FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ON MAYA ANGELOU SELECTED POETRIES

Risma Hayani

Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda University

rismahayani@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aimed to find out the kinds of figurative language in the five selected poetries of Maya Angelou, the titles are: *Alone, Caged Bird, Old Folks Laugh, Phenomenal Woman, Still I Rise*. The focus of this study is figurative language which involves: Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Simile, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Irony, Antithesis, Symbolism, and Paradox. Qualitative approach with design of content analysis was used in this study. The researcher acted as the main instrument since she was the one who analyzed the figurative language. Moreover checklist was also used to support her data collection. The data was analyzed through three stages; 1). Data reduction, 2). Data representation, 3). Conclusion. The result of her study showed there were 40 sentences that containing figurative language in five selected poetries of Maya Angelou. They were; Metaphor (13 sentences), Personification (9 sentences), Hyperbole (1 sentence), Simile (8 sentences), Synecdoche (1 sentence), Antithesis (1 sentence), Symbolism (5 sentences), and Paradox (2 sentences). The researcher conclude, if the figurative language used by Angelou to compare, or even symbolize the sentences to bring the meaning come up with beautiful language. Mostly of her poetries told about her experience in the past that rooted to history of the discrimination of American-African.

Keywords: Figurative Language, Poetry, Maya Angelou

INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is commonly applied in literary works. One of the literary works is poetry. With the assumption that figurative language is often used in poetry, this thesis discusses particularly the application of figurative language in selected poetries of Maya Angelou. The descriptive words of figurative language have a meaning that beyond the literal meaning. figurative is language that used symbol to describe other things, or event metaphor which means using a word to identify other words, so it cannot interpret based on literary view d also the reader cannot find those meaning in dictionary. Poetry might be defined as a kind of language that says more intensely than ordinary language (Laurence & Thomas, 1992). That's why figurative language mostly find in the poetry, because it used the language that beyond the ordinary language.

Researcher chose poetry as the object of the study for several reasons; first poetry contains much figurative language than other literature device. Secondly, the content in poetry needs more interpretation in order to understand what is the message that the poet wants to deliver to the reader or listener. Thirdly, the researcher as a future teacher which demanded to have competence to teach about literature to the students. The one of literature work is the understanding the literary of poetry. Poetry also has significance to education such as poetry can benefit students in the ways to increase reading comprehension. Through poetry, students experienced increase in vocabulary, and critical analysis skill. Many of students systematically abandon a text based on length alone. They simply do not believe that they are capable of reading long passages and never attempt to read a novel. Poetry might be a possibility to reading comprehension because poetry just shorter pieces of text (Norris, 2010). Etymologically, the word 'poetry' in the Greek comes from 'poesis', which means making or creates. In English, poetry is closely with 'poet' and 'poem'. The word 'poet' comes from Greek; which means make or create. In Greek, the word 'poet' means the person who creates through his imagination, a person who almost seems as god or like to god. Language used by a poet as a tool to record their surrounding life and described it to a poetry. Poetry is universal language used by the poets to express their ideas in beautiful word (Laurence & Thomas, 1992). As a universal language, poetry has existed almost in all period. Poetry is unique medium of communication, it is created in the form of a brief language, and it is differs from other literary works.

Kinds of Figurative Language

There are ten of figurative language that researcher used in this study, they are stated by Arvius alm (2003); Pardede (2008); Dancygier & Sweetser (2014) ; Kennedy & Gioia (2002).

1. Metaphor

Metaphor is kind of figurative language that made comparison between two things that different to identify one with another (Arvius alm, 2003). Metaphor is used in poetry to explain emotions, feelings, and relationship other elements that could not be described in ordinary language. For example of metaphor is *her teeth are pearl*.

2. Personification

Personification consists of giving human characteristics to an object. Personification is a figure of speech that describes something that is not human as though it could feel, think, act, live, or die in the same way as people (Arvius alm, 2003). For example in Emily Dickinson's poem in the title "***Ambition cannot find him***".

3. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the term used that overstatement. This figure use by someone who has desire and expectation to the thing that happen to make object more greater than the real object (Arvius alm, 2003). For example : *"I will **die** if I don't meet him tomorrow"*, the word 'die' is over expression if the reader want to thing that in the real life.

