FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN A SHORT STORY ENTITLED "AN ANGEL IN DISGUISE"

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Abstract

This study endeavored to find out the types of figurative language in a short story entitled "An Angel in Disguise" and the most frequent occurrence of the figurative language type. This short story was chosen because it contained good moral values. The method employed in this study was a descriptive qualitative method. The steps in analyzing data in this study encompassed reading the short story, looking for the phrases or sentences that belonged to figurative language, classifying those phrases or sentences based on the types of figurative language, interpreting the figurative language found, drawing the conclusions. The results showed that there were several types of figurative languages found in the short story. They were personification, metaphor, hyperbole, and simile. Moreover, the most frequent occurrence was hyperbole. The use of exaggeration (hyperbole) in the short story can make the readers excited in reading it and avoid the readers' boredom. Furthermore, this short story can be used as learning materials for Senior High School students as it can enrich students' insights about narrative text and how to make a story interesting.

Keywords: An Angel in Disguise; Figurative Language; Short Story

INTRODUCTION

This study probes the figurative language in a short story entitled 'An Angel in Disguise'. As it is known, people need language to communicate one another and sometimes they use sentences that do not contain the real meaning. In other words, someone may not speak literally. One of the ways to do it is by making use of figurative language. In this way, people may reveal their thoughts or feelings in certain words with certain meanings.

Figurative language refers to language that uses various figures of speech (Arifah, 2016). Figurative language can also be said as language employing expressions or words that contain different meanings from the literal ones (Harya, 2016). Literal meaning is the real meaning of a word or utterance. The opposite of the literal meaning is non-literal meaning. In this case, it is closely related to semantics, which is the study about language meaning.

Figurative language can be used in any form of communication (Harya, 2016), either spoken or written. We may find the use of figurative language in literary works, such as short stories, poems, or novels. We also can find it in speeches, songs, advertisements, etc. Moreover, we need to use our imagination to interpret or understand the meaning of the figurative language used in a literary work or others.

There are several types of figurative language. According to Leech, there are seven types consisting of irony, hyperbole, metaphor, metonymy, litotes, simile, and personification (Harya, 2016). The following are the further explanation of each type of figurative language.

1) Irony
    Irony is a type of figurative language which states contradictory meanings. It is usually used to satirize by saying the opposite. For example, "it's so clear your writing that I can't read".

2) Hyperbole
    Hyperbole is a figure of speech containing statements that are excessive in number, size or nature with the intention of placing emphasis on a statement or situation in order to enhance its impression and influence. In other words, it is an exaggeration. For example, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse".

3) Metaphor
    Metaphor refers to the use of words or groups of words without their true meanings, but rather with their similarities or comparisons. In this case, an implied comparison between two unrelated things which share some common characteristics is made. For example, "building castles in the air", which means making unrealistic plans; "king of the jungle", which means lion.

4) Metonymy
    Metonymy is a type of figurative language in which the name of a concept or an object is replaced with a word or some words closely related to it. For example, "my sister asks me to buy Indomie", Indomie is a brand name of instant noodle.

5) Litotes
    Litotes is an understatement in which a positive statement is expressed by negating its contrary or opposite.

6) Simile
    Simile can be defined as a type of figurative language that compares two unlike things. In this case, a direct comparison between two things is created and it usually uses the word "as" and "like". For example, "they fight like cats and mice".

7) Personification
    Personification is a type of language in which it gives human characteristic/ behaviors to an inanimate object. For example, "the breeze greets me this morning". Here, the breeze is an object that cannot greet someone. 'Greet' is an act that is usually done by a human being.

There were several studies about figurative language. One of them was a study aimed to find out the types of figurative language used in the songs of One Direction's album entitled "Up All Night" (Fitria, 2018). Moreover, this study also sought the most dominant figurative language in the song lyrics in this album. The data analyzed in this study were the phrases or the sentences of the song lyrics in this album. There were thirteen songs in this album. The findings of the study showed that there were six types of figurative language used in this album. They encompassed metaphor, parallelism, simile, hyperbole, repetition, and personification. In addition, repetition became the most dominant type of figurative language used in the song lyrics of this album.

Another study of figurative language on song lyric was undertaken by Ibrahim et al in 2019. Their study investigated the types and the meanings of figurative language used in "Endless Love" song (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Pure structuralism approach was chosen for analyzing data. The findings indicated that there were 7 types of figurative language used in this song lyric. They were repetition (36%), hyperbole (32%), metaphor (12%), pleonasm (8%), personification (4%), and onomatopoeia (4%). Moreover, the meanings of the figurative language in the song lyric included connotative and denotative meanings.

