



An Analysis of Figurative Language in Poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak

Marce Laimena¹,

Pattimura University, Indonesia

Stella Rose Que^{2*},

Pattimura University, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: stella.que@fkip.unpatti.ac.id

Abstract

Figurative language is used to beautify literary work, especially poems. It can make the poems more exciting and unique. But some readers cannot identify the figurative language used in poetry. The poem's readers will read, analyze, and interpret poetry without considering the use of figurative language. The research objectives were to explain the kinds of figurative language used in selected poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak and the use of figurative language in Laksmi Pamuntjak's poems. This is qualitative research with content analysis. This approach offered to analyze data by choosing some poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak, reading the poems, identifying the figurative language used in the poems, then analyzing the figurative language used in the poems. In analyzing figurative language in Laksmi Pamuntjak's poems, the researcher grouped them based on the figurative language used in each poem. In analyzing data, the researcher analyzed every figurative language found in the poems and the last drawing conclusion based on the result of the data analysis. This research revealed figurative language in every selected poem by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The figurative languages used in the poems vary. Each poem had characteristics, so the use of figurative language was also diverse. This research will give readers advantages, especially the lectures and the college students. There is hope that more research will analyze figurative language in poetry and other literary works.

Keywords: *Figurative Language; Laksmi Pamuntjak, Poetry Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Some people are accustomed to writing beautiful sentences in the caption of their social media. They usually upload a photograph and then use beautiful poetic sentences to attract others. It makes them popular. For those who cannot write poetic sentences, they will take the lyrics of a song or someone else's poetry. Most of them quote the song's lyrics or poetry without knowing the meaning. They put it in their caption because of its beautiful word order.

The meaning of poetry is not as clear as the meaning of other literary writing. Wainwright (2004: 22) said that poetry is a part of a functioning and the gesturing of the words we use every day, but it is also set aside. It means that diction in poetry is not the

same as daily language expressions which have lexical meanings and literal purposes. It can be said that the poet used language in his/her poetry by using more complex meaning language. The poetry is written in poetic language but anyone else does not know the meaning beyond.

Poetry expresses the idea and feeling of the poet by considering diction, figurative language, rhyme, rhythm, and other elements. Poets' thoughts and feelings are dealing with their imaginations and experiences. They often used implicit words or sentences in their work.

Based on Drew (1959: 15), poetry is the earliest and remains the most concentrated and intense form of communication among arts and language. In line with Wainwright Wainwright (2004: 5) who explains that reading or writing poetry offers a practicing awareness of the problems of language and meaning . It means that reading poetry does not about the beauty of the words line by line. Reading or writing poetry needs an understanding of the language used. One element which cannot be separated from poetry and language is figurative language.

According to Perrine (1973: 6), figurative language is defined as any way of saying something other than an ordinary way. It means that figurative language has some meanings that differ from the literal meaning. The figurative language is mostly used in poetry because it will express the language behind the ordinary language to beautify the poetry. Actually, the use of language in poetry is free. But the use of figurative language can make the poet write a beautiful diction. Because of the use of figurative language in poetry, the researcher analyzes the application of figurative language in some poems.

There are so many studies about figurative language. It is being studied because it can be found in songs, stories, poetry, even in news. One that inspired the researcher was the study from Fitria (2018), entitled Figurative language used in One Direction's Album Entitled Up All Night. She analyzed and found figurative language in all song lyrics of one album. She found that most of the figurative language that happened in One Direction's song was anaphora and epiphora. Another research was from Nuraeni and Peron (2017). In their study, they analyze figurative language in Kelly Darrow' Poetry. Their study is almost the same as this research because they analyze poetry from a woman poet. The difference between those researches with this study is in the poetry that was analyzed. The mentioned researchers do not use Laksmi Pamuntjak's poetry as

the subject of their research.

