

## A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF FIGURES OF SPEECH IN *THE JAKARTA POST* HEADLINES UNDER THE ISSUE OF *KPK* VS. *POLRI*

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### Abstract

This research is aimed at identifying the types and functions of figures of speech in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK* vs. *Polri*. The study of stylistics is employed since this research investigates language and style which can be seen in figurative language through figures of speech in the objects of study.

This research applied descriptive qualitative method. The data of this research were taken from *The Jakarta Post* official website. The forms of the data are the sentences in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK* vs. *Polri* which contain figures of speech. In the research, inductive analysis method was used in the analysis of data. Triangulation was used to establish the reliability of the data and to ensure the findings, so that it can enhance trustworthiness.

The results of this research are as follows. (1) There are only six of twelve types of figures of speech found based on Perrine's theory, i.e. metaphor, simile, apostrophe, synecdoche, overstatement/hyperbole, and irony. (2) Each type of figure of speech has its particular function or functions. Yet, there are only two of four functions of figures of speech found based on Perrine's theory, i.e. to add emotional intensity and to say much in a brief compass. Metaphor, simile, and overstatement/hyperbole carry both functions, adding emotional intensity to the readers and saying much in a brief compass. Apostrophe and irony only function to add emotional intensity to the readers, while and synecdoche only functions in saying much in a brief compass.

**Keywords:** figures of speech, types, functions, news headlines, *The Jakarta Post*

### INTRODUCTION

Language in its role as a means of communication has some functions; one of which is to deliver information. Basically, language is delivered in two forms, written and spoken forms, each of whose application is adapted by the necessity. Through the times, people aim to develop media of communication to deliver information and idea, and to apply the functions of language to be easier. Media of communication are also more varied in their development, for example, printed media, electronic media, and mass media.

Language has a very significant role in human life. Since it is important, humans give their attention to language and then the knowledge that focuses on studying human

languages called linguistics is formed. Linguistics is also the study of how humans deliver information through spoken or written form with varied language styles according to the speaker or the writer. In linguistics, this study is called stylistics.

Each language user has his/her style of language which makes his/her own characteristics of language style. As Leech and Short (2007: 9) say, style is a way in which language is used. It refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, and for a given purpose. In its application, style of language is used whether in written or spoken form, for example in literary works and speeches. Moreover, by learning stylistics, people can find out the relation

between language and its artistic functions (Leech & Short, 2007: 11).

Under stylistics, figure of speech is one of language style aspects commonly discussed. Here language style can be seen in figurative language through figures of speech. According to Leech & Short (2007: 63), figures of speech are the features which are foregrounded by virtue of departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language code. Leech categorizes figures of speech into two categories, i.e. schemes and tropes. As time goes by, the application of figures of speech is also found not only in literary works, but also in speeches, advertisements, and news.

In this study, the researcher investigates the use of figures of speech in *The Jakarta Post* headlines in January 2015 under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*. *The Jakarta Post* is a large and well-known daily newspaper using English language published in Indonesia (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/about>). Since 1983, *The Jakarta Post* is the largest English language newspaper in Indonesia with an average circulation around 50.000 copies.

The objectives of this study are to identify the types of figures of speech used in *The Jakarta Post* headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*, and to find out the functions of figures of speech used in *The Jakarta Post* headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*.

This research is expected to give some benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to give academic contribution by enriching the knowledge concerning the study of stylistics

conducted by the lecturers and the students. To be exact, it deals with the role of figures of speech used in mass media. Practically, the readers are expected to be more open-minded toward non-literary products particularly in language use, especially for the academicians. Then, they can express their creativity in various ways and conduct the use of figures of speech to be more effective and interesting in non-literary works. In addition, the finding of this research can be one of the sources of information or a reference for other researchers in the future. Thus, they can conduct further studies in stylistics with a more complex discussion that focuses on different objects.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative approach. This study is called descriptive because it emphasizes on explaining the phenomenon of the use of language in its context by interpreting the data. Moreover, this study is called qualitative because it provides a richer and more in-depth understanding (VanderStoep and Johnston, 2009: 8). According to VanderStoep and Johnston (2009: 167), a qualitative research's purpose is more descriptive than predictive. It aims to make a research participant get a deep understanding. Through stylistic approach, the researcher analyzed the types and functions of figures of speech in the headlines to give the explanations of the language use and artistic function, like what Leech and Short (2007: 11) say. The phenomena described in this research are language styles in terms of figures of speech.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objects of this study are *The Jakarta Post* newspaper selected headlines in January 2015 under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*. The forms of the data are the sentences in the title and body of newspaper headlines which contain figures of speech. The contexts of the data are the headlines in January 2015 under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri* in *The Jakarta Post* news website. The data source of this research is *The Jakarta Post* website, i.e. [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com).

The main instrument of this study is the researcher himself since the method used in this study is qualitative. The secondary instrument of this study is the data sheet which eased the researcher to categorize and analyze the data. The data sheet is in the form of a table of types and functions of figures of speech.

Since the object of this study is non-literary text in the form of newspaper, the researcher used analysis of documents by note taking as the data collection technique.

