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A SEMANTICS ANALYSIS OF PERSONIFICATION IN PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY'S POETRY

Andien Nurfadlilah Aulika
English Department, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia.
andien.aulika@widyatama.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to identify the types of personification and the contextual meaning behind the personification used in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry. This research uses descriptive qualitative method as the purpose of making this research is to analyze the types of personification and the contextual meaning behind the personification used. This research uses semantics studies with several theoretical sources that refer to the theory of Personification from Paxson (1994) and the theory of contextual meaning by Chaer (2009). The results of the research, 41 data contain personification expression was found. There are 12 data of Prosopographia and 29 Prosopopopeia. 12 data of Prosopographia is classified into five sub-classes: Emotions, Characteristic, Concept, State and Time. The research reveals 7 data of Prosopographia in Concept category, 2 data in State category, 3 data in Time category, and 0 data found in Emotions and Characteristic categories. Out of 29 data of Prosopopopeia, the researcher also classified the data into three sub-classes: Living things, Places and Inanimate object. There are 3 data of Prosopopopeia in Living things category, 3 data in Places category and 23 data in Inanimate objects category.

Keywords: *personification, figurative language, semantics.*

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the realms of expression beyond the literal, figurative language serves as a captivating linguistic device. Figurative language serves as a guide to the infinite expression of words far beyond the limits of ordinary literal meaning. Therefore, figurative language exists not only as a linguistic device but also as a connector where words can become a living entity, resonating with emotion, imagination, and a deep connection between the speaker and the listener. Figurative language is a poetic and imaginative form of linguistic artistry, empowers us to transcend the literal and venture into a realm where words become catalysts for profound meaning and evocative imagery. According to Perrine (1992), *figurative language is a way to express something outside the usual way*. *Figurative language is the language that cannot be taken literally (or should not be taken literally) and say something other than ordinary ways or say one thing and mean another*. When studying the realm of figurative language, we can find that figurative language has a profound ability to convey contextual meaning with higher impact. Context plays an important role in unravelling the layers of meaning embedded in figurative expressions. Context provides the backdrop against which figurative expressions reveal their nuanced meanings by allowing the reader to delve deeper into the expression. Therefore, one of the ways to understand figure of speech is by knowing the contextual meaning behind it. Chaer (2009) stated that *contextual meaning is a*

meaning or word that is in a context that can be related to the situation, place, time and environment of the language used.

Figurative language manifests in various literary genres like novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. Specifically, poetry, as a unique form of linguistic expression, incorporates sound considerations to convey the imaginative, emotional, and intellectual experiences of the poet derived from personal and societal aspects. This expression is achieved through deliberate technique choices, aiming to evoke specific experiences in the reader or audience. (Suminto A. Sayuti, 2008). Romance poetry often uses vivid and imaginative language to convey feelings, and personification can play an important role in bringing emotions to life by attributing human qualities to non-human entities. Personification of nature, elements, or abstract concepts can enhance the emotional impact of the verses. This research focused on analysing one of the types of figurative language called personification in three selected Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry. They are *Love's Philosophy (1819), The Cloud (1820)* and *Ode to the West Wind (1820)*. This research aims to identify the types of personification and the contextual meaning of the personification used in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry. This research uses semantics studies with several theoretical sources that refer to the theory of Personification from Paxson (1994), and the theory of contextual meaning by Chaer (2009) to analyse the meaning of personification used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semantics

According to what has long been the most widely accepted theory of semantics, Palmer (1981:1) stated that *Semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning, and since meaning is part of language, semantics is a linguistic*. Semantic refers to the meaning or interpretation of something, especially in the context of language, communication, and understanding. It is concerned with the study of meaning in language and how words, phrases, sentences, and symbols convey information and represent concepts. In linguistics and philosophy of language, semantics is a branch that focuses on the meaning of words, the structure of sentences, and how language conveys information and represents the world. Based on the definition above, semantics can be concluded as a study of meaning, sign, or code. Semantics uses logic and human thoughts to construct meaning and to understand human expression. Semantics is more than just the structure of language; it delves into the field of pragmatics-the study of language use in context. Through semantics, how words obtain meaning is not only explored through dictionary definitions, but also through contextual usage, connotations, and the intent of the speaker. Semantics serves as a bridge between the abstract world of language and the concrete reality of human experience. By studying semantics, linguists gain insights into how language shapes our understanding of the world,

influences communication, and reflects cultural perspectives. This field plays a crucial role in uncovering the intricate web of meanings that underlie our everyday language use.

