FIGURES OF SPEECH AND STEPS OF EMPOWERMENT REFLECTED IN KID PRESIDENT'S SPEECHES

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the types of figures of speech used by Kid President in his top ten speeches, the functions of those figures of speech, and the steps of empowerment reflected through those figures of speech. In this research, the researcher applied descriptive quantitative-qualitative approach. The researcher employed some steps to collect the data: downloading the videos and scripts, checking the sripts and the videos, and collecting words, phrases, and sentences containing figures of speech. The researcher found that there are eleven types of figures of speech which are applied by Kid President in his top ten speeches. Those types are metaphor, metonymy, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, simile, apostrophe, paradox, litotes, symbol, and irony. The functions of those figures of speech are to give the listeners an imaginative pleasure, to bring additional imagery, to add emotional intensity, and to say much in a brief compass. Moreover, there are four steps of empowerment which are reflected by the speaker. They are being involved in a crisis or life transition, acting on anger or frustration, responding to new information, and building on inherent strengths and capabilities. However, there is no type or function which is identical with a certain step of empowerment.

Keywords: figures of speech, functions, empowerment, steps of empowerment, Kid President, speech

INTRODUCTION

In literary works, the choice of a language style is very significant. The style that is chosen by the writer gives a clearer picture about not only the context of the story but also the character of the writer. Therefore, literary men have a poetic license that allows them to ignore rules and conventions in using language. That is why there are many language deviations employed by the author of literary works. By the existence of language deviations in literary works, the analysis of style through stylistic approach seems necessary.

There has been some stylistic research specifically dealing with semantic deviations in some great novels and poetry. Unfortunately, linguistic field still lacks of stylistic analysis in other kinds of literary works such bible, speech, newspaper and advertisement. Considering the lack of stylistic research on other types of literature, the researcher is interested in analyzing the semantic deviation specifically figures of speech in the speeches of nowadays' phenomenal figure who is known as Kid President.

The speeches of Kid President are interested to be analyzed because it talks about a growing and important issue that is children's empowerment. In his speeches, Kid President, which is played by a ten-year-old kid named Robby Novak, speaks a lot about how to be an awesome kid and to make the

world better. Moreover, the motivation behind his speeches is to show the world that children also have an argument that is worth listening. In other words, he inspires and persuades his audience and children to be empowered.

Not only the topic, the language phenomena which can be found in Kid President's speeches are also interesting to be analyzed. One of the language phenomena is figures of speech. It is rarely used by children because they need an advanced linguistic understanding. Thus, it is interesting when a ten years old kid like him is able to give speeches that empower and inspire people with such style.

This research has three objectives; they are (1) to identify the types of figures of speech in the selected Kid President's speeches, (2) to describe the functions of figures of speech in the selected Kid President's speeches, and (3) to analyze how the figures of speech in Kid President's speeches characterize children's empowerment.

This research is significant because it will enrich the readers' knowledge about how figures of speech are used in a speech especially by children. Moreover, it also helps the readers to be more aware about the kinds and effects of language phenomena, especially when these language phenomena are used by and/ or to the children.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher basically applied descriptive qualitative approach. Nawawi (1993: 63) defines descriptive qualitative approach as a procedure of solving a problem by describing or illustrating the condition of the research subject or object, e.g. people, department, and society based on the fact and its factual condition. Thus, the researcher expressed the result of this research in the form of description and explanation.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the researcher also applied quantitative approach in processing the data. Still, the numbers and measures used by the researcher were only to state the percentages and to strengthen the interpretation.

The forms of the data in this research were words, phrases, and sentences in which figurative language is used. Meanwhile, the context of the data was the text of Kid President's speeches which were selected based on their popularity. The primary sources of this research were ten speeches of Kid President that were taken from *youtube.* Those selected speeches are entitled *A Pep Talk from Kid President to You*, *Kid President's 20 Things We Should Say More Often*, *An Open Letter to Moms from Kid President*, *Kid President's Pep Talk to Teachers and Students*, *Kid President's Letter to A Person on Their First Day Here*, *Kid President – Diabetes vs. Diabeetus*, *Kid President – Guide to Being A Party*, *Kid*

President's 5 Things that Make Summer Awesome, *Kid President Expalins It All*, and *Kid President Changes the Future*.