In this qualitative research, the method used to analyze the collected data is an inductive analysis which goes from specific to general. Here, qualitative research employed observation and interpretation in the analysis of the types and functions of figures of speech.

In order to gain credibility and reliability of the data, the researcher used a method called triangulation. The researcher discussed and consulted the data with his two supervisors. Moreover, the researcher also asked some linguistics students to triangulate the data. Through their analysis, the data were rechecked to ensure the suitability between the theories and the findings in the research.

There are twelve figures of speech according to Perrine's theory (1969: 64-167), i.e. metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, symbol, synecdoche, allegory, paradox, overstatement/hyperbole, understatement/litotes, and irony. Those twelve types are classified into three categories, i.e. figures of speech by comparison, figures of speech by association, and figures of speech by contrast. There are only six of the twelve types of figures of speech which are found in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*, i.e. metaphor, simile, apostrophe, synecdoche, overstatement/hyperbole, and irony.

Perrine (1969: 71) also says that there are four functions of figures of speech. First, figures of speech function to afford imaginative pleasure. Second, figures of speech function to bring an additional imagery. Third, figures of speech function to add emotional intensity; and fourth, figures of speech function to concentrate the meaning in a brief compass. There are only two of four functions of figures of speech which are found in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*, i.e. to add emotional intensity and to say much in a brief compass. To make the explanation about the types and functions of figures of speech in the objects clearer, some examples are provided as follow.

The first type of figures of speech in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri* is metaphor. Metaphor is a

figure of speech that compares the things essentially unlike. The metaphor occurs in the news entitled “Budi’s case exposes rivalry within police” was published on January 16, 2015. The datum is in the following.

“If you have issues related to rivalry, settle it first and don’t throw **the fireball** at the House,” he told Budi during a hearing at the House on Wednesday. (18/N2/a/3-4)

The statement is said by *NasDem* (National Democrat) Party lawmaker Akbar Faizal during a hearing at the House of Representatives on Wednesday (January 14, 2015). The statement contains metaphor since the speaker mentions **the fireball** which substitutes for a problem. The speaker prefers to make indirect comparison of two things by substituting one thing for another that is seemingly unrelated. Moreover, **the fireball** and a problem are the things essentially unlike. The speaker tends to compare them to indicate similarities of particular values between them, i.e. dangerous and risky. The speaker assumed that throwing a problem to others is as dangerous and risky as throwing a fireball. By employing metaphor, the speaker makes variations in expressing something.

The second type of figures of speech in the objects of study is simile. Simile is like metaphor. The difference between metaphor and simile is the use of comparative words. The simile occurs in the news entitled “Opposition against Budi on rise” was published on January 16, 2015. It is presented in the following.

“We must emphasize that **our support for Jokowi was not like a blank check**, but it was based on our big hope that Pak Jokowi could live up to his promises to support the country’s corruption eradication efforts,” he said. (04/N1/b/4)

The statement is said by a rapper named Joshua Matulesy who is also known as JFlow. As a representation of the group, he read an open letter expressing the group’s disappointment over Jokowi’s pick. The statement is considered as a simile since it compares **our support for Jokowi and a blank check**. **Our support for Jokowi and a blank check** are the objects or things essentially unlike. Moreover, the expression uses **was not like** which indicates comparative words. Here the speaker tends to compare them to indicate the differences of particular values between them, i.e. their support was based on nothing or without any certain reason.

The third type of figures of speech in the objects of study is apostrophe. Apostrophe is a figure of speech which directly used to address to someone or something such as an inanimate object, a dead or absent person, an abstract thing, or a spirit. The apostrophe occurs in the news entitled “Budi’s case exposes rivalry within police” was published on January 16, 2015. It is presented in the following.

“**If you are a true statesman, why didn’t you just go to the President to tell him that Budi’s nomination was inappropriate?**” the former South Sulawesi Police chief said, refusing to disclose who he was referring to. (11/N2/d/4)

The statement is said by Insp. Gen. (ret) Sisno Adiwino, a former South Sulawesi Police chief. His statement is considered as an apostrophe since he implicitly speaks to someone or some people (Budi's rivals within the National Police) absent in that situation. The use of pronoun **you** in his statement makes the addressee unclear, but if the readers can understand the context of the situation, the readers will know who he is referring to. Also as it is an apostrophe, the readers know that the addressee could not answer the speaker's utterance in that situation and there would be no responses.

The fourth type of figures of speech in the objects of study is synecdoche. Synecdoche uses a part of a thing to represent a whole thing, and vice versa. The synecdoche occurs in all three selected headlines, i.e. "Opposition against Budi on rise" was published on January 16, 2015, "Budi's case exposes rivalry within police" was published on January 16, 2015, and "KPK faces total paralysis" was published on January 28, 2015. An example of synecdoche is presented in the following.