Figurative Language

Figurative language is a form of literature that enhances the impact of words in speech and writing by introducing and differentiating certain objects or objects from other things that are more general. A figure of speech is not intended to express literal meanings and often compares one idea with another to make the first idea simpler to understand (Simatupang, Sihaloho 2020). In essence, the way to use each figure of speech can change and give rise to different connotations. According to Perrine (1992), *Figurative language serves as a means of conveying ideas in a manner that goes beyond conventional expression. It encompasses language that should not be interpreted literally, expressing something in ways that deviate from ordinary usage, often conveying meanings through indirect or symbolic representations* Hence, figurative language refers to the use of language that deviates from its typical literal meaning, opting for imaginative expressions to convey emotions in captivating and aesthetically pleasing ways. At times, figurative language can appear more straightforward than literal language, as it facilitates a swift comprehension of ideas for the reader. According to Perrine's theory, figurative language is classified into 12 types: simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole, understatement, and irony.

Personification

Personification is a literary device that imbues non-human entities with human-like qualities, emotions, or actions. Personification Figurative Language can be interpreted as a Figurative Language or language style that compares or assumes that inanimate objects perform the behaviour and also the characteristics possessed by living things (Simatupang, Supri 2022). It is a form of figurative language that allows writers to create more relatable and evocative descriptions by giving life and personality to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract concepts. Personification can breathe life into the inanimate, allowing readers to connect on a deeper level with the subject. This figurative language not only adds depth to the description but also invites readers to perceive the world through a more imaginative and empathetic lens. Personification is a powerful tool that enriches storytelling, poetry, and other forms of literature by transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary through the lens of human experience. Personification is often used for storytelling, poetry, and artistic expression. According to Paxson (1994), *personification is a style of language that makes things as if they were living by giving qualities as if they were doing something like humans*. Personified animals, ideas, and inanimate objects may exhibit human emotions or perform human actions.

Example:

(1) ***The sun smiled*** *down on the children at play.*

In this sentence, the sun is personified as if it were capable of smiling. This personification gives the impression that the sun is benevolent and happy, casting a warm and pleasant light over the scene.

(2) ***Time marches on****, waiting for no one.*

Time is personified in this expression as if it has the human characteristic of marching. This personification emphasizes the relentless and unstoppable nature of time, as if it were a disciplined and purposeful entity.

Different forms of personification can serve various purposes in storytelling and poetry, from adding depth to descriptions to conveying deeper themes and emotions. Paxson (1994) state that *there are two types of personification: Prosopographia and Prosopopopeia*.

Prosopographia

Prosopographia or also known as abstract personification is a specific type of personification in literature and art where abstract concepts are personified and represented as if they were human beings. Zhu (1991) stated that *this kind of personification makes speeches, actions, human behaviour, and so on can be done by abstract objects, such as time, opinion, disease, hunger, and war*. Prosopographia involves the representation of abstract concepts, emotions, or qualities as if they were individual characters with human traits, emotions, and behaviours. Abstract noun is classified into 5 different categories: Emotions, Characteristics, Concepts, States, and Time.

- **Emotions:** abstract nouns that describe mental states or moods.

(3) ***Anger roared*** *with thunderous might.*

Anger is personified as a powerful and tumultuous force, capable of roaring like a storm. The emotions are given human-like qualities, allowing the reader to visualize and feel the intensity of anger as if it were a living entity.

- **Characteristic:** abstract nouns that describe character, traits and personality.

(4) ***Courage stood tall****, a valiant companion with a lion's heart.*

In this example, courage is personified as a valiant companion with human-like qualities, such as standing tall, having sturdy shoulders, and wielding a metaphorical sword of resilience.

- **Concepts:** abstract nouns that describes a complex idea about logic or principles.

(5) *In the intricate map of human choices,* ***Morality stood as a steadfast***

guiding compass.

Morality is personified as a guiding compass with human-like attributes, including standing steadfast, having a needle, and whispering convictions.

- **State:** abstract nouns that describe a condition or mode of existence.

(6) ***The luxury smiled*** *as I entered the house.*

In example number 6, luxury is personified as a smiling host that welcomed the guest with warm hospitality.

- **Time:** abstract time-related nouns, such as hour and year, Thursday and July.

(7) ***Now December found love*** *we shared in September.*

In this expression, the months of the year are given human-like qualities. December is described as "finding love," as if it has its own experiences and emotions.