This study also analyses the figurative language used in some poetries of Laksmi Pamuntjak. She is an Indonesian poet, essayist, award-winning novelist, and food writer. Pamuntjak has written several novels and articles for local and international publications, including opinion articles for the Guardian. She wrote so many poems on various themes, such as love, poverty, hope, sadness, hope, and many others. She was productive in literary works and was active in a human rights association. Pamuntjak's first novel *Amba*, a national bestseller, was the winner of the Literaturpreis 2016.

Some of Laksmi Pamuntjak's poetry used in this research was taken from her own poems' book compilation entitled *There are Tears in Things*. The researcher takes some poetry randomly and then analyzes the figurative language used in that poetry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Poetry

Roberts and Jacobs (1995: 547) describe poetry and poem as a wide variety of spoken and written forms, styles, and patterns, and also a wide variety of subjects. Poetry may only have some elements after being analyzed. But it usually has deep meaning. Due to the variety of some patterns and elements, it is not possible to make a single comprehensive definition of poetry.

Ollila and Jantas (2006) stated that poetry is any kind of verbal or written language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story. It can be seen in books, magazines, or any other media that some poems use short and incomplete sentences. The poem is usually arranged in lines, but does not observe in rhythmical patterns, nor does it rhyme. It does not mean that they have not had rhyme, meter, rhythm, imagery, diction, or symbolism, and so on. Short sentences can show the reader that the poem has richer, finer, more powerful, and deeper meaning than other literary works. It can be concluded that the language used in the poem is extra-condensed that the language of prose and drama in the way it gives the message. The most necessary component about it is that, as it engages us and amuses us, it also rings of fact.

Some poets write poetry based on their experience and imagination then pour it into the words. Even if they do not think about the elements, it is attached automatically in their works. Reading and understanding poetry is not as easy as learning short stories, drama, or the others because the subject of poetry consists of figurative languages and

connotation phrases or clauses so it makes it difficult to be interpreted.

Figurative Language

One element of poetry is language. Language in poetry makes it more precious and powerful. It usually uses unique, meaningful, and beautiful words to attract the reader. Language elements in poetry include imagery, diction, and figurative language. In this research, the researcher focuses on the use of figurative language. Thus, this is part of the explanation about figurative language.

Some linguists have their own opinions on the kind of figurative language. Perrine (1983) in his book divided figurative language into ten kinds; they are metaphor, simile, synecdoche, personification, metonymy, allegory, hyperbole, irony, symbol, and paradox. Based on the book of Rozakis (1995) figurative language divided into allegory, ambiguity, apostrophe, conceit, connotation and denotation, contrast, metaphor, irony, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metonymy, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, personification, sarcasm, simile, symbolism, synecdoche, synaesthesia, transferred epithet, and understatement. In his book, Keraf (2008) mentions so many kinds of figurative language and divided them into 4 main categories. There are comparisons, contrast, relationship, and repetition.

There are many kinds of figurative language as stated above, but the researcher will focus on ten figurative languages. The explanations of every kind are taken from some linguists, books, or sources. Figurative language used in this part will be used as the tool to examine the poetry of Laksmi Pamuntjak. The explanation is as follows:

Metaphor

According to Wainwright (2005: 153) metaphor is saying one thing in terms of another which has the same characteristic. Daily speech, prose, and poetry often try to use a metaphor. Metaphor is used in poetry when a writer feels that two terms are identical instead of merely similar. It is a comparison but does NOT use **like** or **as** to make the comparison.

Example: *All the world's a stage* (Shakespeare); *The language that is lace* (Eavan Bolan).

Personification

Personification is a kind of figure of speech that describes things such as being alive or having humanity characteristics (Keraf, 2008: 140). Personification gives

human characteristics to inanimate objects, things, animals, or ideas. It shows an analogy to draw a thing as if it were human characteristics.

Example: *The night was creeping on the ground! She crept and did not make a sound* (James Stephens).

