon and collects data systematically and carefully to produce a comprehensive study of a phenomenon. The purpose of this research is to understand and searching for the meaning behind the data found. This thesis uses a qualitative descriptive method because, (1) the researcher collects information in the form of words, (2) The research implemented non-numerical data to analyze the various forms of figurative language appear and mostly used in William Shakespeare's poems, (3) this

research also has purpose to reveal the function of figurative language dominantly used in William Shakespeare’s poems.

Additionally, this research was a literature analysis. Literature analysis means analyzing a text specifically and understanding its meanings. In this research, the data taken was from seven poems by William Shakespeare. The researcher chose the poems randomly, then will closely analyze the figurative language found in the poem. The aim is to gain a better understanding about figurative language in the seven poems by William Shakespeare.

3. Results and Discussion

The researchers found six types of figurative language after analyzing the seven poems of William Shakespeare, the figurative language are personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, metonymy, and litotes in William Shakespeare’s poems entitled “Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer’s Day?”, “Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds”, “Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore”, “When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men’s Eyes”, “All the World’s Stage”, “That time of year thou mayst in me behold”, and “The Rape of Lucrece”. And the figurative language dominantly used in the 7 poems of William Shakespeare’s are personification and metaphor. The results are summarized in the table below.

Table 1
Figurative Language Used in 7 Poems of William Shakespeare

No.	Types of Figurative Language	Found in the Poems	Total Number of Findings	Percentage
1.	Personification	P(1), P(2), P(3), P(4), P(6), P(7)	167	36,54%
2.	Metaphor	P(1), P(2), P(3), P(5), P(6), P(7)	163	35,67%
3.	Simile	P(3), P(4), P(5), P(7)	73	15,97%
4.	Hyperbole	P(2), P(4), P(7)	33	7,22%
5.	Metonymy	P(1), P(7)	18	3,93%
6.	Litotes	P(2)	3	0,66%
7.	Irony	0	0	0%
Total			457	100%

Personification

Datum 1: Poem 1: Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer’s Day?

In line 3, “*Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May*”

The figure of speech that was found in the line above is personification. Personification is type of figurative language that give a human attributes or feelings to a non-human thing or an

object. In the line above, the words "Rough winds" is an object that "shake" the buds of May. The word "shake" is a human feeling.

Datum 2: Poem 2: "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"

In line 9, "*Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks,*"

In line 9, he personifies time, notably Death, as a person. Take note that Shakespeare capitalized the word "Time" in line 9 as if it were the name of a real person.

Datum 3: Poem 3: "Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"

In line 8, "*And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.*"

Shakespeare used the pronoun "his" referring to a non-human thing, in this case is "Time".

Datum 4: Poem 4: "When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"

In line 3, "*And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,*"

There is a clear mark in this line that make the line categorized as personification. The phrase "deaf heaven" is a proof that the poet gives human characteristic to heaven by saying that heaven is deaf.

Datum 5: Poem 6: "That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold"

In line 2, "*Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,*"

In the lines above, Shakespeare used personification. In line 2, the word "shake" is a human characterization and it refers to "those boughs" which is a non-human thing.

Datum 6: Poem 7: "The Rape of Lucrece"

In line 799, "*O Night, thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,*"

In line 800, "*Let not the jealous Day behold that face*"

In line 801, "*Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak*"

In line 802, "*Immodestly lies martyr'd with disgrace!*"

In line 803, "*Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,*"

In line 804, "*That all the faults which in thy reign are made*"

In line 805, "*May likewise be sepulchred in thy shade!*"

The several lines above are categorised as personification. Shakespeare uses the pronouns "thou" and "thy" to night, and personifies "Night" and "Day" as a person.

Metaphor

Datum 7: Poem 1: Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?

In line 1, "*Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day*"

The line above uses figure of speech of metaphor. Metaphor is kind of figurative language that made comparison between two things directly. The poet describes the person he addressed to something beautiful, in this case, the beautiful thing he means is a summer's day. Summer's day create and image as a beautiful and warm thing.

Datum 8: Poem 2: "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"

In line 7, "*It is the star to every wand'ring bark,*"

Line 7 categorized as metaphor because Shakespeare write "*It is the star to every wand'ring bark,*". He compares love to a star that leads every bark on the ocean.

Datum 9: Poem 3: "Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"

In line 5, "*Nativity, once in the main of light,*"

In line 6, "*Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,*"

In line 7, "*Crooked ellipses 'gainst his glory fight,*"

These lines above are categorized as metaphors because it shows how the sun when it rises out of the ocean is the same as a person's development and existence.

Datum 10: Poem 5: "All the World's Stage"

In line 1, *"All the world's a stage,"*

In line 2, *"And all the men and women merely players;"*

William Shakespeare compared this world to the stage in the opening sentence. In line 2, He said that *"And all the men and women merely players;"* which means that all the people in this world are actors who play a role such as a doctor, nurse, and etc.

Datum 11: Poem 6: "That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold"

In line 1, *"That time of year thou mayst in me behold"*

In line 2, *"When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang"*

In line 3, *"Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,"*

In line 4, *"Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."*

Metaphor was found in the four lines to describe the signs of aging. The poet repeatedly compares old age to a certain "time of the year" in these opening lines. The first metaphor for old age is autumn, where "yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang." The poet compares aging to the time of year when the leaves have nearly all fallen, it is cold outside, and the birds have flown from the branches of the tree. This metaphor highlights the emptiness of old age. This is notably clear when the poet utters the phrases "Bare ruin'd choirs" and "boughs wick shake against the cold.". Slowly, the time passed and getting older can't be denied.