Prosopopopeia

Prosopopoeia It is a specific type of personification where concrete concepts are personified and represented as if they possess human attributes, emotions, intentions, or abilities, even though they do not. Zhu (1991) stated that *in this type of personification, non-living beings include natural phenomena, such as mountains, rivers, lakes, earth, stars, moon, sun, and clouds as well as artificial products such as houses, ships, and vehicles are personified and given subjective awareness or feelings as humans do*. Concrete noun can be classified into 3 categories: Living things, Places, and Inanimate object.

- **Living things:** nouns that relate to people, animals, plants, and other organisms.

(8) *In the forest,* ***the old oak tree stands as a wise guardian.***

The old oak tree is personified by having the ability to convey wisdom as a wise guardian.

- **Places:** nouns that relate to locations in general or specific places, physical environment, building, or particular region.

(9) *New York,* ***the city that never sleeps.***

The expression "New York, the city that never sleeps" is a form of personification where the city of New York is attributed human-like qualities. The characteristic of not sleeping is applied to the city to emphasize its constant activity, energy, and vibrant atmosphere.

- **Inanimate object:** nouns that represent objects that is not alive and can be perceived through senses.

(10) ***The old car groaned*** *as it struggles up the steep hill.*

In this sentence, the concrete object “car” is in the category of material things, and it is personified by being described as "groaning.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. Simatupang, Tarigan (2022) pointed out that *Qualitative research is a research method that focuses more on social understanding and emphasizes the whole picture rather than on a more detailed meaning into interrelated variables*. The descriptive qualitative method was used to analyse this research because poetry has a poetic and subjective nature of meaning expression. In the field of literary analysis such as poetry, the qualitative approach method is very suitable to be used as a research method because it allows researchers to investigate more deeply and allows researchers to explore themes, emotions, and stylistic choices made by poets by emphasizing the qualitative aspects of language, tone, and context. The data source of this research is three selected Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry, they are *Love's Philosophy (1819), The Cloud (1820)* and *Ode to the West Wind (1820)*. The researchers chose to analyse the ideas of one types of figurative language called Personification. There were several steps that the researcher took to collect the data. First, the researcher collecting the data by reading and analysing the three poems that the researcher chose to study. Second, classifying the data based on Paxson's (1994) theory of personification and determine the data based on types of personification. Third, Analysing the data based on types of personification and the contextual meaning based on the theory of contextual meaning by Chaer (2009). And finally, after analysing the data, the researcher then concludes the results of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result, 41 data was found that contain the use of personification in *Love's Philosophy (1819), The Cloud (1820)* and *Ode to the West Wind (1820).* In accordance with the theory proposed by Paxson (1994), there are 12 data of Prosopographia and 29 data of Prosopopopeia.

Prosopographia

The researcher classified the 12 data of Prosopographia into five sub-classes: Emotions, Characteristic, Concept, State and Time. The research reveals 7 data of Prosopographia in Concept category, 2 data in State category, 3 data in Time category, and 0 data in Emotions and Characteristic categories.

Concepts

(11) *"**Wild Spirit**, which art **moving everywhere**;*
*Destroyer and preserver; **hear, oh hear!**"*
(Ode to the West Wind, S1-L13)

The line in (13) contains personification expression because the abstract concept of a *"Wild Spirit"* is personifies by attributing a human action of moving everywhere. Additionally, *"hear, oh hear!"* also emphasizes personification expression by treating *"Wild Spirit"* as if it has the ability to hear and respond. This personification expression gives the *"Wild Spirit"* a capacity for understanding and acknowledgment. This adds to the impression of the *"Wild Spirit"*, as if it has the capacity to heed the speaker's wishes. Therefore, it was identified as prosopographia in concepts category.

In context, Shelley uses these lines to convey a deep connection with nature and the power of the wind. The poet sees the West Wind as a force that can both destroy and preserve. The poet also makes a plea to the West Wind. The poet seems to be calling upon this force with respect and acknowledges its complex and diverse nature.

State

(12) *"And all the night 'tis my pillow white;*
While I sleep in the ***arms of the blast****"*

(The Cloud, S2-L16)

In (12), the poet personified *"the blast"* by gives it human attributes as if *"the blast"* has arms that can hold the speaker through the night. This type of personification includes abstract object in state category because in this context, *"the blast"* is a stormy nighttime situation. Thus, it was identified as Prosopographia.