4. Simile

Simile is the figure that make comparison between two different things, just like metaphor but in simile usually using the word as, than, like, seem, so, appear, more than.(Arvius alm, 2003). Christina also give an example of simile *"He is as hard as nails"* more specifically, the adjective here used to describe behavioral and attitudinal characteristics of person referred to as *"he"* via comparison with concrete, physical hardness of nails, which made of metal, typically steel.

5. Metonymy

Metonymy is a word or complex expression that basically stands for one thing, or it also use for one lexical thing which connected with other through experience (Arvius alm, 2003). It also about *part–whole* relationships, the kind which allows the same word to be used in many languages for 'hand' and 'arm,' or for 'foot' and 'leg'.

6. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech that a part refers the to specify whole (Pardede, 2008). Synecdoche which expresses either more or less than it literary denotes. For example is *"I got a new **wheels** from my father"*. Word "wheel" represent meaning car, so she got a new car.

7. Irony

irony statement are untrue, based reasoning that interpreted by the hearer from the speaker's meaning, if irony not praise but usually criticism (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). Example: "no doubt, you is the best person that ruined my life."

8. Antithesis

Antithesis is figure speech that combine two things which different or contradiction in one sentence or negation. Antithesis is a device for placing opposing ideas in

grammatical parallel. Antithesis is results when a pair or more strongly contrasting terms are presented together (Pardede, 2008), Example: *"Speech is silver, silence is golden"*

9. Symbolism

Symbolism is a kind of figure speech that using symbol of animal, plants, or things for substitute something. Symbolism established from the result of personal; experience or fantasies" (Arvius alm, 2003). For example Word "Rose" is referent for beauty destroyed by time, sexuality, secrecy, and guilt, all seem drawn in by the implications of these words.

10. Paradox

Paradox is a figure speech that deliver two things which contradictory but this figure reveal the real fact that make sense even the speaker or the writer use a word that absurd, (Kennedy & Gioia, 2002). For example, "Experience is simply the name we give to our mistakes" by Oscar Wilde. Those quote that actually fact, when we have do something wrong in our life, we always take it as an experience in our life.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this research, the researcher used design content analysis with qualitative approach. Content analysis is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into category of similar concept, to identify consistent patterns or relationship between variable or themes (Given, 2008).

Qualitative research is understanding of social phenomenon based on participant's point of view. In order to increase information into a particular phenomenon, such as an environment, a process, or even a belief (Gay, 2006).

The objects of the study were five selected poetries by Maya Angelou, they were : "Alone", "Caged Bird", "Old Folks Laughs", "Phenomenal Woman", "Still I Rise. The researcher chose the famous and popular poetry among Maya Angelou collection poems.

The main data of this study were figurative languages found in the five selected poetries by Maya Angelou. First, the researcher selected five poetries of Maya Angelou which popular and famous in her collection poems. After that, she read the poetries line by line to found the figurative language, and then classify them and put them in the checklist table based on figurative indicator. In analyzing the data of research, the researcher used qualitative data

analysis theory by Miles & Huberman (1994), this analysis consist of three steps, they are: data reduction, data display, or data representation, and conclusion drawing and verification.
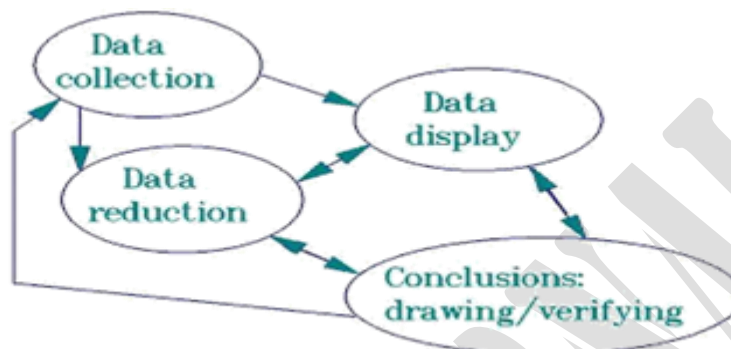

Figure 1 M&H's Component of Data Analysis

In reduction process the researcher chose the best five poetry of collection poems by Maya Angelou that retrieved from site http://gen.lib.rus.ec. the researcher read line per line to identified word, phrase or sentence that containing the figurative language. Then, the researcher put into checklist table's instrument , that contain figurative categories.