Hyperbole

Tjahjono (2010: 65) explains that hyperbole is an exaggeration. It is used to state something or situation exaggeration not intended to be taken literally. Exaggeration or overstatement is used to affirm something in a very different thing and to create a dramatic effect. It is used to make the object greater than the real object.

Example: *In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes, for they in thee a thousand errors note* (Shakespeare).

Metonymy

Keraf (2008: 140) states that metonymy is a figurative language that uses a specific word to explain other words because it has a very close relationship. Metonymy uses to take the name or brand of one object for another to which it has relation. It replaces the exact word with something related to an object, thing, or idea. It means one word is being substituted with another word that has a close association.

Examples: *He buys a new Chevrolet.*

Simile

A simile is an expression that compares something to another else by the use of a function word, such as *like*, *than*, *resemble*, *seem*, or *as* (Keraf, 2008: 138). A simile uses a direct comparison between some ideas which are unlike in their essence.

Example: *My love is like a red, red rose* (Robert Burn).

Synecdoche

Synecdoche means collectively to receive. Synecdoche has two types, they are synecdoche pars prototo and synecdoche totem pro parte. In synecdoche pars prototo the writer uses parts of something to state the whole of the parts. Besides, synecdoche totem pro parte uses the whole parts of something to state the little parts. (Keraf, 2008: 142)

Example:

We spoke all night in tongues, in fingertips, in teeth (Robert Hass) (Synecdoche pars prototo). *SMA 2 hits SMK 4 3-1 in the final basketball championship* (Synecdoche totem pro parte).

Irony

The irony statement is the statement of untrue. It is interpreted by the hearer from the meaning of the speaker, if irony is not praise but usually criticism (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). This is a kind of result from the contrast statement between factual meaning and the suggestion of another meaning.

Example: *Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink* (Samuel Taylor Coleridge).

Paradox

Paradox means to deliver two kinds of contradictory but it reveals the real fact that makes sense if the speaker or the writer uses absurd words (Kennedy & Gioia, 2002). A paradox is a rhetorical term for a situation or statement that seems contradictory or absurd but may contain insight into life (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018: 48). The main purpose is used to attract others' attention and price very dramatic impacts.

Example: *Ignorance is strength* (George Orwell, 1984).

Symbolism

Symbolism is a kind of figurative language that uses the symbol of animals, plants, or things to substitute anything else. Symbolism was established from personal experiences, expressions, and fantasies. (Alm-Arvius, 2003). The symbol is a literary device consisting of some meaning layers representing other aspects, concepts, or traits. It uses an object, idea, or action that has some meaning more than its literal meaning. The symbol usually uses familiar things in people's daily life.

Alliteration

Alliteration is a kind of figurative language that has repeated some consonants. (Keraf, 2008: 130). This figurative language is the repetition of the initial consonant. There should be at least two repetitions in a row.

Example: Sit on the bed alone, staring at the phone

METHOD

The design of content analysis with a qualitative approach is used by the researcher to conduct this research. Content analysis means a process of categorizing data into a similar category. Categorizing the subject research is to identify patterns between variables (Given, 2008). After collecting the subject into the same category, the researcher analyzed it. Denzin and Lincoln (2018:3) claim that qualitative research involves an *interpretive and naturalistic* approach. This means that the researcher studies things naturally to make sense of some phenomena. In terms of the meanings, people bring them. It means that the qualitative approach is used to increase information into a particular phenomenon; it can be a process, a sense, or even a belief.

The subject of the study were three selected poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak, they were: "From the Buru Notebook: From Now On", " Night train: late january", "From The Buru Notebook: The Arrival". The researcher chose the random poetry among Laksmi Pamuntjak collection poems in her book *There are Tears in Things* (Pamuntjak, 2016).

The main data of this research were figurative languages found in the three selected poetries by Laksmi Pamuntjak. First, the researcher selected randomly five poetries of Laksmi Pamuntjak in her book. Then, the poetries were read line by line to find the figurative language and then classify them. In analyzing the data of research, the researcher used a qualitative approach. By using this approach the researcher was able to study the contextual factors, symbolic dimensions, and meaning. The researcher also can find flexibility in unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively.

