



Figurative language domination in a short story about an impoverished girl

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ABSTRACT

Background: The dominant figurative language found in The Little Match Girl short story is pleonasm, metaphor and simile. This study is significance to know the message or meaning that the author wants to convey in his/her work.

Purpose: This study aims to identify the kinds of figurative language and finding the dominant of the figurative language that are found in The Little Match Girl short story.

Design and methods: This research used descriptive qualitative method. Data in the short story of The Little Match Girl is analyzed using the theory of figurative language.

Results: The results of this study show that there 8 kinds of figurative language; 4 data from pleonasm, metaphor and simile, 3 data from symbol, 2 data from personification and hyperbole, and 1 data from paradox and repetition.

Keywords: Semantic, Figurative language, Short Story, impoverished girl story

Introduction

Language plays an important role in human communication. People need language in their life to make good communication with others. Because people are a social human and cannot live without others. So, people have to know how to make a good communication with others. According to Patrick Griffiths Rymes, (2014) , “Language is for communicating about the world outside of language.” Besides, Wibisono & Widodo (2019) says “Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication.” People can encode against what they want to say which consist of various components. As a main tool of communication, language has a very important role in human’s life. Language is a specific human’s characteristic that makes them different from other. By using language, people can say their intents, wants, messages, and information to other people.

There are many types of text and its own genre. Each of them has its own specification and criteria. Occasionally, some textual materials use figurative language to make the text more interesting and get attention from the readers. The use of figurative language itself is most noticeable in literary works because literary works need tools to convey messages as well as beauty and clarity, which can only be achieved by using figurative language. The message itself can be represented in the form of oral or written. In oral language, the message is given and received through conversations. While in written language, the message given can be in the form of letter, poem, essay, and even fairy tales that are also called a literary work. Figurative language is used in different forms of communication, such as in daily conversation, articles in newspaper, advertisements, novels, poems, etc.

Short story is one of the literary forms that are a work of fiction that is usually written in prose, often in narrative format and usually focuses on only one incident, has a single plot,

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a single setting, a small number of characters, and cover a short story period of time. Some reader enjoys to read short story because the reader will finish to read short story in one time and they have done to understand about the contents.

One of famous story writer is Hans Christian Andersen. One of the short stories of Hans Christian Andersen is “The Little Match Girl.” It was published in 1845. This short story tells about an impoverished girl, who afraid to return to her violent family after not having sold any matches, strikes matches which induce hallucinations of her desires for warmth, food, prosperity, and love as she succumbs to hypothermia. From the girl’s point view, she ascends to heaven to be with her dead grandmother, while passersby see her dead body and assume, she lit so many matches in an attempt to stay warm.

The Little Match Girl’s short stories contains many types of figurative language. Figurative language is certainly making the readers confused to understand its meaning. That’s why the used of figurative language is important, also can be able to ease the readers to understand what the sense of the short story. In reading short story, a reader should be known what the sense and the content in short story.

The figurative language has the implied meaning or we can say that the meaning of the figurative language is based on the context. According to Anderson Clarke et al., 2019 ”Figurative language is a term used for words or expression that have a secondary, more figurative meaning.” Figurative language makes story more real because in figurative language an expression may be to refers to an idea or an object that does not normally belong to the primary meaning the domain of the object that the figures is used to refer to.

This research, the researcher is interested in analyzing the figurative expression that are found in short story. As we all know that when we read a short story, sometimes we will find some terms that are difficult to understand because different from the language that we use in daily activity. The deviation of language has occurred in figurative language. This figurative language is often used as the technique to tell the story by the author. It is used to obtain the effect containing the meaning behind figurative language in which the use of it makes the description of the short story more powerful than the daily use of language or it is called literal language. When the author use figurative language to describe the story, she or he usually trick the language because they want to create the implied meaning that will make the readers think deeply about the meaning. In interpreting the expression and think what the meaning behind it.

This the Little Match Girl’s short stories requires needed the accuracy of the reader to understand its content. Because the use of language that is rarely used or has never even existed. Furthermore, the use of language style in conveying story ideas makes the story more aesthetic without leaving the quality of the story being conveyed. And that is actually an interesting side of Hans Christian Andersen in his works.

When we see the title of this short story, the readers are required to think following the author’s ideas. Then made curious to read the contents of the short story. The selection of different and unique diction and language is interesting to study in terms of figurative language.