In data representation, the researcher presented in the data in checklist table. Those data arranged based on each figurative categories.

In making conclusion, the researcher conclude which figurative that appears among ten figurative language, and what figurative that mostly found in five selected poetry of Maya Angelou.

FINDING

In the five selected poetry of Maya Angelou which the title; "*Alone*"; "*Cage Bird*"; "*Old Folks Laughs*"; "*Phenomenal Woman*"; "*Still I Rise*". Researcher made the coding of poetry title; P1(Poetry 1) is "Alone"; P2 (Poetry 2) is "Cage Bird"; P3(Poetry 3) is "Old Folks Laughs", P4(Poetry 4) is "Phenomenal Woman"; P5 (Poetry 5) is "Still I Rise", and also the researcher used letter (P) Stands for poetry; letter (L) stands for line of poetry, symbol ∑(Sigma) is referent for total of findings.

In poetry "Alone" the researcher found 1 metaphor, 1 personification, 1 simile, 1 antithesis, and 2 symbolisms. In poetry "Cage Bird" there were; 2 metaphors, 7 personifications, 2 symbolisms, and 1 paradox. In poetry "Old Folks Laugh", there were

found; 1 metaphor, 1 simile, 1 synecdoche, and 1 paradox. In poetry "Phenomenal Woman", there were found; 2 metaphors, 1 hyperbole, and 1 symbolism. In the last poetry "Still I Rise", there were found; 7 metaphors, 1 personification, and 6 similes. It can be summarized that, in the five selected poetries, Angelou used 13 metaphors, 9 personifications, 1 hyperboles, 8 similes, 1 metonymy, 1 antithesis, 5 symbolisms, and 2 paradoxes. Total of findings were 40 sentences contains figurative language. The most figurative language found was metaphor and the least were synecdoche and antithesis. There were no found for metonymy and irony, because there were no sentence showed the indicators of metonymy and irony.

No	Kinds of Figurative Language	Founds in Poetry	Σ
1	Metaphor	(P1), (P2), (P3), (P4), (P5)	13
2	Personification	(P1), (P2), (P5)	9
3	Hyperbole	(P3) (P4)	2
4	Simile	(P1), (P3), (P5)	8
5	Metonymy	(P3)	1
6	Synecdoche	-	-
7	Irony	-	-
8	Antithesis	(P1)	1
9	Symbolism	(P1),(P2), (P4)	5
10	Paradox	(P2),(P3)	2
	Total		41

Table 1 Findings in Five Selected Poetry

DISCUSSION

The researcher has reduced the data and found that Angelou mostly use metaphor, personification, simile, and symbolism in her poetry. However, in poetry, she used some figurative language. There were 8 kinds of figurative languages found in the poetries; 1). Metaphor, 2). Personification, 3). Hyperbole, 4). Simile, 5). Synecdoche, 6). Antithesis, 7). Symbolism, and 8). Paradox. The totals of figurative language found were 41 sentences. Metaphor consist of 13 sentences, personification consist of 9 sentences, hyperbole 2 consist of sentences, simile consist of 8 sentences, synecdoche consist of 1 sentence, antithesis consist of one sentence, symbolism consist of 5 sentences, and paradox consist of 2 sentences. From ten figurative languages not all of those indicators were found in the five selected poetries, among ten indicators, metonymy and irony there were not found any, because there were no sentences in five poetries that appropriate to indicators of irony and metonymy.

