

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN WRIGHT'S CASE NO. 39

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Abstract

This study focuses on the use of figurative language in a mystery movie, Wright's *Case No. 39*. The manner of writing by adopting figurative language has been found helpful to trigger the reader's anxiety and to support the mysteriousness of the story. This research is under the scope of stylistics which is aimed to (1) identify types of figurative language; and (2) explain the functions of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39*. Qualitative method was employed to scrutinize the data which were in the form of utterances which contain kinds of figurative language by including the data frequency to support the explanation of the findings. The quantity of the data helped to show the dominance and lesser amount of types and functions of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39*. The contexts of the data were dialogues and their setting in Wright's *Case No. 39*. The main instrument of the study was data sheet. After being collected, the data were classified and interpreted based on the types and functions of figurative language by Perrine (1969). To make sure the data were acceptable and valid; trustworthiness was employed through peer triangulation process. The research reveals two findings. Firstly, eight out of twelve types of figurative language are employed by the characters in *Wright's Case No. 39*. Paradox, as the most dominant type is always used by some characters to catch the meaning by employing contradictory statement to reveal a truth. Because of investigating a series of clue, it needs to apply a statement that can help to reveal the truth. It helps to collect the evidence to solve the problem of the story. Secondly, in Wright's *Case No. 39*, the use of figurative language mostly create specific functions. Through these functions, the characters try to create tension in discovering clues; that is why the language can trigger the reader's emotion.

Keywords: stylistics, figurative language, mystery, Wright's *Case No. 39*

INTRODUCTION

Language style is a particular way to express an idea or concept through language use Keraf (1984:112). Style reveals the differences in how people deliver their thought. Style is the manner of writing that is the distinction of a particular work, or else of an author, or a literary tradition, or an era, Abrams (1999:305). It denotes that style depends on author's way in arranging their own literary works.

Style in writing can be seen through the way an authors decide particular genre like mystery, romance, comedy, and so on and choice of word such as figurative language to raise particular functions. Mystery story relates much with experience in finding the clues. The employment of figurative language in mystery genre is capable of building reader's fear by presenting chilling atmosphere, variety of

horrors, and terrors even mysterious event to distract readers Abrams (1999:111).

Figurative language is a part of the issues that is studied in Stylistics. The manner of writing by adopting figurative language has been found helpful to trigger the reader's anxiety and to support the mysteriousness of the story. The way language conveyed a meaning through wordplay is in order to make the readers think harder in guessing meaning of a text.

A well-known movie, *Wright's Case No. 39*, is chosen as the object of this research because it also belongs to mystery genre which contains some hints of a crime to be solved by executing the investigation process. This story talks about the investigation of violence suffered by Lily that actually is possessed by an evil who feeds on her feelings. It focuses on the detective story where one of officer of children department is saved her life from a demon kid. There are a lot of clues that can invite the readers to solve the puzzle in the story line.

In *Wright's Case No. 39*, the characters tend to apply language style to be more triggering the reader's anxiety by using figurative language and support the dramatic event contain nervousness, suspense, scared, and the distraction events

surrounding that usually related with mystery story.

The objectives of this research are: to identify the types of figurative language in *Wright's Case No. 39* and to explain the functions of figurative language in *Wright's Case No. 39*. Perrine (1969) divides three types of **figurative language to answer the first objective**: (1) by comparison, comprising metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe; (2) by association, consisting metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, and allegory; and (3) by contrast including paradox, irony, hyperbole, and litotes.

The way characters uttered a statement by using figurative language may imply particular intention to express the character's feeling or embed certain image. According to Perrine (1969: 71), the use of figurative language has four main purposes which are to give imaginative pleasure, to give additional imagery, to add emotional intensity, and to concrete the meaning in the brief compass.

The result of this study is expected to give valuable contribution to everybody in general and specifically for English Department Students. This research can provide the knowledge of stylistics features i.e. types and functions of figurative

language, especially in mystery genre and the readers can understand the employment of figurative language in mystery genre especially to draw on their own work. Hopefully, these findings are able to be additional sources for other researchers to conduct the same research under the issue of stylistics majoring in figurative language applied in different subject of mystery genre.