So, in this research, the researcher would like to analyze the figurative language in short story. The researcher chooses this short story because there are so many figurative expressions found, and difficult to understand. The researcher is also interested in finding out what the meanings of the figurative language expressions found in that short stories. The researcher use data analyze as a form of research that use descriptive qualitative method.

The result of this study will be described in detail by using all data obtained from The Little Match Girl’s short stories. Conclusion will be taken and will be presented at the end

of this thesis. From the descriptive above, the researcher interested in analyzing the figurative language used in *The Little Match Girl's* short stories.

Methods

For the research method, the researcher uses the qualitative research method to analyze this short story. Fraenkel and Wallen Al Horr et al., 2016 defined qualitative research as “A research study that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials.” The researcher conclude that qualitative research is a research method used to examine the social situation of a research subject.

Fraenkel and Wallen in Al Horr et al., (2016) explain five characters of qualitative method. First, the natural setting is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research. Second, qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Third, qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as product. Fourth, qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. Fifth, how people make sense out their lives is a major concern to qualitative researchers.

Findings & Discussion

Findings

The data findings are tabulated as follows:

Table 1 the Dominant of figurative language

No.	Figurative Language	Frequency in Short Story
1.	Metaphor	4
2.	Simile	4
3.	Symbol	3
4.	Personification	2
5.	Paradox	1
6.	Hyperbole	2
7.	Pleonasm	4
8.	Repetition	1

After the analysis, it was found that many figurative languages used in *The Little Match Girl* short story. Proverbs used almost all the types of figurative language, except Apostrophe, Metonymy, Understatement, Irony, Alliteration, Allusion, Synecdoche and Onomatopoeia. Based on the table, that in Metaphor, Simile and Pleonasm is the dominant, the frequency of Metaphor, Simile and Pleonasm is 4.

Discussion

Semantic apprehend human expression

Semantics is the study of how phrases expressions exhibit and contribute to meaning. Because language meanings are uncertain or ambiguous, it becomes one of the most difficult parts of the grammar to learn. Swarniti (2021) defines semantics as “The study about the meaning of the written or spoken text”, while according to Crystal (Yunira et al., 2019), “Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics that examines meaning, and it is widely regarded as the most important branch in linguistics for the study of language meaning”. It can be conclude that semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meanings of both spoken and written language, and it is widely regarded as the most important field for the study of language meanings.

Besides, Searle (Agung et al., 2016) says that “Semantics is the study of meaning expressed by linguistic elements, characterized as a symbolic system. He also states that

semantics is the study of the meanings of isolated verbal phrases, whether simple or complicated.” It concludes that semantics is the study of the meaning of verbal phrases based on linguistic aspects. It is defined as a symbolic system that assesses whether the phrase's meaning is simple or complex.

In addition, Verhaar (Aqromi, 2019) states that “Semantics is a systematic branch of language that investigates meaning”. Also, Palmer (Hidayati et al., 2018) states that semantics as “Semantics is a technical term for the study of meaning, and because meaning is a part of language, it is a part of linguistics”. It mean that semanticis is a technical term that refers to the study of meaning, and because meaning is a part of language, semantics is an aspect of linguistics. Semantic also defined the study about the meaning of word and don’t discuss word translations or sentences from one language to another. From those defintions, the writer conclude that semantic is the examine of which means that is used to apprehend human expression through language.

Kinds of Figurative Language in the Short Story

Figurative language is defined as language that use words or expressions that have a meaning that differs from the literal interpretation. Figurative language expresses a wide range of thoughts and emotions. When it comes to how to create a sentence effectively and artistically, it can provide a concrete description in the reader's imagination.

According to Keraf (Wibisono & Widodo, 2019) ,” Figurative language or style is a way of expressing one's mind through a unique language that reflects the writer's spirit and personality (language user). An effective language style consists of three components: sincerity, respect, and attractiveness”. It means that figurative language is a form of expressing the writer's spirit, thoughts, and characteristics through language.

In Addition, Tarigan (Rahman, 2019) states that “Language style is a rhetorical form, namely the use of words in speaking and writing to convince or influence listeners and readers.” It concludes that figurative language is used to persuade or encourage readers to utilize words when speaking or writing.

Beckson and Ganz (Harya, 2016) state that “Figurative language is language that use certain tactics known as "figures of speech," the majority of which are techniques for contrasting dissimilar objects, to generate results that go beyond the scope of literal language.” It means that figurative language is language that is usually used to compare distinct objects in order to produce results that are beyond the scope of literal languages.

