

*Figurative Language in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story Entitled The Mask of The Red Death, The Tell-Tale Heart and The Cask of Amontillado*

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Abstract

The study focuses on Figurative Language in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story Entitled *The Mask of The Red Death*, *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Cask of Amontillado*. The objective of this study is to identify the types of figurative language in three of the short story, to find the dominant of figurative language, and to analyze the meaning of figurative language. The researcher applies figurative language theory by Perrine, theory meaning by Leech and uses descriptive qualitative research design. In this study, nine types of figurative language are found; they are simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony, paradox, synecdoche, symbol, and allegory. The most dominant types of figurative language based on the short story by Poe. In *The Mask of the Red Death*, simile and personification are the dominant of figurative language. *The Tell-Tale Heart*, hyperbole is the dominant of figurative language. *The Cask of Amontillado*, simile is the dominant of figurative language.

Keywords : figurative language, short story,

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Language is known as a medium of communication. Kreidler (1998:19) states that language is a system symbols through which people communicate. Human beings are social beings who are interdependent with each other. Through language, people can express their thought; ideas, feelings, and can also build relationship with others. People not only understand the form of language but also the meaning in learning and interpreting it.

According to Perrine (1977: 61) figurative language is another way of adding extra dimension to language. Figurative language, in other words, is another way of expressing something ordinarily and cannot be taken literally. In daily conversations, figurative language is rarely used. But in literary works, figurative language is mostly used, such as articles in newspaper, advertisement, novel, short story, poems, etc. The use of words that go beyond the ordinary context is figurative language. It needs that reader to use imagination to figure out the meaning of the whole literary works.

Based on Perrine's theory, there are 12 types of figurative language, they are: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony, paradox, metonymy, symbol, allegory, apostrophe, synecdoche, and understatement. The below are further explanations about the types of figurative language.

a. Simile

The simile is a word or phrase that expresses an explicit comparison of two things such as *like, as, than, similar to, or resembles*. In other words, a simile is a direct comparison of two objects that are deeply opposed in some sense.

Example: Her eyes are like a sparkle diamond.

b. Metaphor

Metaphor is the process of comparing two different objects as if they are one. Metaphor uses more appropriate words such as; is, are, was, or were to express something.

Example: Life is a roller coaster.

c. Personification

Personification consists of giving the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object, or a concept. It is really a subtype of metaphor, an implied comparison in which the figurative term of the comparison is always a human being.

Example: My board marker was flying across the whiteboard.

d. Apostrophe

Apostrophe defined as addressing someone absent or something nonhuman as if it were alive and present could reply to what is being said. Apostrophe is also a type of personification in which a nonhuman or inanimate object is directly addressed as if it was a human or animate.

Example: “My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?”

e. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is the use of the part for the whole. Synecdoche is divided into two parts: Pars pro-toto and Totem pro-parte. Pars proto-toto is a part for the whole and totem pro-parte is when the whole things stand for its part.

Example: A boy has been admitted to the hospital. The nurse says, “*He’s in good hands.*”

f. Metonymy

Metonymy is the use of something closely related to the thing actually meant. Metonymy can be defined as the substitution for one word for another that is closely related to an object.

Example: “Nice *ride*, man.”

g. Symbol

A symbol may be defined as something that means more than what it is. A thing (could be an object, person, situation, color, or action) which is stand for something else more abstract.

Example: The four-leaf clover

h. Allegory

Allegory is narrative or description that has second meaning beneath the surface one. Allegory is description that has another meaning. The meaning beneath is different from its description. The objective of its use is to preach some kind of a moral lesson.

Example: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe novel written by C.S Lewis.

i. Paradox

Paradox is an apparent contradiction that is nevertheless somehow true. It may be either a situation or a statement.

Example: I must be cruel to be kind.

j. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is simply exaggeration out in the service of truth. Hyperbole is a statement so exaggeration that is not assumed to be true by anyone.

