

# AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN EMILY DICKINSON'S POEMS

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## ABSTRACT

*This study which is entitled "Figurative Language in Emily Dickinson Poems" focusing on the use of a figurative language and categorize it accordance with the types and describe the meaning of figurative language itself. The reseacher choose five poems which have interesting titles and famous works of Emily Dickinson and using intrinsic approach to gain an understanding of the meaning of figurative language in each poem. The data were collected from Emily Dickinson's poems and focused on the figurative language. The data which have been identified, collected and classified are analyzed descriptively by using intrinsic approach. This study uses the theory of Perrine in his book "Literature, Structure, Sound and Sense". According to Perrine, figurative language is away to express something beyond the usual way. In his book also describes the types of figurative language such as personification, metaphor, simile, symbol, synecdoche, metonymy, and hyperbole. The result of this study can be summarized as follows : first, in the poems of Emily Dickinson there are three types of figurative language, including : personification, simile, hyperbole. The personification and simile types dominate every poem of Emily Dickinson. Second, the meaning of figurative language used by Emily Dickinson in her poems in general described Emily Dickinson life experience.*

**Keywords:** Personification, Simile, Hyperbole.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The poem is one of the literary works that has a rhythm and story. It can express any kind of emotion and have ideas. The poem uses aesthetic and rhythmic in writing so that making a poem is not just writing but it can derive from the result of a feeling expressed by a poet in a language that uses rhythm, rhyme, dimension, stanza, and the composition of meaningful lyrics until becomes a beautiful literary work. The poem is a literary work that the poet creates with spontaneous and powerful feelings

a strong feeling of the poet to read of audience.

Someone can express his or her ideas in many ways. The ideas can be expressed directly through oral and written communication. One of the ways expressing ideas in written form is poem. In poem, the language says different meaning than the ordinary meaning. It shows the strong feeling that is written in a beautiful stanza. According to Parini (2013), poems represent "the most refined way human beings have ever found for expressing themselves in language,

language". It also contains philosophical messages that are showed by the poet through emotions, imaginations, and senses.

Most people find difficulties when studying or reading poetry. Any difficult vocabulary in the poems is either explained or given special attention. Poetry is full of meaning and symbol. It is very important to understand about poetry when someone reads poetry. When readers read poetry, they will find message and theme of poetry. To read a poetry, it is important to know and find the figurative language used in the poetry. Figurative language is not to make poetry confusing, but to make it clear.

One of the famous American poets is Emily Dickinson who is capable in communicating through poems. According to Kirk (2004), she was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, on December 10, 1830. In her early twenties, she began to write poetry in her lifetime. She had made so many poems, but only few that are published before her death. *Because I could not stop for death* is one of her poem that is published on 1890. In addition, by the age of 20, Emily Dickinson had begun to the seclusion that would define the rest of her life. The deaths of several friends and mentors had started weighing heavily on Emily's mind. Those made her in a depression. The final year was when her father passed away suddenly while on a trip to Boston in 1874.

The researcher used Emily Dickinson poems since the researcher of the thesis has read some of his literary works. She is one of the great poets in America. Most of his poems have deep meaning and the figurative language gives poetic sense to his poem. This study, deals with figurative language, as they are used

in Emily Dickinson's poems. That is why to analyze the figurative language used in those poems are interesting.

In this research, the researcher discusses the figurative language based on Perrine's perception. According to Perrine, figurative language consists of 12 kinds, they are: simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole, understatement, and irony. But the researcher only focus to investigate on hyperbole, personification and simile. In this research has 3 research problem they are, how is the hyperbole of Emily Dickinson's poems?. Next is how is the personification of Emily Dickinson's poems?. The last how is the simile of Emily Dickinson's poems?

This research focused on figurative language with mainly analyzed about hyperbole, personification, simile seen in the "*I'm Nobody Who Are You, This World Is Not Conclusion, A Bird Come Down The Walk, A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I, A Prison Gets To Be A Friend*" poems. This research provides significance for other researchers who want to analyzed other types of figurative language. In this research objective is find out the hyperbole, personification, and simile in Emily Dickinson's poems. On the other hand, this research can be useful as a comparison to previous studies or future studies.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature is concerned with all aspect of human life and the universe in their entirety, surely every work of

literatures is about something, and the more of a person reads, the better stocked will his mind be with knowledge. According to Wellek, literature is the criterion is either aesthetic worth alone or aesthetic worth in combination with the general intellectual distinction.