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
1	Lying, thinking	
2	Last night	
3	How to find my soul a home	Symbolism
4	Where water is not thirsty	Personification
5	And bread loaf is not stone .	Antithesis
6	I came up with one thing	
7	And I don't believe I'm wrong .	
8	That nobody,	
9	But nobody	
10	Can make it out here alone.	
11	Alone, all alone	
12	Nobody, but nobody	
13	Can make it out here alone.	
14	There are some millionaires	
15	With money they can't use	
16	Their wives run round like banshees	Simile
17	Their children sing the blues	Symbolism
18	They've got expensive doctors	
19	To cure their hearts of stone.	Metaphor
20	But nobody	
21	No, nobody	
22	Can make it out here alone.	
23	Alone, all alone	
24	Nobody, but nobody	
25	Can make it out here alone.	
26	Now if you listen closely	
27	I'll tell you what I know	

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
28	Storm clouds are gathering	
29	The wind is gonna blow	
30	The race of man is suffering	
31	And I can hear the moan,	
32	'Cause nobody,	
33	But nobody	
34	Can make it out here alone.	
35	Alone, all alone	
36	Nobody, but nobody	
37	Can make it out here alone.	

Table 2 Poetry 'Alone'

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
1	A free bird leaps	Symbolism
2	on the back of the wind	Personification
3	and floats downstream	
4	till the current ends	
5	and dips his wing	
6	in the orange sun rays	
7	and dares to claim the sky.	
8	But a bird that stalks	
9	down his narrow cage	
10	can seldom see through	
11	his bars of rage	Metaphor
12	his wings are clipped and	Metaphor
13	his feet are tied	
14	so he opens his throat to sing.	Personification
15	The caged bird sings	Symbolism
16	with a fearful trill	
17	of things unknown	
18	but longed for still	
19	and his tune is heard	
20	on the distant hill	
21	for the caged bird	
22	sings of freedom.	
23	The free bird thinks of another breeze	Personification
24	and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees	
25	and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn	Personification
26	and he names the sky his own.	Personification
27	But a caged bird stands on the grave of	Paradox

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
	dreams	
28	his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream	Personification
29	his wings are clipped and his feet are tied	
30	so he opens his throat to sing.	
31	The caged bird sings	Personification
32	with a fearful trill	
33	of things unknown	
34	but longed for still	
35	and his tune is heard	
36	on the distant hill	
37	for the caged bird	
38	sings of freedom.	

Table 3 Poetry 'Cage Bird'

Lines	Line in Poetry	Figurative Language
1	They have spent their	
2	content of simpering,	
3	holding their lips this	
4	and that way, winding	
5	the lines between	
6	their brows. Old folks	Simile
7	allow their bellies to jiggle like slow	
8	tamborines.	
9	The hollers-	Metaphor
10	rise up and spill	
11	over any way they want.	
12	When old folks laugh, they free the world.	Synecdoche
13	They turn slowly, slyly know	
14	the best and worst	
15	of remembering.	
16	saliva glistens in	
17	the corners of their mouths,	
18	their heads wobble	
19	on brittle necks, but	
20	their laps	
21	are filled with memories.	
22	When old folks laugh, they consider the promise	Paradox
23	of dear painless death, and generously	
24	forgive life for happening	
25	to them.	

Table 4 Poetry 'Old Folks Laugh'

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
1	Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.	
2	I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size	
3	But when I start to tell them,	
4	They think I'm telling lies.	
5	I say,	
6	It's in the reach of my arms,	
7	The span of my hips,	
8	The stride of my step,	
9	The curl of my lips.	
10	I'm a woman	
11	Phenomenally.	
12	Phenomenal woman,	
13	That's me.	
14	I walk into a room	
15	Just as cool as you please,	
16	And to a man,	
17	The fellows stand or	
18	Then they swarm around me,	
19	Then they swarm around me,	Metaphor
20	A hive of honey bees.	
21	I say,	
22	It's the fire in my eyes,	Hyperbole
23	And the flash of my teeth,	Symbolism
24	The swing in my waist,	
25	And the joy in my feet.	
26	I'm a woman	
27	Phenomenally.	
28	Phenomenal woman,	
29	That's me.	
30	Men themselves have wondered	
31	What they see in me.	
32	They try so much	
33	But they can't touch	
34	My inner mystery.	
35	When I try to show them,	
36	They say they still can't see.	
37	I say,	
38	It's in the arch of my back,	
39	The sun of my smile,	Metaphor
40	The ride of my breasts,	
41	The grace of my style.	
42	I'm a woman	

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
43	Phenomenally.	
44	Phenomenal woman,	
45	That's me.	
46	Now you understand	
47	Just why my head's not bowed.	
48	I don't shout or jump about	
49	Or have to talk real loud	
50	When you see me passing,	
51	It ought to make you proud	
52	I say,	
53	It's in the click of my heels	
54	The bend of my hair,	
55	the palm of my hand,	
56	The need for my care.	
57	'Cause I'm a woman	
58	Phenomenally.	
59	Phenomenal woman,	
60	That's me.	