”In general, figurative language refers to the use of words in a way that deviates from traditional structure and meaning in order to convey an intricate meaning, sparkling writing, clarity, or evocative comparison. Furthermore, it uses a common language to allude to something without outright admitting it” (Putra et al., 2020). It can be conclude that words that deviate from traditional structures and meanings are frequently employed in conveying complex ideas and insulting something without outright acknowledging it.

Similarly, Rohani et al. (2018) state that “Figurative language is a language aspect in which an expression is expressed in the opposite direction than it is normally expressed. Figurative language is commonly utilized by writers in a variety of ways, each of which has a distinct influence on readers.”. It can be conclude that to persuade the reader, the author employs a range of approaches and contrasts that are commonly used in communicating the meaning of a language.

Dancygier and Sweetser also (Nuraeni & Peron, 2017) states that “Figurative language was regarded to be one component of what gives a text, especially a poetic text—special esthetic worth.”. It means that figurative language is a way of describing anything that is used in a text to allude to something by providing an implicit meaning. Figurative language

expresses something in a different way to refer to something by providing an implied meaning. It is frequently used in literary works to demonstrate the author's creativity and the beauty of language. Furthermore, it is one of the methods of deciphering hidden meanings in literary works.

In order to find out the kinds of figurative language, the researcher analyzes all the data of *The Little Match Girl* short story. In finding the figurative language of the short story, the researcher paid attention to the sentence. The findings are described more as follow.

Hyperbole

A strong exaggeration intended to illustrate a point and might be emotive or funny in nature. Hyperbole should not be taken literally. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," for example. We all know that eating an apple every day will not prevent you from becoming ill and having to visit the doctor

Data 1

She crept along trembling with cold and hunger a very picture of sorrow.

This sentence is categorized into hyperbola. In sentence "**she crept along trembling with cold and hunger**", we know that it is not possible. The exaggeration of she crept along trembling with cold and hunger. It is simply for emphasis to describe this situation.

Data 2

Thousands of lights were burning on the green branches, and gaily-colored pictures, such as she had seen in the shop-windows, looked down upon her.

Andersens uses "**thousand**" it shows the exaggeration because it is impossible to have thousand of lights. The burning lights not thousand in really, the lights are so much to see and the little match girl cannot count all of them and call it as *thousand* because of it. This sentence is hyperbole.

Personification

Personification is one of the most common types of comparison—that is, speaking of something that is not human as if it had human powers and reactions. Keats, for example, personifies a season when he characterizes autumn as a harvester "resting careless on a granary floor" or "on a half-reaped furrow sound sleeping." Frost is also described as a "blond assassin" in the Dickinson poem mentioned earlier. As a result, she represents frost. My November Guest: the guest is sadness, personified as a much loved woman who walks alongside him. The tree outside my window is watching him sleep; it has tongues that are speaking aloud

Data 3

She drew one out "Rischt!" how it blazed, how it burnt! It was a warm bright flame like a candle as she held her hands over it, it was a wonderful light.

The sentence "**as she held her hand over it**" is personification. This sentence is like the warm from match light can hold on the little match girl's hand it is like human being and it bring this sentence to personification. Actually fire from little candle cannot hold hand of some on or something because it will makes big fire. The sentence can give explanation that the match light is like her little hope to be warm to have someone hugs her.

Data 4

For above her she had only the roof through which the wind whistled.

The sentence “**through which the wind whistled**” is personification. In this sentence, the wind is interpreted as a human, the wind is non-human object and in function as to make the wind like alive by indicating a human.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a comparison of two dissimilar objects. "My baby sister's a doll," you may say, comparing your sister's size and sweetness to that of a doll's perfection. "My brother is a rat," you might add at another time. This compares your brother to the most heinous thing you can think of. In both circumstances, you would be using a metaphor, which is a type of comparison that directly compares two dissimilar objects. A metaphor doesn't waste time getting to the point.

Data 5

In this cold and darkness there went along the street a poor little girl, bareheaded, and with naked feet.

In this context, the researcher “catch” one thing that the word unlike thing “*poor little girl*” means that here a little girl did not have anything. The word **poor** emphasize how lonely she was. The word “**little girl**” emphasize that how the girl did not have power she was little and she just a girl who did have much energy than a boy or man.