The contextual meaning in this line reflects a deep connection between the speaker and nature. Shelley describes a sense of intimacy and comfort even in the midst of a storm. These lines contribute to Shelley's imaginative and romantic depiction of nature. the line *"sleep in the arms of the blast"* is personified as if *"the blast"* has arms that provide comfort for the speaker to rest in. this line also reflects the idea that the speaker is symbolically sleeping in the arms of the blast.

Time

(13) *"O wild West Wind,* ***thou breath of Autumn's being****,*
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,"

(Ode to the West Wind, S1-L1)

In the opening stanza of *Ode to the West Wind (1820)*, the poet refers to the wind as *"the breath of Autumn's being"*, this means the poet personifies the wind and gives it a human quality as if it has breath or can breathe. This kind of personification includes abstract object in time category because "Autumn" is an abstraction of time. Thus, it was identified as Prosopographia.

The contextual meaning behind this line shows the deep connection between the poets and nature, especially the west wind and autumn season. Shelley speaks of the wind as a powerful force in the fall. The use of *"the breath of Autumn's being"* implies that the west wind plays an important role in the existence of fall.

Prosopopopeia

Out of 29 data of Prosopopopeia, the researcher also classified the data into three sub-classes: Living things, Places and Inanimate object. There are 3 data of Prosopopopeia in Living things category, 3 data in Places category and 23 data in Inanimate objects category.

Living things

(14) *"**I** bring fresh showers for **the thirsting flowers**,*
From the seas and the streams;"

(The Cloud, S1-L1)

In this line from the poem *The Cloud (1820)*, the personification lies in the speaker (the cloud) is actively bringing fresh showers for the thirsting flowers. *"the thirsting flowers"* is also personified as if a plant like flowers can feel thirsty like human being does. Plants, such as flowers is considered as a living thing. Thus, this kind of personification is concrete object that lies in the living things category.

The contextual meaning in (13) is *"I"* the cloud is portrayed as a benevolent force that providing moisture in the form of fresh showers to drench the plants or in this context, the flowers. This line emphasizes the life-giving and rejuvenating aspect of nature.

Places

(15) *"See **the mountains kiss** high heaven,*
And the waves clasp one another;"

(Love's Philosophy, S1-L9)

The act of *"the mountains kiss high heavens"* involves personification expression. The word *"mountains"* is personified as if they can do human act like kissing. Therefore, this type of personification is considered as concrete object in places category.

In (14), the contextual meaning behind this line is that the poet is inviting the reader to observe a scene where the mountains seem to touch or "kiss" the sky which is referred as "high heaven". The act of mountains "kissing high heaven" conveys a connection between the earth and the sky as if they are engaged in a loving or intimate gesture. The speaker is using these natural images to illustrate the idea that

love and unity are fundamental and inherent in the world around us, much like the elements of nature coming together in an intimate and harmonious way.

Inanimate object

(16) *"The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,*
While the moist ***Earth was laughing*** *below."*

(The Cloud, S5-L72)

The personification involves attributing human-like actions to inanimate object in this line. The *"Earth"* is personified as if the earth can perform human-like actions, in this case is laughing. Hence, this type of personification is considered as a concrete object in an inanimate object category.

In this context, the poet describes the scene of a sunset or sunrise by using "soft colours" to vividly portray the skies colours. The use of "laughing" may symbolized a joyful response to the play of colors in the sky. Shelley's romantic and imaginative portrayal of nature invites the reader to create a visual imagination of nature and its artistry colours of the sky.

CONCLUSION

The final result of the data analysis of personification contained in Percy Bysshe Shelley's three selected poems: *Love's Philosophy (1819), The Cloud (1820)* and *Ode to the West Wind (1820)*, there are 12 data of Prosopographia and 29 data of Prosopopopeia found. The researcher classified the 12 data of Prosopographia into five sub-classes: Emotions, Characteristic, Concept, State and Time. In these sub-classes, the research reveals 7 data of Prosopographia in Concept category, 2 data in State category, 3 data in Time category, and 0 data found in Emotions and Characteristic categories. Out of 29 data of Prosopopopeia, the researcher also classified the data into three sub-classes: Living things, Places and Inanimate object. There are 3 data of Prosopopopeia in Living things category, 3 data in Places category and 23 data in Inanimate objects category.

A more in-depth analysis of personification in three of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poems provides an understanding of the categorization of personification in his works. the data above reveals important frequencies of Prosopographia and Prosopopopeia, which provide insight into Shelley's romantic use of personification to endow emotions, concepts and inanimate objects with human attributes. The researcher's classification into sub-categories further enhances the detail of the analysis in revealing patterns in the Prosopographia and Prosopopopeia data.

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