Table 5 Poetry 'Phenomenal Woman'

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
1	You may write me down in history	
2	With your bitter, twisted lies,	Metaphor
3	You may trod me in the very dirt	Metaphor
4	But still, like dust, I'll rise.	Simile
5	Does my sassiness upset you?	
6	Why are you beset with gloom?	
7	'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells	Simile
8	Pumping in my living room.	
9	Just like moons and like suns,	Simile
10	With the certainty of tides,	
11	Just like hopes springing high,	
12	Still I'll rise.	
13	Did you want to see me broken?	
14	Bowed head and lowered eyes?	
15	Did you want to see me broken?	Simile
16	Weakened by my soulful cries?	
17	Does my haughtiness offend you?	
18	Don't you take it awful hard	
19	'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines	Simile
20	Diggin' in my own backyard.	
21	you may shoot me with your words,	Metaphor
22	You may cut me with your eyes,	Metaphor

Lines	Line in poetry	Figurative Language
23	You may kill me with your hatefulness,	Personification
24	But still, like air, I'll rise.	Simile
25	Does my sexiness upset you?	
26	Does it come as a surprise	
27	That I dance like I've got diamonds	
28	At the meeting of my thighs?	
29	Out of the huts of history's shame	
30	I rise	
31	Up from a past that's rooted in pain	Metaphor
32	I rise	
33	I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,	Metaphor
34	Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.	
35	Leaving behind nights of terror and fear	
36	I rise	
37	Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear	
38	I rise	
39	Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,	
40	I am the dream and the hope of the slave.	Metaphor
41	I rise	
42	I rise	
43	I rise.	

Table 6 Poetry 'Still I Rise'

CONCLUSION

Based on research finding, the researcher found some figurative languages in the five selected poetries of Maya Angelou, entitle: ; "Alone"; "Caged Bird"; "Old Folks Laugh"; "Phenomenal Woman"; "Still I Rise". The researcher concluded in several point. Since the researcher used ten categories of figurative language (Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Simile, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Irony, Antithesis, Symbolism, and Paradox). First, the totals of figurative language found were 40 sentences. Metaphor consist of 13 sentences, personification consist of 9 sentences, hyperbole 1 consist of sentences, simile consist of 8 sentences, synecdoche consist of 1 sentence, antithesis consist of one sentence, symbolism consist of 5 sentences, and paradox consist of 2 sentences. Secondly, not all of those indicators were found in the five selected poetries, among ten indicators, metonymy and irony there were not found any, because there were no sentences in five poetries that appropriate to categories of irony and metonymy. Lastly, most of the five selected poetry of Maya Angelou tell about racism, sadness, confident, and survive, that can inspire most of peoples in the world, especially to peoples who interest to poetry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arvius alm, C. (2003). *Figures of Speech*. sweden: student literature, lund.

Croft, S., & Cross, H. (2000). *Literature, Criticism, and Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dancygier, B., & Sweetser, E. (2014). *Figurative Language*. USA: Cambridge. Retrieved from http://www.gen.lib.rus.ec

Gay, L. R. et al. (2006). *Education Research (Competencies for Analysis and Applications)*. New Jersey, USA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Given, L. M. (2008). The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *qualitative research methods*. sage.

Kennedy, X., & Gioia, D. (2002). *An Introduction to Poetry* (eleventh). New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Laurence, P., & Thomas, R. (1992). *Sound and Sense: An INtroduction to Poetry* (Eight). London: Southern Methodist University.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (second). California: Sage. Retrieved from gen.lib.rus.ec

Norris, J. M. (2010). *Using Poetry To Teach Reading Comprehension Strategies To English Langugae Learners*. Hamline.

Pardede, M. (2008). *Understanding Poetry*. Sumatera Utara.