Since this research is considered as a qualitative research, the primary instrument of this research was the researcher herself. The researcher employed some steps to collect the data: downloading the videos and scripts, checking the sripts and the videos, and collecting words, phrases, and sentences containing figures of speech. In analyzing the data, the researcher classified the data based on the research objectives and described them. To achieve trustworthiness, the researcher discussed her data and findings with her two supervisors who are the lecturers of linguistics and English literature studies. The researcher also asked three linguistics students to check her data and findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Perrine (1969: 65-118) proposes twelve types of figures of speech which are called simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory, irony, paradox, hyperbole, and litotes. In the ten selected speeches delivered by Kid President (Robby Novak), there are eleven of those twelve types of figures of speech which are presented by the speaker. Those types are metaphor (17 data), metonymy (13 data), personification (9 data), synecdoche (8 data), hyperbole (6 data), simile (5 data), apostrophe (4 data), paradox (3 data), litotes (2 data), symbol (2 data), and irony (1 datum). Thus,

the total data of this research are 70 data. This finding supports Colston and Kuiper (2002: 27) who argue if children have completely exhibited adult proficiency in figures of speech comprehension since they reach 7 or 8 years of age.

Metaphor is the most frequent type which is applied by the speaker. This finding indicates that the speaker tends to deliver his ideas through some indirect comparisons. Mostly, the speaker applies metaphor in giving a suggestion or in persuading the listeners about how they are supposed to behave and to live. In addition, metaphor is also often used by the speaker to deliver his ideas about the essence of life.

In contrast to metaphor, allegory is not applied at all because it is considered as the most complex type. Meanwhile, the speaker of the ten speeches being analyzed is an eleven-year old kid. Therefore, he tends to use the other types which are simpler than allegory such as metonymy, personification, and synecdoche.

Similar to metaphor, the speaker mostly applies metonymy to deliver his arguments about the meaning of life. Meanwhile, personification is often applied by the speaker to attract the listeners' attention and to persuade them to use their life wisely so that they can make other people joyful. Many of the data which are considered as personification overlap with synecdoche. It is because the speaker mostly personifies the

same object, which is the world which literally has two meanings. The first meaning of the world is the earth or the planet, which is a non-living thing. Therefore, the words "the world" which are followed by the attribute of human beings are included as personifications. However, "world" can also mean the earth and all things (living and non-living things) on it so that some of personifications which personify the world are also included as synecdoche.

The speaker also applies some hyperboles. Many of hyperboles are used by the speaker to express his pride to a mother. In addition, hyperbole is applied by the speaker to stress a certain important point, such as when he insists that the role of the listeners to make this world better is very important. Following hyperbole, simile is also applied by the speaker in some parts of his speeches. Although this type is also considered as a figure of speech by comparison, it is not applied as frequent as metaphor. This indicates that the speaker tends to give the listeners a more chance to consider the relation between the things being compared. Not only simile, apostrophe is also rarely applied by the speaker. The speaker employs some apostrophes in a similar form to exaggerate his feeling of joy.

Some other types which are paradox, symbol, litotes, and irony are not applied frequently. The speaker applies paradox only in some parts of some speeches when he wants to create a surprising effect. Meanwhile, symbol is rarely applied because it is applied by mentioning one thing that has another meaning behind. Therefore, similar to allegory, symbol is also considered as a type which is difficult to be applied. In his speeches, the speaker applies symbol only by quoting a poem in which some symbols are presented. Having the same frequency, litotes is not applied frequently. The speaker employs litotes only in some sentences in which he also wants to exaggerate the message. In the last rank, there is irony which is only applied by the speaker to insult or touch the listeners' emotion.

The speaker applies many figures of speech in his speeches to achieve some purposes. Those are giving imaginative pleasure (52 data), bringing additional imagery (11 data), adding emotional intensity (36 data), and saying much in a brief compass (16 data). Most of the figures of speech are used to give imaginative pleasure. It is because children in his age are in a stage in which their creative and imaginative skills are developed. The types which contribute significantly to this function are metaphor, metonymy, and personification. Meanwhile, to bring additional imagery, the speaker mostly applies metaphor. Metonymy and synecdoche are mostly applied by the speaker to add the listeners' emotional intensity while to say much in a brief compass, the speaker mostly uses metaphor.

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Lord and Hutchison (1993: 11-12) propose four steps of empowerment. Those four steps of empowerment are reflected in the speeches of Kid President. They are (1) being involved in a crisis or life transition (14 data), (2) acting on anger or frustration (14 data), (3) responding to new information (52 data), and (4) building on inherent strengths and capabilities (56 data). The first and the second steps have the same frequency because both of them cannot be separated. Every datum which reflects that the speaker is involved in a crisis also shows his responses on anger or frustration. Meanwhile, there are some data which reflect the fourth step without the occurrence of the third step. Still, all of the data reflecting the third step also reflect the fourth step. Therefore, the fourth step has a higher frequency than the third step.