Data 6

The poor little thing lost them as she scuffled away across the street, because of two carriages that rolled by dreadfully fast.

Carriages make the one and only slipper the little girl has. The carriages are like make the little girl hopes to save from cold was gone. The carriages make the condition of little girl more dreadful than before. The carriages are has big power to get her hopes to the slipper, her little hopes was carried away with big power who did not have respect to the little hopes.

Data 7

She crept along trembling with cold and hunger; a very picture of sorrow, the poor little thing!

Picture of sorrow means that the pain of little girl is perfect. She was hungry and cold no one respect to her although at that time was many people, because at the time was New Year eve. No one want buy her match although just for help her. It is metaphor phrase.

Data 8

The lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher, she saw them now as stars in heaven; one fell down and formed a long trail of fire.

The context of **star in heaven** is a signal to someone will die. Here the little girl was saw her die itself. And she has enjoyed it. Actually it was beautiful things by the little girl. That is show the metaphor.

Paradox

A statement or circumstance that appears to have contradictory or incompatible aspects, yet upon closer examination, may be true. Example: Ghost house: I'd like to live in a house that has since vanished

Data 9

At the cold hour of dawn, sat the poor girl, with rosy cheeks and with a smiling mouth, leaning against the wall--frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. Stiff and stark sat the child there with her matches, of which one bundle had been burnt.

The sentence shows the paradox. The little girl was died under the snow; she was tried to warm herself. She had frozen when the town celebrates Christmans and New Year's Eve. It two cross event, one is the died of the girl under the snow and another event is the environment was celebrate the Christmas and New Year's eve, really contrast even between sad and happy. How there is not respect each other.

Simile

If you stated, "My sister is like a doll," or "My brother is as good as gold," you would be utilizing a simile, which is a type of comparison in which one object is compared to another dissimilar thing using comparison terms such as like, as, and resembles. Poets seek out uncommon metaphors and similes.

Other examples:

- a. Going for water: we rush as though to meet the moon, then pause/like gnomes.
- b. Stars: As white as snow.
- c. Mending Wall: Like an armed ancient stone savage

Data 10

She drew one out "Rischt!" how it blazed, how it burnt! It was a warm bright flame like a candle as she held her hands over it, it was a wonderful light.

In this sentence, the researcher finds two "like" that showing comparisons. Here the author compares the bright from match and the bright from candle. The light looks same in the little match girl imagination, although it totally different. The light from candle is more long standing from the matches. This comparison using "like", that is why this data is take in simile.

The meaning of expression above her little hands were almost numbed with cold it seemed brass feet and a brass ornament at top. The fire burned with such blessed influence, it warmed so delightfully.

Data 11

*The lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher, she saw them now **as stars in heaven.***

The sentence "**she saw them now as stars in heaven**" belong to simile. The word "**The lights of the Christmas tree**" is compared with '**stars in heaven**' by using the connection "as". It means the light in the Christmas trees so beautiful.

Data 12

And the matches gave such a brilliant light that it was brighter than at noon-day.

This sentence is categorized into simile. In sentence “**the matches gave such a brilliant light that it was brighter than at noon-day**”, the light of matches compares with the brilliant and brightness at noon-day by using connection “than”. It means to express a beautiful light of matches and the brightness of the matches.

Data 13

*There **the wall** became transparent **like a veil**, so that she could see into the room.*

This sentence contains simile. In sentence “**there the wall became transparent like a veil**”, the “**wall became transparent**” is compared with the veil by using the connection **like**.

The meaning above she rubbed another againsts the wall it burned brightly, on the table was spread a snow white tablecloth upon it was a splendid porcelain servic, and the roast goose was steaming famously with its stuffing of apple and dried plums.

Symbol

A thing (which could be an object, person, situation, or action) that stands in for something more abstract. For example, early in Frost's poems, a flower becomes a symbol for his beloved, Elinor

Data 14

She carried a quantity of matches in an old apron, and she held a bundle of them in her hand.

The researcher can find many times the word **match**. For the researcher match here has another meaning, it not just a match to get a fire. Match here as the source of a fire. Although fire from match is not bigger than the fire from torch but the match here can make the fire by itself. It means that the match girl create her spirit by herself like the match create the fire by itself. The spirit not comes from another aspect, not from her environment and not from her family also. The spirit is pure from her.