Datum 12: Poem 7: "The Rape of Lucrece"

In line 2, *"Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,"*

Shakespeare used metaphor in the line above. The phrase "the trustless wings of false desire" is a comparison of his evil lust to Lucrece.

Simile

Datum 13: Poem 3: "Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"

In line 1, *"Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,"*

In line 2, *"So do our minutes hasten to their end;"*

Simile can be identified by a word or expression such "like," "as," "similar to," "resembles," or "seems. Two lines above categorized as simile because there are the words "like" and "as". Moreover, it's simile because the word "the waves" in the ocean are compared to "the minutes" in a lifetime.

Datum 14: Poem 4: "When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"

In line 11, *"Like to the lark at break of day arising"*

This line is using figure of speech of simile. The line above starts off with the word "like" and that is a characteristic of simile.

Datum 15: Poem 5: "All the World's Stage"

In line 8, *"And shining morning face, creeping like snail"*

The line above categorized as simile because the poet compare two things and he also used the conjunction word 'like'.

Datum 16: Poem 7: "The Rape of Lucrece"

In line 258, *"First red as roses that on lawn we lay,"*

In line 259, *"Then white as lawn, the roses took away."*

The two lines above classified as simile. Shakespeare uses the word "as" in the word "red as roses" and "white as lawn" to comparing two things. In these sentences, Tarquin comparing the red blush on Lucrece's cheeks to roses and lawn.

Hyperbole

Datum 17: Poem 2: "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"

In line 6, *"That looks on tempests and is never shaken;"*

Line 6 of the poem appears to include hyperbole, where we can sense the exaggeration of meaning in that verse. The word *"tempests"* indicates exaggeration in this sentence. Shakespeare depicts the strength of the tempest or severe storms in this passage.

Datum 18: Poem 4: "When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"

In line 11, *"Like to the lark at break of day arising"*

In line 12, *"From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate;"*

We can sense the exaggeration of meaning in the verses above. Shakespeare describes the feeling of the man who think about his love in an exaggeration way by comparing it to *"Like to the lark at break of day arising"* in line 11 and *"From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate;"* in line 12. In his brighter times, he believes he can sing songs straight to God at "heaven's gate."

Datum 19: Poem 7: "The Rape of Lucrece"

In line 402, *"Showing life's triumph in the map of death,"*

In line 403, *"And death's dim look in life's mortality:"*

In line 404, *"Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,"*

In line 405, *"As if between them twain there were no strife,"*

In line 406, *"But that life lived in death, and death in life."*

The several lines above are classified hyperbole. These lines above are full of Tarquin's admiration for Lucrece. The exaggeration of these lines was clear where Tarquin was so shocked to see Lucrece that even though she was asleep, she appeared very beautiful and alive.

Metonymy

Datum 20: Poem 1: Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?

In line 5, *"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines"*

The line above categorized as metonymy. Metonymy is one of figure speech that substituted one thing to another thing that associated or have a comparable meaning with it. The phrase "the eye of heaven" refers to the sun.

Litotes

Datum 21: Poem 2: "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"

In line 1, *"Let me not to the marriage of true minds"*

In line 2, *"Admit impediments. Love is not love"*

In line 3, *"Which alters when it alteration finds,"*

These lines above are examples of litotes. Shakespeare spends the words explaining what love genuinely is by negating what love is not.

Datum 22: Poem 7: "The Rape of Lucrece"

In line 1088, *"To whom she sobbing speaks: 'O eye of eyes,"*

Metonymy can be found in the line above. Shakespeare uses the word "O eye of eyes" to substitute sun.

4. Conclusions

The researcher discovered six of seven types of figurative language in seven of William Shakespeare's poems. The six types of figurative language are personification, metaphor, hyperbole, simile, litotes, and metonymy. Personification was found 167 times in six poems

titled *"Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?"*, *"Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"*, *"Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"*, *"When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"*, *"That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold"*, and *"The Rape of Lucrece"*. Metaphor was found 163 times in six poems titled *"Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?"*, *"Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"*, *"Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"*, *"All the World's Stage"*, *"That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold"*, and *"The Rape of Lucrece"*. Simile was found 73 times in four poems titled *"Like as The Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore"*, *"When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"*, *"All the World's Stage"*, and *"The Rape of Lucrece"*. Hyperbole was found 33 times in three poems titled *"Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"*, *"When, In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"*, and *"The Rape of Lucrece"*. Metonymy was found 17 times in a poem titled *"Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day?"* and *"The Rape of Lucrece"*. Litotes was found 3 times in a poem titled *"Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds"*. The researcher draws the conclusion that personification and metaphor are the two categories of figurative language that William Shakespeare used the most in these seven poems. Shakespeare frequently used personification and metaphor in his seven poems because these two types of figurative language can help him easier to express ideas or concepts in his mind to the readers. It also gives the readers vivid imagination where they can visualize a situation or condition quite clear in their minds. By contrasting two different objects, metaphor helps the reader comprehend the poet's point better. Personification, on the other hand, helps the reader comprehend the idea that the poet is trying to convey in the poem by giving a non-human thing with human characteristics.

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