FINDINGS

This part showed the result of the data analysis of the figurative language found in the poetry by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The researcher analysed the figurative language in the lyric of poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The figurative language of "From the Buru Notebook: From Now On" can be seen in table 1. The figurative language of "Night train: late january" can be seen in table 2. The figurative language of "From The Buru Notebook: The Arrival" can be seen in table 3.

Table 1.

The analysis of figurative language in "From the Buru Notebook: From Now On"

No	Line in Poetry	Figurative Language
1	With what lips do I taste the sweet fear in the mouths (<i>Line 5</i>)	symbolism
2	to the dead faces I've lain next to, that befog the air with reflections of my own (<i>Line 7,8</i>)	symbolism, hyperbole

Table 2.

The analysis of figurative language in "Night train: late January"

No	Line in Poetry	Figurative Language
1	the persimmon of traffic cones (<i>line 4</i>)	metaphor
2	daisy chain of red light (<i>Line 5</i>)	metaphor
3	like Hades' wink the split instant (<i>Line 6</i>)	Simile
4	they say fear grows the wings of the devils (<i>Line 8,9</i>)	Personification, hyperbole
5	there is only numb chugging (<i>Line 12</i>)	Hyperbole
6	and a chill, (<i>Line 13</i>)	Symbolism
7	that freeze-frame a kiss (<i>Line 14</i>)	Metaphor
8	in eternity (<i>15</i>)	Symbolism

Table 3.

The analysis of figurative language in "From the Buru Notebook: The Arrival"

No	Line in Poetry	Figurative Language
1	clung by the ocean (<i>Line 4</i>)	personification
2	krinyu the local doctors, pale as green (<i>Line 5,6</i>)	personification, symbolism
3	The sky leaks like the amber, from your eyes (<i>Line 7</i>)	simile , hyperbole

In this part, the researcher presents the result of the data analyzed. There are three selected poems written by Laksmi Pamuntjak. Each poem has been analyzed in every table. In the first poem, From the Buru Notebook: From Now On, there was 2 symbolism and 1 hyperbole. In the second poetry, Night train: late january, it was found 3 metaphor, 1 personification, 2 hyperbole, 3 metaphor, and 2 symbolism. in the third poetry, From The Buru Notebook: The Arrival, it was found 2 personifications, 1 symbolism, 1 simile, and 1 hyperbole.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher gives further explanation about the data which had been presented in the previous part. This part was started by giving the summarization of the whole data. From the result, one kind of figurative language, alliteration, was not found in all poetries. Some figurative languages only appeared in each poetry. Metaphor and simile were only seen in poetry Night train: late january. Metonymy was only seen in poetry "Night Train: Mid March". The symbol was only seen in poetry. It means that not every language feature can be applied every time the author writes the poetry.

Some figurative languages were identified in some poetry. Irony can be found in "From The Buru Notebook: The Arrival and Night Train: Mid March". Personification can be found in three poetries (From the Buru Notebook: From Now On, Night train: late january, The Break Up). Hyperbole can be found in three poetries (Night train: late january, The Break Up, Night Train: Mid March). Paradox can be found in three

poetries ("Night train: late january", "From The Buru Notebook: The Arrival", "Night Train: Mid March"). Synecdoche was the most often used of all. It can be found in "From the Buru Notebook: From Now On", "Love is like a bruise", "Night Train: Mid March."

Fitria (2018) found in her study that the most used figurative languages were anaphora and epiphora. The difference between this research and Fitria study was the sum of the figurative language types, the sum of the research subjects, and the type of research subject. In this research, the researcher has 10 figurative languages to be analyzed, in her study she had 13. In this research, the researcher analyzes 5 selected poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak, but her study she had 9 song lyrics to be analyzed. Fitria focuses on figurative language and then analyzes the lyrics in her study. It is different from this research because it focuses on the poetry and then analyzes them to find the figurative in each line. Those two kinds of analysis are good because it has their own special thing. Song lyrics and poetry are almost the same. But usually, poetry has a deeper meaning than song lyrics. In song lyrics, there are fewer figurative languages than in poetry. So it is easy to focus on figurative language when analyzing song lyrics. In this research, the researcher focuses on each poetry because in one poetry it will be found more than one figurative language.