The other study about figurative language on song lyric was an analysis of figurative language in Michael Jakson's song lyrics. The objective of this study was to find out the figurative language in the aforementioned song lyrics, especially the types of figurative language and the dominant type (Lumbangtobing et al., 2021). In analyzing the kinds of figurative language, this study employed Perrine theories. A number of ten songs were analyzed here. The findings revealed that there were six types of figurative language found in Michael Jackson's songs, namely metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, symbol, and hyperbole. Moreover, the most dominant type was hyperbole (30%).

An investigation of figurative language in a song lyric was also undertaken by Dewi et al in 2020. In their study, they used a descriptive qualitative model with a pure structuralism approach (Dewi et al., 2020). The results conveyed that there were 6 kinds of figurative language in "Lose You to Love Me" song including paradox, repetition, personification, irony, hyperbole, and simile. Furthermore, hyperbole was the most dominant kind of figurative language found in this song.

Besides figurative language on songs, the analysis of figurative language on poems had also ever been undertaken, as what Syafitri & Marlinton did in 2018. They conducted a study on Edgar Allan Poe's Poems (Syafitri & Marlinton, 2018). The goals of their study was to describe types and meanings of figurative language employed in Edgar Allan Poe's poems. A number of eight poems were analyzed here and this study used library research as the data collecting technique. This study found ninety six figurative language in the poems consisting of six similes, two ironies, six metonymies, twenty five personifications, eleven hyperboles, nine paradoxes, sixteen metaphors, and twenty one symbols. Furthermore, in line with the meanings of figurative languages in the poems, they were classified into thirty social meanings, forty two connotative meanings, sixteen reflected and eight collocative meanings. With so many figurative language used, it could be said that Edgar Allan Poe's poems were very attractive and they could evoke the readers' imagination.

A study about figurative language on a speech was also conducted. This study probed the kinds of figurative language used on Joe Biden's victory speech and their meanings (Nainggolan et al., 2021). Content analysis method was employed in this study. Based on the results of the study, it was found out that from eighty six sentences, there were five kinds of figurative language used. They were hyperbole (five sentences), litotes (one sentence), personification (thirty four sentences), metaphor (forty four sentences), and simile (2 sentences). Here, it could be seen that metaphor often appeared in this speech.

The above studies were studies about figurative language on song lyrics, poems, and a speech. Different from the aforementioned studies, this study strives to reveal the figurative language in a short story. The goal of the study is to find out the types of figurative language in a short story entitled "An Angel in Disguise" and the most frequent occurrence of the figurative language type. The writers choose this short story because it contains good moral values.

METHOD

The method employed in this study was a descriptive qualitative method. Maanen conveyed that qualitative research dealt with interpretive techniques and an attempt to describe phenomena (Merriam, 2009). The data was in the form of a text, that was, a short story by T.S. Arthur and it was obtained from an online source. For the data analysis, this study used content analysis. Content analysis dealt with "summarizing and reporting written data - the main contents of data and their messages" (Cohen et al., 2007). In other words, the analysis focused

on the contents of the data. The steps in analyzing data in this study were as follows: reading the short story, looking for the phrases or sentences that belonged to figurative language, classifying those phrases or sentences based on the types of figurative language, interpreting the figurative language found, drawing the conclusions. The conclusions conveyed the kinds of figurative language found in the short story and the most frequent occurrence of the kind of figurative language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

An angel in disguise is a short story told about a sick child, named Maggie, who was able to give happiness to a couple, Mr. Thompson and his wife. Maggie was a child who had severe pain that made her not able to leave her bed. She was also abandoned by her deceased mother. She was the last child in her family. After her mother was buried, her neighbors would like take care of her brother and sister, namely, John and Katy. However, no one seemed to want to take care of her. Fortunately, a man named Joe Thompson had a benevolent heart and took the helpless child to his home. Thompson's wife, who was childless, seemed to refuse the arrival of Maggie at first. Thompson said that he would carry Maggie to the poorhouse the next day so that her wife let Maggie stay at their home. As time goes by, she decided not to carry Maggie to the poorhouse and she wanted to take care of her. The sweetness of this sick child could bring happiness and tons of love for Thompson's family.

After reading the short story, the writers analyzed the types of figurative language employed in this short story. The results of the analysis revealed that there were some kinds of figurative language used in the short story. They were personification, metaphor, hyperbole, and simile. Furthermore, the most occurrence was hyperbole.