Literature is considered as the expression of beautiful thought, ideas in beautiful language. (Hartiningsih, 2001) will be interesting for some readers if they have high sensitivity and imagination because they can really enjoy the beauty of literature. Literature is writing of particular kind involving a particular use of words, writing that works in particular way, makes different (usually more exacting). Literature is human expression about the life experience in language form.

Poetry is the most considered and concentrated form of literature (Perrine in Siswanto, 2010). Poetry as a genre has completely competition of using word. It does not give space to make free creation for the author because poetry has a solid competition and also concentrated. Poetry useless word than the other literary words, but by less word a poem can explain more cases.

According to Pradopo (2000), figurative language is a language to describe the comparison, equation, and imagery. Figurative language is crucial to get the poetic meaning of poem. There are figurative language make poem more interesting, more beautiful, more life, and make clear of imagine. There are various kinds of figurative language, but although they are diverse they have something (characteristic) common, namely figurative language that connects things by plugging in something else. The types of

figurative language are simile, metaphor, personification, allegory, metonymy, etc.

The researcher discusses the figurative language based on Perrine's perception. According to Perrine, figurative language consists of 12 kinds, they are: simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole, understatement, and irony. But the researcher only focus to investigate on hyperbole, personification and simile.

Hyperbole is a figurative language that exaggerates things without diminishing the reality of the true meaning. Personification is a figurative language that gives the nature, behavior or human equipment to animals, objects, or concept. Simile is figurative language that compares things with others indirectly, using comparative words such as like, as, than, similar to, or resemble.

To conduct the research, the researcher takes some literary studies which refer to as previous study which have same approach or theory. The first, Oktavia Ines Windyaswari (2018), entitled "Analysis on Figures of Speech Found in Emily Dickinson's *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*". In this study, the writer focuses on poem. The selected poem is Emily Dickinson's *Because I Could Not Stop for Death* which was published on 1980. The poem tells about death in Emily Dickinson's point of view.

Second, the thesis written by Habib Syarwani (2017), entitled "An Analysis of Metaphor in Emily Dickinson's Poems". In this research, the researcher described metaphorical expression and find out the implicit meaning of those metaphorical expression. The researcher did not

describe numerical but describe the data in this research. This mean, that this research is qualitative descriptive. The researcher analyzed the sentences are emphasized on using metaphorical expression in every condition and analyzed the meaning of that metaphorical expressions through generic stylistic approach. The poetry used are, *“He ate and drank the precious Words, I had no time to hate, I had no time to hate, Look back on time with kindly Eyes, The heart asks pleasure first, I felt a cleavage in my mind, If you were coming in the fall”*.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used qualitative methods. The data source was collected from the sentence taken from the sentences in *“I’m Nobody Who Are You, This World Is Not Conclusion, A Bird Come Down The Walk, A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I, A Prison Gets To Be A Friend”* poems.

Based on the research method, the procedures of collecting data can be seen in figure 3.1 follow:

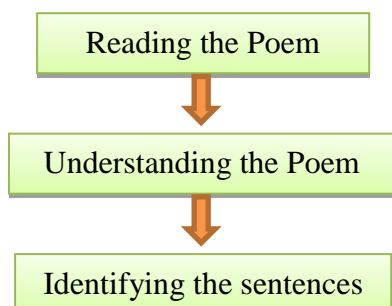


Figure 3.1 : Step in collect the data

Based on research method, the data analysis technique would include the following set as seen in figure 3.2 as follow:

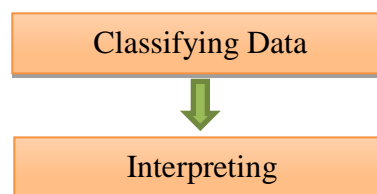
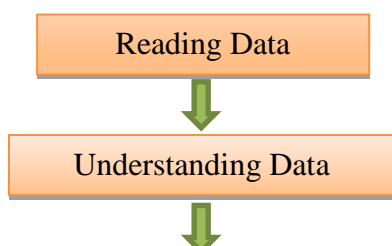