Example: An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

k. Understatement

Understatement is saying less than one means that may exist in what one says or merely in how one says it. The presentation of a thing with under emphasizes in order to achieve a greater effect or implying more than is said. It is the opposite of exaggeration.

Example: *The storm brought us a little bit of rain today.*

l. Irony

Irony is a statement contrary to intended meaning. The intended implication is always simply a mockery of what is being stated literally.

Example: *Water, water everywhere, nor any a drop to drink.*

According to Leech (1981: IX) semantics (as the study of meaning) is central to the

study of communication; and as communication becomes more and more a crucial factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes more and more pressing. Semantics not only the center of communication study but also the center of the study of the human mind thought processes, cognition, conceptualization-all these are intricately bound up with the way in which we classify and cover experience of the world through language. Knowing the messages contained within the short story provides a deep understanding of the meaning.

Leech (1981: 23) states that there are seven types of meaning as follows:

- a. Conceptual meaning (sometimes called 'denotative' or 'cognitive' meaning) is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication.
- b. Connotative meaning is the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content.
- c. Social meaning is that which a piece of language conveys about the social circumstance of its use.
- d. Affective meaning is largely a parasitic category in the sense that to express our emotions we rely upon the mediation of categories of meaning – conceptual, connotative, or stylistic.
- e. Reflected meaning is the meanings which arise in case of multiple conceptual meaning, when one of a word forms part of our response to another sense.
- f. Collocative meaning consist of the associations a word acquires on account of the meaning of words which tend to occur in its environment.
- g. Thematic meaning is a matter of choice between alternative grammatical constructions.

The researcher chooses short story in this study because short story has a unique diction such as a figurative language. Using figurative language in a short story makes it sound more attractive and alive, also make the short story can catch the reader's attention. Therefore the reader must learn about figurative language to understanding the content and the message of the short story.

Based on the explanation above, the reseracher wants to analyze a figurative language in short story. Many of the authors around the world who published their literary works, but the thesis writer chooses short story from Edgar Allan Poe. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) born in Boston, Massachusetts. Poe was an American author, artist, critic and editor best known for reminiscent brief stories and poems that captured the imagination and interest of reader around

the world. Poe's writing style is a dark and unique. Poe has many literary works that became his best-known and all his stories have the same theme of either death, lost love, or both; such as *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

Therefore the researcher chooses the title for this study, "Figurative Language in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story Entitled *The Mask of the Red Death*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and *The Cask of Amontillado*".

## B. Research Method

This study used descriptive qualitative design because it focuses on the analysis or interpretation of textual content in context. The sources of data for this study are a short story entitled *The Mask of the Red Death*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and *The Cask of Amontillado* written by Edgar Allan Poe.

## C. Finding and Discussion

From the short story, the researcher finds types of figurative language in *The Mask of the Red Death*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and *The Cask of Amontillado* short story by Edgar Allan Poe.

### 1. Types of Figurative Language in "The Mask of the Red Death"

**Datum 1** *The red death had long been feeding on the country.* (Page 1: 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

"The red death had long been feeding on the country" is an example of personification since it depicts an inanimate object that has an attributes of human being. In fact, the word "the red death" is an inanimate object which cannot feed like humans.

**Datum 2** *And then, after another sixty minutes, after another three thousand and six hundred seconds of Time, of flying Time, the clock struck again, and the dancers stopped as before.* (Page 1: 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The sentence above is an example of personification because this phrase "of flying time". "Flying" is a human characteristic while "time" is inanimate object.

**Datum 3** *It did not seem that their steps followed the music, but that the music rose from their steps.* (Page 3: 8<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The sentence above is an example of personification since “rise” is a human characteristic while “the music” is an inanimate object; human can rise with their legs.

**Datum 4** *But the other rooms are crowded, and in them beats hotly the heart of life.*  
(Page 3: 9<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence is categorized into personification because this sentence identifying human nature to non-human object that is character “*beats*” to the object “the heart of life”.