In Nuraeni and Peron (2017), it was found that Kelly Darrow uses metaphor, simile, irony, personification, and hyperbole. The way they analyze poetry is also almost the same as this research. They analyze Kelly's poetry line by line to find the figurative language.

The theme of poetry was analyzed in their study and this research was different. Kelly's poetry is about social life and Laksmi Pamuntjak's poems are mostly about love. The findings in this research are different from those two previous studies. The first previous study focuses on song lyrics and the second focuses on poetry but from a different writer. The various result will make various knowledge for the reader.

CONCLUSION

Some figurative languages are found in poetry by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The totals of figurative languages found in Laksmi Pamuntjak's selected poems were 43 sentences. Metaphor consists of 2 sentences, personification consists of 10 sentences, hyperbole consist of 6 sentences, simile consist of 1 sentence, metonymy consists of 4 sentences,

synecdoche consists of 7 sentences, symbolism consists of 4 sentences, paradox consist of 5 sentences, alliteration did not appear in any sentence. All ten figurative languages were not always found in all poems. Among the ten figurative languages, alliteration there was not found any. Some figurative languages only can be found in one poem. Some others can be found in more than one poem. It also can be concluded that one poem could only consist of two figurative languages. Next, three selected poetries of Laksmi Pamuntjak tells about love, struggle, freedom, survival, and hope. All those five poems can inspire the reader. The reader needs to read and try to understand the meaning of the poems so that they can catch what the author wants to deliver in her poetry. The poems can also be the motivation and inspiration for those who want to express their feeling in poetry. It is because Laksmi Pamuntjak wrote her poems using simple sentences.

REFERENCES

- Alm-Arvius, C. (2003). *Figures of Speech*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Dancygier, B., & Sweetser, E. (2014). *Figurative Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5 ed.). Night Train: Mid March: SAGE Publications.
- Drew, E. A. (1959). *Poetry: A Modern Guide to Its Understanding and Enjoyment*. New York: W. W. Norton, Incorporated.
- Fitria, T. N. (2018). Figurative Language Used in One Direction's Album Entitled up All Night. *English and Literature Journal*, 5(1), 69–79. doi: 10.24252/elite.v5i1a7.
- Given, L. M. (2008). *Qualitative Research Method*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Kennedy, X. J., & Gioia, D. (2002). *An Introduction to Poetry*. Night Train: Mid March: Longman.
- Keraf, G. (2008). *Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- McArthur, T., Lam-McArthur, J., & Fontaine, L. (2018). *Oxford Companion to the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nuraeni, C., & Peron, P. A. (2017). Figurative Language in Kelly Darrow's Selected Poetry. *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 9(2), 122–129. doi: 10.31294/w.v9i2.2480.

Ollila, B., & Jantas, J. (2006, Desember 15). *The Definition of Poetry*. Accessed from <https://joejantas.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/the-definition-of-poetry1.pdf>.

Pamuntjak, M. (2013). *The Complete Collected Poems*. Night Train: Mid March: Hachette UK.

Perrine, L. (1973). *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Perrine, L. (1983). *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Roberts, E. V., & Jacobs, E. H. (1995). *Literature*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall International.

Rozakis, L. (1995). *How to Interpret Poetry*. New York: A Simon & Schuster Macmillan Company.

Tjahjono, T. (2010). *Mendaki Gunung Puisi ke Arah Kegiatan Apresiasi*. Malang: Banyumedia Publishing Anggota IKAPI.

Wainwright, J. (2004). *Poetry the Basic*. New York: Routledge