Figure 3.2 : Step in analys the data

The first stage was reading the data, and limit the data based on data itself, the next stage was identifying data. The next stage was to classified the figurative language data contained in the poems. Next after reading, understanding and identifying the sentences, the researcher finds Emily Dickinson’s poems phrase that contains figurative language and then tries to describe the meaning sentence so that the author’s assumption in Emily Dickinson’s poems are getting stronger.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher got the result of figurative language used in *“I’m Nobody Who Are You, This World Is Not Conclusion, A Bird Come Down The Walk, A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I, A Prison Gets To Be A Friend”* poems by Emily Dickinson which can be seen in table 4.1 as follow:

POEMS	P	S	H
1	√		
2	√	√	√
3	√	√	
4		√	
5	√	√	

Information:

P = Personification

S = Simile

H = Hyperbole

Table 4.1 shows the finding of the figurative language used in poems “*I’m Nobody Who Are You, This World Is Not Conclusion, A Bird Come Down The Walk, A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I, A Prison Gets To Be A Friend*” namely, 4 of Emily Dickinson’s poems contain personification, 4 of Emily Dickinson’s poems contain simile, and the last only one poem has hyperbole.

The researcher found the figurative language identified in the first poem entitled “*I’m Nobody Who Are You*” there is 3 personifications found. The next found the figurative language identified in the second poem entitled “*This World Is Not Conclusion*” there were 9 personifications, 2 simile, 2 hyperbole. The next found the figurative language identified in the third poem entitled “*A Bird Come Down The Walk*” there were 5 personifications, 3 simile. After that the figurative language found identified in the fourth poem entitled “*A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I*” there is 4 simile. The last found the figurative language identified in the fifth poem entitled “*A Prison Gets To Be A Friend*” there were 7 personifications, 6 simile.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Of Emily Dickinson’s five poems entitled “*I’m Nobody Who Are You*”, “*This World Is Not Conclusion*”, “*A Bird Come Down The Walk*”, “*A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I*”, “*A Prison Gets To Be A Friend*” only the poem entitled “*This World Is Not*

*Conclusion*” contains figurative language of hyperbole such as, “*Contempt of generations, And crucifixion shown*”.

2. Only four of Emily Dickinson’s poems contain personification of the five poems. The poem entitled “*I’m Nobody Who Are You*” such as *How public - like a frog, To tell one’s name – the livelong june, To an admiring bog!*.

The poem entitled “*This World Is Not Conclusion*” such as *A species stands beyond, To guess it, puzzles scholars, To gain it, men have borne, Faith slips – and laughs and rallies, Blushes if any see –, Plucks at a twig of evidence –, And ask a vane the way –, Much gesture from the pulpit, Strong hallelujahs roll.*

The poem entitled “*A Bird Come Down The Walk*” such as *a bird come down the walk, He bit an angle worm in halves, And ate the fellow raw, To let a beetle pass, Or butterflies, off banks of noon-*.

The poem entitled “*A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I*”, there are no words that contain personification.

The poem entitled “*A Prison Gets To Be A Friend*” such as *A prison gets to be a friend, We learn to know the planks, The posture of the key, Whose features-day and night-, The liberty we knew, Avoided like a dream.*

3. Only four of Emily Dickinson’s poems contain personification of the five poems. The poem entitled “*I’m Nobody Who Are You*”, there are no words that contain simile.

The poem entitled "This World Is Not Conclusion" such as *Invisible as music-, But positive as sound.*

The poem entitled "A Bird Come Down The Walk" such as *They looked like frightened beads, I thought. Like one in danger, cautions.*

The poem entitled "A Loss Of Something Ever Felt I" such as *As one bemoaning a dominion, It self the only prince cast out, And fainter too as wiseness is, And a suspicion, like a finger.*

The poem entitled "A Prison Gets To Be A Friend" such as *It deal us-stated as our food, And hungered for the same, As plashing in the pools, As phantasm steel, Are present to us-as our own, And as escapless quite.*

The researcher has some suggestions for next researcher. The poetry is a branch of literature which is very interested to analyze. It is not only analyzing figurative language, meaning, theme, and message but all things related about poetry, such as imagery, symbol, rhyme, sound, and rhythm. Therefore, future research could further to study about the poetry in different poem. The study in analyzing poetry is not only limited to the problems studied by the writer at this time but also there are still many aspects can be analyzed so in the writing of the thesis will be better.

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