## 2. Types of Figurative Language in “The Tell-Tale Heart”

**Datum 1** *heard sounds from heaven; and I heard sounds from hell!* (Page 64: 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence is categorized in hyperbole, because this sentence was used the words that give a dramatic effect, such as “I heard sounds from heaven; and I heard sounds from hell”. This sentence is used to emphasize the sentence and to make the reader get the point in the short story.

**Datum 2** *When the old man looked at me with his vulture eye cold feeling went up and down my back; even my blood became cold.* (Page 64: 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence is categorized in hyperbole. In sentence “even my blood became cold”, that it is not possible. The author uses hyperbole to give dramatic effect when the readers read the story. It is merely for emphasis to portray this situation.

**Datum 3** *I stood quite still. For a whole hour I did not move.* (Page 65: 8<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence is categorized in hyperbole, because this sentence was used the words that give a dramatic effect, such as “I stood quite still. For a whole hour I did not move”.

**Datum 4** *Dead as a stone.* (Page 66: 11<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence above is categorized into simile. It is compare two different things uses connective words such as ‘as’, illustrates how “dead” compares to “stone”.

## 3. Types of Figurative Language in “The Cask of Amontillado”

**Datum 1** Fortunato had hurt me a thousand times and I had suffered quietly. (Page 68: 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)

This underlined sentence above is categorized as hyperbole, the author use the word ‘thousand’ to give exaggerated expression and show the situation to readers that Montessor was really hurt.

**Datum 2** He spoke to me more warmly than was usual, for already he had drunk more wine than was good for him. (Page 69: 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

This underlined sentence above is simile. Because in the sentence ‘he spoke to me more warmly’ compare with ‘was usual’ by using connective words ‘than’.

**Datum 3** I acted pleased to see him, and shook his hand, as if he had been my closest friend. (Page 69: 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence above is categorized as simile, because in the sentence ‘I acted pleased to see him, and shook his hand’ compare with ‘as if he had been my closest friend’ by using the connective words ‘as’.

**Datum 4** This, I knew, was enough to make it certain that they would all leave as soon as my back was turned. (Page 69: 17<sup>th</sup> paragraph)

The underlined sentence above contains synecdoche, in this sentence ‘as soon as my back was turned’ is identifying as synecdoche pars proto-toto, a part of something is used to refer to its whole.

#### D. CONCLUSION

After getting the results of the analysis, the researcher makes the following conclusions. The first objective of the study, the thesis writer found out the types of figurative language in the three of the short story by Poe, there are: The Mask of the Red Death, The Tell-Tale Heart, and The Cask of Amontillado. The thesis writer used Perrine’s theory to solve the problems and found out the types of figurative language in three of the short story by Edgar Allan Poe.

In the first short story, The Mask of the Red Death the researcher finds five types of figurative language that Poe used in the short story, there are one sentence of paradox, one sentence of metaphor, one sentence of allegory, four sentence of personifications, and five sentence of simile. In the second short story, The Tell-Tale Heart the thesis writer found five types of figurative language in the short story, there are one sentence of symbol, one sentence of irony, two sentence of simile, two sentence of personification, and three sentence of

hyperbole. In the third short story, *The Cask of Amontillado*, the thesis writer found out the types of figurative language in the short story, there are one sentence of hyperbole, one sentence of synecdoche, one sentence of irony, and two sentence of simile.

In the second objective of the study, the researcher finds out the most dominant figurative language used Poe in his three of short story. In *The Mask of the Red Death*, the dominant of figurative language are simile with five sentences and personification with four sentences. In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the dominant of the figurative language is hyperbole with three sentence. And in *The Cask of Amontillado*, simile come out as the dominant of figurative language in this short story with two sentence. There are three of types figurative language that did not find in three of the short story by Poe's. The reason why the three of them did not find because there is not the data that contains three of types figurative language.

Moreover, the researcher discovers through this study that figurative language it turn out not only to embellish the words, phrase, or sentence but also explains the meaning behind the figurative language itself. Figurative language frequently used in daily life to adding the dramatic or serious effect.



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