Beside, matches in here represent safety. The matches' symbolic value is fleshed out more as the story progresses and the little girl strikes her matches for warmth, discovering their magical ability to imaginatively satisfy her desires for safety and comfort in the form of warmth, food, prosperity and love.

Data 15

She drew one out. "Rischt!" how it blazed, how it burnt! It was a warm, bright flame, like a candle, as she held her hands over it: it was a wonderful light.

The meaning of **candle** here is has connected with the first symbol. If the fire from match takes in the candle the fire will blaze more a long time. Here the match girl after gets spirit likes a match she wants the spirit come to be the power to hold her from the snow. But in this story the candle just her imagination. The little girl wants to have power to save her, but she does not have. So the candle here is symbol of the little girl hopes.

Data 16

"Grandmother!" cried the little one. "Oh, take me with you! You go away when the match burns out; you vanish like the warm stove, like the delicious roast goose, and like the magnificent Christmas tree!"

This short story also tells the **grandmother** of little girl. Her grandmother is one and only people who loved her so much. The grandmother was passing away many long times ago. Her grandmother is the one people who loved her. Although, her grandmother was died the little girl feel very happy when meet her grandmother. The little girl gets her warm from her grandmother in the heaven. Andersen tries to tell about the happiness is not just in the world but also in the heaven. Where a place we can meet our beloved people who was passed away.

Christmas tree is symbols of happiness. The little girl wants to be happy in this world and in every condition also in the New Year Eve. One again this Christmas trees just an imagination of the little girl. She just can imagine the happiness of New Year Eve.

Pleonasm

Data 17

Most terribly cold it was it snowed and was nearly quite dark, and evening the last of year the year.

In expression "**most terribly cold it was it snowed**", contains pleonasm because when it comes to snow, we can presume that it is cold, the addition of "**most terribly cold**" is considered unnecessary.

Data 18

Her little feet she had drawn close up to her, but she grew colder and colder.

This sentence categorized into pleonasm because this sentence used more words than necessary if one of the words omitted doesn't change the meaning. This sentence means her feet very cold.

Data 19

The lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher.

The sentence "**higher and higher**" belongs to Pleonasm. It means the lights so high. Included into pleonasm because this sentence used more word than necessary if one of the words omitted doesn't change the meaning.

Data 20

She took the little maiden on her arm and both flew in brightness and in joy so high, so very high and the above was neither cold, nor hunger, nor anxiety they were with God.

This sentence contains Pleonasm because this sentence used more word than necessary if one of the word is omitted it doesn't change the meaning. The sentence "**in joy so high, so very high**" means she is very happy with her God.

Repetition

Repetition is an apostrophe using the repetition of words as an affirmation

Data 21

And then above was neither cold, nor hunger, nor anxiety they were with God

This sentence contains repetition. The sentence “**neither cold, nor hunger, nor anxiety they were with God**”, repeat some words to emphasize the content. The meaning of the sentence is a composure and happiness when the girl is dead.

Conclusion

Figurative language is one of language style which has two meaning both literal meaning and connotative meaning. The purpose of this analysis to find out what kinds of figurative language that occur in the short story *The Little Match Girl* by Hans Christian Andersen. There are 21 data found in the short story.

After analyzing 21 data, the researcher found 8 kinds of figurative language in the short story *The Little Match Girl*. They are 4 data from pleonasm, metaphor and simile, 3 data from symbol, 2 data from personification and hyperbole and 1 data from paradox and repetition. Meanwhile the dominant of the figurative language is pleonasm, metaphor and simile as tabulated in the table in chapter III.

Suggestion

This study would like to suggest for other researchers or the readers who are interested in studying the figurative language, especially in the short story, they need to understand the characteristics of figurative language and the context of the sentence where the figurative language appears. They were expected to define the meaning of figurative language not only based on the literally stated, but they have to consider based on the context where the figurative language is used, therefore they could achieve a good comprehension in understanding the figurative language.

Besides, they have to be more careful in identifying the types of figurative language because there are some sentences that appear to have two types of figurative but actually only have one type of figurative language. Therefore, the researcher must also think about the context in the text the overall meaning in the text to be analyzed.

The researcher also suggests for the next researcher to pay attention to the future research. It means more research needs to be conducted to make further analysis in other kinds of text to get a better understanding about shifts of figurative language, because the writer feels that her research through the short story is not enough yet to fulfil reader's need in further studying of figurative language.

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