RESEARCH METHODS

The third chapter stated the research method which explains the technique of analyzing the data. The researcher adopted qualitative research to give the researcher's understanding of an issue of stylistics especially types and functions of figurative language by including the data frequency to support the explanation of the findings as quantitative did. The quantity of the data helped to show the dominance and lesser amount of types and functions of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39*. The researcher adopted note taking as the technique of collecting data. The object of this research was a movie entitled *Case No. 39*. The data were in the form of utterances which contain kinds of figurative language. The context of the data from this study was the dialogue and its setting. The researcher

used movie scenes as the main data source and added by the transcript to make sure the validity of the data. The research involved the data sheet as a primary tool to collect the data in the form of table. To make sure the data were acceptable and valid to convince, trustworthiness was employed through peer triangulation process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The types of figurative language are revealed in forty-three data. Those data are classified into three broad classifications of type of figurative language. They are figurative language by comparison, comprising Metaphor and Simile, figurative language by association consisting of Metonymy and Synecdoche, and figurative language by contrast including paradox, Irony, Hyperbole, and Litotes.

In sum, this research shows that the most common type of figurative language used in the movie is paradox which belongs to the figurative language by contrast. Paradox occurs twelve times out of the total forty-three data. It is always used by some characters to catch the meaning by employing a contradictory statement to reveal a truth. Because of investigating a series of clue, it needs to apply a statement that can help to reveal the truth. It helps to

collect the evidences to solve the problem of the story. Besides paradox, the characters tend to use litotes to show respectfulness and rejection or refusal to do something and hyperbole to support dramatic event and exaggeration of feeling. Meanwhile, Irony and metaphor constitute as the least frequent type of figurative language. Metaphor is a direct comparison between two different things. So the sense is to make the statement more forceful. The writer is better to use simile by using connector between two comparisons and make the statement soft. It also emerges that personification and apostrophe, figurative language by comparison and also symbol and allegory, figurative language by association, are never used in the movie.

In figurative language by association, symbol and allegory also are never appeared. In general, allegory usually appears in storybook by conveying implicit message through imagery, actions, and symbolic figure. Symbol and allegory love referring something to something else that contains hidden meaning beyond the literal word. Both contain the meaning more than what is said. That is way the writer employs metonymy to associate things by renaming something to something else that still has a correlation or by the use of synecdoche to

represent something bigger refers to its part than referring into something else like symbol and allegory did.

Personification is directed to inanimate object which is given human sense. It usually matches up to fairy tale and gives human depiction in an abstract thing. Apostrophe deals with addressing to absent things or someone who can't replay or hear the speaker. Both are directed to an abstract thing. In comparison, the writer prefers adopting simile to compare two different things which have the same characteristic. So, the things compared are real to add viewers' imagination through the comparison. Since the dialogue in the movie belongs to detective story to scrutinize the mysterious case of murder, it is impossible to find those types of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39*.

As a result, Wright's *Case No. 39* applies many kinds of figurative language to magnetize the viewer's attention through language style. The different use of types of figurative language creates the specific functions to give an effect of mystery. The discussion of each type is as follows.

Metaphor is a kind of analogy without using connectors such as "like", "as", or "than" to compare two elements which have same nature, Perrine (1969:65).

It is usually used to reinforce the reader's imagination through the comparison which has implicit meaning.

- (1) interviewer : You think **your daughter is the devil? Evil incarnate?**
(Datum 37)

Interviewer's question in extract (1) is to make sure Margaret's statement that calls her biological daughter as *the devil* or *evil incarnation*. The noun phrase refers to the daughter as the subject who is compared with without asserting a comparative word, Abrams (1999:97). The expression shows that Lily likes being similar to evil incarnation better than human being. Both have the same characteristics which are dangerous and love killing people surrounding. The viewers will get a set of imagery about the comparison between Lily and the figure of evil incarnation or devil looks like. It can evoke viewer's imagination because the figure of Lily in the introduction of the movie is nailed as the victim of violence. The comparison helps to create hint guessing who Lily is. It can usually be used as foreshadowing the clues to invite the viewers to solve the puzzle in the story line.

A simile is a kind of figurative language that explicitly compares two distinctive things. To indicate an expression classified as simile, it can be seen through

the way it applies the comparative words such as "like", "as", "similar", "same" or "than", Abrams (1999:97).

- (2) I like to think of **it as a glass-half-full situation**. Kitchen. Bathroom. Fish. And here, is your room.
(Datum 24)

The conjunction "as" compares the *condition of Emily who lived alone with a glass-half- full of water*. The phrase of *a glass-half- full of water* means that there is still any space left in Emily's life without complete family, husband and kid even parents. The expression matches up to a meaning *a glass with a half full of water*. It provides additional information about Emily's family background. It helps Emily to give Lily's understanding by simple comparison to confirm her condition why she was living alone in her house when Lily asked about her family. Metonymy is the literal term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated because of a recurrent relationship in common experiences, (Abrams, 1999:98). In line with Keraf (2009), the modification of thing explains the relation between cause and effect or the researcher with the discovery, etc.