Discussion

Personification, metaphor, hyperbole, and simile were the figurative language types found in this short story.

1. Personification
   Related to the use of personification, the author of the short story used several verbs (usually used by human) for inanimate object. What the author did here was like what was revealed by Leech (Harya, 2016). Some of the verbs were the word 'do', 'touch', 'knock', and 'release'. Below were some of the personification found in the short story.

   a. *Idleness, vice, and intemperance had done their miserable work*
      In this sentence, the author of the short story described inanimate things (intemperance, idleness, and vice) do something like a human being could do. This sentence seemed to depict one of the reasons behind the death of Maggie's mother who was dead in a drunken fit. It was a pitiful condition.

   b. *Death touches the spring of our common humanity*
      The act of 'touch' is usually done by a human being. However, in this sentence, the author juxtaposed it with the word 'death' which was a noun and couldn't perform the act of

'touch' in the real world. This sentence meant that all human beings will die one day. This sentence was the opening narration before the author described the death of Maggie's mother that was so heartbreaking because she has three children living in an old tumble-down hut and the youngest child was a sick child.

c. *The sad eyes and patient face of the little one touched many hearts, and even knocked at them for entrance.*

The acts of 'touched and knocked' couldn't be done by eyes and face in the reality. In other words, they couldn't perform these kinds of acts. In addition, the meaning implied in this sentence was that the little one made people feel sorry and it seemed that she wanted to ask people to take care of her.

d. *Dusky evening released him from labor*

Here, dusky evening was illustrated as if it could release a human. In fact, an evening was a noun (the part of the day) that was, of course, impossible to do something like a human could do.

2. Metaphor

The following were some examples of metaphors found in this short story:

a. *Her face was in a flame*

The word 'her' here referred to Mrs. Thompson. This sentence described Mrs. Thompson's feeling and expression who was angry when his husband carried Maggie (the sick and pitiful child). She disliked when his husband did it. She disagreed with his husband's decision to take care of Maggie in their house.

b. *had a heart*

This expression described Mr. Thompson who was sympathetic and kind. When nobody cared to Maggie and the people there wanted to leave her at that time, Mr. Thompson invited and carried her to his house. He didn't leave her alone in her house like what the others wanted to do.

c. *precious burden*

This phrase was written by the author when Joe Thompson bore Maggie to his house. The precious burden there referred to Maggie. Maggie was called as a 'burden' since she was a sick and helpless child, and 'precious' because she could give happiness, love and joy for Thompson's family.

3. Hyperbole

Hyperbole dealt with exaggeration. The author used hyperbole for depicting the characters' feeling and characteristics. The examples of hyperbole found in the short story were as follows:

a. *There was not a man in all the neighborhood who drank daily of a more precious wine of life than he.*

This sentence described Joe Thompson's feeling that was very happy by the presence of

the miserable child (Maggie).

b. *filled all its dreary chambers with the sunshine of love.*
This clause illustrated how Maggie's presence could bring a lot of love and joy for Thompson's family. Her presence could change their life into a delightful life.

c. *his heart swelled in his bosom; with what a quicker motion came the heart-beats*
This sentence described Joe Thompson's feeling when Maggie looked at him pleadingly, gratefully, tenderly. It was a thrilling and heartwarming moment. This happened when he went into the bedroom where Maggie lied down and approached her.

d. *a childish sweetness which suffering had not been able to obliterate*
This phrase described how sweet Maggie was. Although she was sick and helpless, she was a child who was attractive, beautiful and pleasant.

4. Simile
The example of simile in this short story was the sentence "the sweetness of that sick child, looking ever to her in love, patience, and gratitude, was as honey to her soul". This compared two things, namely the sweetness of Maggie (Maggie's blissful presence) and honey to Mrs. Thompson's soul (something that made her life happier). This happened when Maggie, the helpless child, looked very grateful and thankful for Mrs Thompson's help and care. This was a heartwarming thing for her. It seemed that it made her life better than before. It could be a healer that omit the bitterness in her previous life.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks the types of figurative language in a short story entitled "An Angel in Disguise" and the most frequent occurrence of the figurative language type. Based on the results of the study, there are several types of figurative languages found in the short story. They are personification, metaphor, hyperbole, and simile. Moreover, the most frequent occurrence is hyperbole. The author used hyperbole for depicting the characters' feeling and characteristics. The use of exaggeration (hyperbole) in the short story can make the readers excited in reading it and avoid the readers' boredom. In addition, this short story can be used as learning materials for Senior High School students as it can enrich students' insights about narrative text.

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