Each of those four steps is mostly reflected through the most frequent types and functions. The first and the second step, for example, are reflected less frequently than the other types. However, these two steps are mostly reflected through the metaphorical sentences and the figures of speech which have a function to give imaginative pleasure. Similarly, the other two steps which occur more frequently are also reflected through metaphor and data with the most frequent function. This finding indicates that there is no type and function which are identical with a certain type. In other words, although

sentences containing figures of speech with certain function can reflect the step of empowerment experienced by the speaker, the listeners or researcher should take a look further at the context of the sentences to know exactly what step it is.

A more detailed explanation about the types of figures of speech, the functions, and the steps of empowerment reflected in Kid President's speeches can be seen in the example bellow.

"Life is not game, people."

(Datum S1/ 00.21/ 2/ a-d/ I-II)

The sentence above is considered as metaphor because the speaker indirectly compares life with a game. This comparison brings a delightful imagination for the listeners about the similarity between life and game. Moreover, through metaphor, the speaker tends to say that life is not only about having fun, fighting one another, and collecting the points to show who the best is. Yet, life is also a chance to make the world better. Therefore, this metaphor is used to say much in a brief way.

That sentence is uttered after the speaker says that the listeners should change their annoying and behavior. Then, after uttering this sentence, the speaker invites the listeners to introspect them self by saying "even if life is a game, are they on the same team?". Therefore, based on the context of the datum above, it can be concluded that the datum above reflects the first step of empowerment

which is being involved in a crisis. It is because that sentence shows that the speaker feels annoyed and concerned with the condition in which the people surrounding him are not aware that they have a big duty or responsibility to make the world better. In addition, this datum also reflects the speaker's action on his frustration. It is because this sentence is considered as the speaker's expression that shows if he is frustrated with the situation.

Another example is in the following datum.

"I am the party!"

(Datum S7/ 00.30/ 2/ a-d/ III-IV)

In the datum above, the speaker applies metaphor by indirectly comparing himself with a political party. This metaphor is used to give an imaginative pleasure because the analogy is not common. Since the meaning of the word 'party' in this sentence is longer, therefore, the metaphor is also used to say much in a brief compass. Before uttering that sentence, the speaker must have a sufficient knowledge that the essence of a political party is about its good influence on other people. Therefore, the speaker in that sentence implicitly says that he brings some good influences for other people. In short, this sentence reflects the speaker's response to new information about the essence of a political party by stating that he is the party. In addition, it also reflects the fourth step of

empowerment because it shows the speaker's confidence.

Conversely, the next example is an example of the data which only reflect the fourth sentence without the existence of the third step. The sentence can be seen below.

"Hey motorcycles, I kissed Beyonce!"

(Datum S9/ 04.23/ 4/ a-c/ IV)

The speaker in the datum above applies apostrophe by addressing a non living thing that is motorcycle. The application of apostrophe in this sentence gives the listeners a pleasure by imagining how if a motorcycle is really able to understand and listen to human's expression of happiness. In addition, it also increases the listener's emotional intensity since the application of apostrophe in this sentence exaggerates the speaker's feeling of happiness because he has kissed Beyonce. That sentence does not reflect that the speaker gets new information which can make him empowered. However, through that sentence, the speaker's confidence is clearly shown. It is because through that sentence, he confidently expresses his happiness after kissing Beyonce. Some other data which reflect only the fourth step also contain the same type that is apostrophe.

In other words, the fourth step of empowerment is reflected most frequently in the speeches of Kid President. It indicates that the speaker tends to encourage the listeners by presenting his personal qualities such as the value of taking responsibility, confidence, and

resourceful. Most of the sentences reflect this step with the reflection of the third step while some of them place this step as the only step reflected in the data.

CONCLUSIONS

All in all, it can be concluded that there are eleven types of figures of speech proposed by Perrine which are applied by Kid President in his top ten speeches. Those are metaphor, metonymy, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, simile, apostrophe, symbol, paradox, irony, and litotes. Allegory is the only type which does not exist because it is considered as a very complex figure of speech so that it is very difficult for the speaker who is only eleven years old to comprehend and apply this type.

It also can be concluded that the speaker applies those figures of speech to give imaginative pleasure, add emotional intensity, say much in a brief compass, and bring additional imagery. From those four functions, the most dominant function is to give imaginative pleasure.

The findings and discussions above also show that the figurative expressions employed by the speaker reflect the four steps of empowerment. Those steps are 1) being involved in a crisis or life transition, 2) acting on anger or frustration, 3) responding to new information, and 4) building on inherent strength and capabilities. The fourth step which is building on inherent strength is the most frequent step which appears in the top ten selected speeches. It indicates that the speaker, in his persuasive speeches, motivates the listeners by implicitly or indirectly showing his firm capabilities.

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