- (3) Tell me, Mr Sheridan, since you've suddenly acquired the power of speech, doesn't it concern you a little

that Lily's grades have gone from A's to D's in three months?

(Datum 17)

In the process of finding hints to solve Lilith family problem, the child service tries to investigate Lily's academic performances at school. Based on Emily's hypothesis, she states that *Lily's grades have gone from A's to D's in three months*. The changes can be a sign that is associated with family problems. Extract (9) is another way the writer adopts metonymy because the speaker substitutes a grade of school with alphabets. A's represents an academic mark indicating the highest grade in school and D's is the worst. It is another way to give a score besides stating in the form of number. It cannot be separated from each other.

The figurative language by association, synecdoche, is divided into *pars pro toto* and *totem pro parte* that means a larger group associates the smaller one and vice versa, Leech (1969). The meaning of this type can be nailed in mind by stating "the whole represents a part, and a part represents a whole" Abrams (1999:99).

(4) I like to think of it as a glass –half-full situation. Kitchen, bathroom, **Fish**, and here, is your room.

(Datum 26)

The statement is to introduce every room and thing in her house to Lily, her foster kid, who already lives with her until

she gets a new foster parent. In Emily's house, there are kitchen, bathroom, Lily's room, and *fish*. *Fish* here represents the aquarium, a place where the fish lives in as a pet, in the living room. Extract (13) fits in as synecdoche *pars pro toto* because *fish* as a part of aquarium refers to a whole of thing by the name of its part, Keraf (2009:142).

The first type of figurative language by contrast, paradox, is a contradictory statement apparently appeared to create shocking value, Arp & Perrine (1969:46). There are twelve times of forty-three data used in the movie. Extract (5) contradicts the situation where the speaker gives suggestion to Sheridan's when Emily held an interview with his family. The first phrase *certain of everything* means that Emily looks absolutely correct of everything to tell how to be better parents when conducted an interview with Sheridan's is contrasted with the second phrase *dead wrong about all of it* in making perception and drawing a conclusion. The statement emphasizes that Emily *totally wrong* with all her presumption which is contradicted to the word *certain* which means surely correct.

(5) You judged us before you ever walked in that house. Sat there in our living room tellin' us about our problems, how to be better parents - **certain of everything and dead wrong about all of it.**

(Datum 42)

The less dominant type of figurative language is irony, the contrast meaning from literal utterance, Abrams (1999:135). It can be said as the contrast meaning from the literal utterance by using tone of voice to indicate one's real meaning. Irony occurs only twice to show the different meaning from the ostensibly expressed.

(6) Tell me, Mr. Sheridan, **since you've suddenly acquired the power of speech**, doesn't it concern you a little that Lily's grades have gone from A's to D's in three months?

(Datum 14)

The sense of extract (6) is actually "he has acquired the power of speech" although the speaker claims to have done it suddenly. It is called irony because it sounds weird when Emily said "since you've suddenly acquired the power of speech" The word "suddenly" refers to something is done quickly. It differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. Here, the power of speech cannot be found in sudden. It is learned since a baby. Extract (17) is a satire to Mr. Sheridan who prefers normally answering all the questions that led by Wayne's interview to Emily's.

Hyperbole, the figure of overstatement, refers to an exaggeration of an object's attribute used to magnify a fact. Descendent from Greek language, hyperbole

means overshooting. It is the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibilities, Abrams (1999:120). It facilitates to emphasize something and create the viewer's response. Hyperbole may be inserted with variety of effects such as convincing, humorous, or restrained, Perrine (1963:47). Some characters use hyperbole to create dramatic effect and support the mysteriousness or the atmosphere of solving the problem. The figure of overstatement occurs seven times by overshooting the fact to create particular effect.

(7) Okay, **I just shot like a gallon of water up my nose**. So much for establishing trust.

(Datum No. 12)

While speaking to Lily, water comes up to Emily's nose in sudden and makes a feeling of pain and shock. Emily expresses it by saying *a gallon of water up my nose*. The expression is not taken literally a gallon of water which comes to her nose. It overstates the amount of water which is a lot of water by saying *a gallon*. The situation in extract (20) belongs to hyperbole because it explains overshooting experience to emphasize something.