Angered by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's decision to nominate graft suspect Comr. Gen. Budi Gunawan as the next National Police chief, Jokowi's presidential campaign volunteers and members of civil-society organizations called on the President to not inaugurate the three-star police general in spite of **the House of Representatives' official endorsement.** (01/N1/g/4)

This datum occurs in the news headline entitled "Opposition against Budi on rise" was published on January 16, 2015. The news writers

associate **the House of Representatives** as a house of the legislature with its members. However, the endorsement is done by the members of the House of Representatives. By this synecdoche, the news writers mean the members of the House of Representatives who make the endorsement.

The fifth type of figures of speech in the objects of study is overstatement/hyperbole. It is used to emphasize something in the service of truth. The overstatement/hyperbole occurs in the news entitled "Opposition against Budi on rise" was published on January 16, 2015. It is presented in the following.

**"Arresting [Budi] is the only way to save the country,"** he said. (05/N1/j/3-4)

This statement is considered as an overstatement/hyperbole since it expresses the statement in a bigger way. It also can be said too much, as the country cannot be saved anymore without doing that action. Furthermore, the speaker tends to make such big effects. He was also implicitly stating of how important to do the action. However, as it is a hyperbole, the statement itself is not expected to be believed by the readers.

The sixth type of figures of speech in the objects of study is irony—specifically, verbal irony. Verbal irony is used when a writer or a speaker says one thing but means something opposite. It implies a contrast or discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. The irony occurs in the news entitled "KPK faces total paralysis" was published on January 28, 2015. It is presented in the following.

“It is difficult to understand that the series of criminal reports against *KPK* commissioners is not coincidental. After Pak Bambang Widjojanto was named a suspect by the police on Friday, then Pak Adnan Pandu Praja and Pak Abraham were reported afterward. I also hear that a police report will be filed against Pak Zulkarnain [on Wednesday]. **It’s a perfect scheme, isn’t it?**” Johan said at the *KPK* headquarters on Tuesday, referring to *KPK* commissioners. (24/N3/1/3)

The statement is said by *KPK* prevention unit deputy Johan Budi at the *KPK* headquarters on Tuesday, referring to *KPK* commissioners. The speaker shows the discrepancy between what he said and what he meant. The word **perfect** contains a negative connotation of what actually happened in that situation is never been expected, while generally the word **perfect** means having all the required or desirable aspects.

The first function of figures of speech in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK* vs. *Polri* is to add emotional intensity. By this function, figures of speech are not merely informative. The example is presented in the following.

“If you have issues related to rivalry, settle it first and don’t throw **the fireball** at the House,” he told Budi during a hearing at the House on Wednesday. (18/N2/a/3-4)

This datum contains metaphor as the speaker mentions **the fireball** which substitutes for a problem which functions to add emotional intensity to the readers by conveying an assumption of a problem in a dangerous term. By this function, the readers are not only read his

statement as an informative statement, but it also provokes the readers’ emotion since the speaker assumed that throwing a problem to others is as dangerous and risky as throwing a fireball.

The second function of figures of speech in the objects of study is to say much in a brief compass. By this function, figures of speech are means of concentration. The example is presented in the following.

***KPK*** faces total paralysis (19/N3/g/4)

This datum occurs in the news headline entitled “*KPK* faces total paralysis” was published on January 28, 2015. The use of synecdoche in this expression functions to simply mention the institution name to make an association rather than to mention the commissioners’ leadership of the *KPK* or the names of the *KPK* commissioners. By this function, the news writers do not need to mention the commissioners’ leadership of the *KPK* or the names of the *KPK* commissioners.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, the researcher concluded two prominent things towards the research.

First, the speakers and news writers have employed several types of figures of speech in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK* vs. *Polri*. There are only six of twelve types of figures of speech found in the researcher’s objects of study, i.e. metaphor, simile, apostrophe, synecdoche, overstatement/hyperbole, and irony. Metaphor and simile are employed by the speakers in the

news to compare the things essentially unlike. Apostrophe is used by the speaker to speak to someone or some people absent in the situation. Synecdoche, as the main type of figure of speech used in the objects of study, are employed by the speakers and news writers in all selected news headlines to represent the part by mentioning the whole. It is used to associate the institutions, organizations, and groups with their members. Overstatement/hyperbole is employed by the speaker to express something in a bigger way. Irony is employed by the speaker in the news to say one thing but means something opposite which implies a contrast or discrepancy between what he said and what he meant.

Second, each type of figure of speech has its particular function or functions. There are only two of four functions of figures of speech found in *The Jakarta Post* selected headlines under the issue of *KPK vs. Polri*, i.e. to add emotional intensity and to say much in a brief compass. Synecdoche is the most dominant type of figure of speech which functions to say something much in a brief way. In line with its typical characteristic which associates a part with the whole or vice versa, the speakers or news writers can simply state the name of the institutions or organizations to make an association with their members. Even so, to say something in a brief way, the speakers or news writers also employed other types of figures of speech, i.e. metaphor, simile, and overstatement/hyperbole. In adding emotional intensity to the readers, metaphor, simile, apostrophe, overstatement/hyperbole, and irony also function well by depicting their typical characteristic. Supported by context,

those five figures of speech give more tension to the readers by provoking, exaggerating, and expressing something with terms that have different tendencies.

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