The last type of figurative language by contrast is litotes. This type, the contradiction of hyperbole, helps to state the respectful of a statement by denying the

truth, Abrams (1999:120). The characters of this movie apply the understatement to make the utterances more polite. Leech (1969) said that litotes is sometimes reserved for a particular kind of understatement in which the speaker uses a negative expression where the positive one would have been more forceful and direct.

(8) And you know, every time something happened, every time, we had an excuse for why it wasn't her fault. Cuz **it's easier to lie to yourself than think bad things about your baby girl.**

(Datum 16)

Extract (8) is categorized as litotes because the speaker shows how parents are better to deny the truth or lie to themselves than condemn their baby girl about any fault even though the parents know that their children make any fault. Parents try to deny the fact by stating *when every time something happened, every time*, in which they know that it is their daughter fault, *we had an excuse for why it wasn't her fault*. Mr. Sheridan uses repetition in phrase, *every time*, to emphasize that parents are better find any excuse condemning themselves than even think bad things about the kid no matter what kinds of fault their children did because of the parent's love to their kid.

In terms of functions, the dominant occurrence of function of figurative

language used in a movie entitled *Case No. 39* is to add emotional intensity. Besides creating atmosphere of anxiety, the use of figurative language mostly relates to effect viewer's emotional responses. In *Case No. 39* movie categorized as mystery genre, the characters try to create tension in the process of discovering clues; that is why the language can trigger the viewer's feeling of suspense or even horror to support the atmosphere of mystery. There are twenty-five occurrences out of the total forty-three data. On the other hand, figurative language used to give imaginative pleasure becomes the least frequent functions of figurative language. This function occurs only five times in *Case No. 39* movie because the movie rarely provided the imagination that can satisfy the viewers. Followed by the functions of figurative language to state the meaning in brief compass and give additional imagery, both help to create a meaning in a brief statement and catch the viewer's attention to experience every story line by providing visual depiction. Those functions of figurative language are presented below.

The first function of figurative language becomes less dominant function in Wright's *Case No. 39*. Figurative language can lead the viewer's imagination flows.

Imagination might be described in one sense as the ability to portray the story. This function is to invite the viewers to create an imagination to give imaginative pleasure in reading a story. Imaginative pleasure refers to a feeling of being satisfied or having pleased imagination. It makes the viewers pleased after obtaining a source of pleasure in the exercise of the imagination through the text, Perrine (1969: 33). The function of figurative language by giving imaginative pleasure only occurs three times to satisfy the viewer's ears, imagination, and sense. The movie can affect the viewer's mind to build viewer's imagination. As a result, viewers satisfy with what they think of. It can give imaginative pleasure.

(9) I like to think of it as a glass –half-full situation. Kitchen. Bathroom. **Fish.** And here, is your room.

(Datum No. 26)

Extract (9) explains about every part of Emily's house brings the viewers into their imagination as if they see a fish that can please and interest children attention to hear such expression. Viewers try to fancy as well as when they observed an attractive object such as a colorful aquarium. The example is satisfying in viewer's mind by providing a source of pleasure in the imagination.

The second function is to give additional imagery, visualizing the concept into figurative depiction. It also enhances the viewer's skill to transform ideas to be concrete into the viewer's mind. When the ideas directed the viewers to build an imagination, the mental picture helps to conceptualize how such description seems to be. This function appears eighteen times to build additional imagery in viewer's mind through the story. It helps to guess the clues or mysterious events will happen next.

(10) You think **your daughter is the devil ? Evil incarnate?**

(Datum No. 37)

Based on extract (10), the viewers will get a set of imagery in their mind about the comparison between *Lily* and the figure of *evil incarnation* or *the devil* look like. It seems that viewers look the depiction of Satan itself. The mental picture of Lily, as an innocent girl in the appearance of evil incarnation looks scared. Both can support the diction of mystery genre related with hell, murder, devil, satan, and violence.

Figurative language helps to add beauty and create emotional sense. The great feeling of the story invites the viewers to feel the atmosphere of the story line itself. Thus, the viewers can experience the similar tension and sensation like the character's feel. This function can take a part to support

the mysteriousness of the *Case No. 39* as a mystery genre by presenting chilly atmosphere. It comes about twenty-six times to create emotional intensity. In *Case No. 39* movie categorized as mystery genre, the characters try to create tension through investigation process of discovering a series of clue; that is why the language can trigger the viewer's feeling of suspense or even horror to support the atmosphere of mystery.

(11) I didn't say weird, I said scary. The guy sat there **the entire time staring** at me, the mother is like his emotional slave.

(Datum No. 09)

The situation pictured in extract (11) is in an interview about family problem with Mr. And Mrs. Sheridan and Lily conducted by Emily as child service. The atmosphere of the interview is suspense. Mr. Sheridan without any word to say is staring at Emily with emotional expression. The gesture of Emily describes that she feels threatened by the way he looks Emily intently. Viewers sense the tension when interview was held. Thus, the viewers can experience such intimidation felt by Emily through the visualization. The viewers sense the tension when interview was held. Thus, the readers can experience such intimidation felt by Emily through the visualization.

To concrete the meaning in the brief compass, the figurative language takes a part to make the sentence to be more effective, a way of saying much in brief compass, Leech (1969:34). The last function emerged in *Case No. 39* movie about eighteen times, is to describe the meaning in a brief compass. The writer does not need to explain something implicit in a long explanation.

(12) Sometimes **people have kids** and then decide **they don't want to be parents**.

(Datum No. 40)

Extract (12) helps Doug to explain to children in a playgroup who got violence. The explanation is about why parents do violence to their own kids. The satire contains deep meaning. The speakers do not need to say in many words to express the allusion. It will not destruct parent's image in children's view. The first utterance, *sometimes people have kids* refers to the parents. The second utterance *they don't want to be parents* indicates the parents who refuse their kids. There are many reasons that children do not understand why the parents give full rein to the kids related with economical aspect, generally. They can guess the reasons without explained them in longer statement.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This research investigates types and functions of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39*.

1. In line with the first objective of the research, there are three categories of figurative language. They are **figurative language** by comparison comprising metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe, **figurative language** by association consisting metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, and allegory, and **figurative language** by contrast including paradox, irony, hyperbole, and litotes. The researcher found eight out of twelve types of figurative language in Wright's *Case No. 39* movie. They are metaphor (2), simile (5), metonymy (7), synecdoche (5), paradox (12), irony (2), hyperbole (7), and litotes (6). In sum, this research shows that the most common type of figurative language used in the movie is paradox which belongs to the figurative language by contrast. Paradox occurs twelve times out of the total forty-three data. It is always used by some characters to catch the meaning by employing a contradictory statement to reveal a truth. Because of investigating a series of clue, it needs to apply a statement that can help to reveal the truth. It helps to

collect the evidence to solve the problem of the story. Besides paradox, the characters tend to use litotes to show respectfulness and rejection or refusal to do something and hyperbole to support dramatic event and exaggeration of feeling. Meanwhile, Irony and metaphor constitute as the least frequent types of figurative language. Metaphor is a direct comparison between two different things. So the sense is to make the statement more forceful. The writer is better to use simile by using connector between two comparisons and make the statement soft. It also emerges that personification and apostrophe, figurative language by comparison and also symbol and allegory, figurative language by association, are never used in the movie.

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2. In terms of the functions of figurative language, to give imaginative pleasure (3), to give additional imagery (18), to add emotional intensity (26), and to concrete the meaning in the brief compass (18) are found in Wright's *Case No. 39*. The dominant occurrence of functions of figurative language used in movie entitled *Case No. 39* is to add emotional intensity. Besides creating atmosphere of anxiety, the use of figurative language mostly relates with

effecting emotional responses. In *Case No. 39* movie categorized as mystery genre, the character tries to create tension in the process of discovering clues; that is why the language can trigger the viewer's feeling of suspense or even horror to support the atmosphere of mystery. Followed by the functions of figurative language to state the meaning in brief compass and give additional imagery, both help to create a meaning in a brief statement and catch the viewer's attention to experience every story line by providing visual depiction.

Suggestions

After conducting this research, the researcher proposes some suggestions. It is suggested to the students majoring in linguistics who are interested in stylistics to explore another area for further study related to stylistics especially about figurative language. One of which may be dealing with specific elements of mystery genre or how the language in mystery genre should be to create a newest perspective of figurative language in mystery story.

There are still many interesting topics under stylistic approach which have not been examined yet combine with different objects such as poem, novel, and other literary works. It is suggested that other researchers develop another various

kinds of figurative language used another theories and experts or related with genre, such as comparing mystery to romantic genre and the like. As a result, the future researchers will be able to write a good research and help to add additional sources for the other researchers to conduct the same research under the issue of stylistics majoring in figurative language.

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