



## Language Style Approach to Teach Poetry in EFL Classroom

Rahayu Kuswardani<sup>1\*</sup>, Fithriyah Inda Nur Abida<sup>1</sup>, Fahri<sup>1</sup>, Fauris Zuhri<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

\*Korespondensi: [rahayukuswardani@unesa.ac.id](mailto:rahayukuswardani@unesa.ac.id)

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to describe the method of using language style in poetry learning in the EFL classroom. Some of the methods used are focusing on the word choice, sentence structure, and figurative language of the selected poem. This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques are observation and documentation with conversation observation technique and writing technique. This study was conducted on 5th semester students majoring English education program at State University of Surabaya. The data of this research is a collection of poetry by Robert Frost. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The results of this study found that the effective approach of teaching language style in poetry begins with a discussion of vocabulary in poetry, going on to a review of sentence structure and coherence, and finally continuing on to rhetoric and figurative language. Through this method of instruction, information is gradually transferred to students, who gain a better understanding of how to interpret poetry.*

## 1. Introduction

Poetry is a poetic work of art that is formed from a series of words in the most beautiful arrangement. As a form of literary work, poetry contains expressions of thoughts that are poured through the choice of words, tone, style, and certain imagery. Poetry expresses thoughts that evoke feelings, which stimulate the imagination and the five senses in a rhythmic arrangement. Pradopo in (Eliasari, 2018) defines poetry as recording and interpreting important human experiences, composed in the most memorable form. According to Aminuddin (Rita Vidyasari, Ni Putu Era Marsakawati, 2016) poetry is a poetic work of art that is formed from a series of words in the most beautiful arrangement. The ability of the author to utilize all elements of language, especially the aesthetic beauty of a language is

the essence of a poem. Each author has their own style in using language as it is a personal voice recorded in his work. Therefore, Sayuti in (Floris, 2004) mentions that there is no better or worse term in terms of style. There are only stylistic differences between one author and another (Syamsia. & Ismail, 2021). Teaching stylistics in poems is one of the methods to improve students' ability in understanding a poem. It is because the style of the language in a poem is the essence of the poem itself (Alvi & Alvi, 2019). Language style is an element of poetry that stems from language.

Language style according to Keraf is a way of expressing thoughts through language that specifically shows the soul and personality of the author (Syamsia. & Ismail, 2021). Pradopo in (Inda et al., 2020) divides language style into two, namely figurative language style and rhetorical style. It is stated that the figurative language styles include (1) comparison, (2) metaphor, (3) parable of the epic, (4) personification, (5) metonymy, (6) synecdoche, and (7) allegory. Furthermore, rhetorical styles are (1) tautology, (2) pleonasm, (3) enumeration, (4) parallelism, and (5) paradox. Meanwhile, according to Siswanto in (F. I. N. Abida, 2016) figures of speech are divided into nine kinds: Irony, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Simile, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Symbol and Paradox. Nurgiantoro (2014: 40) adds that language style is how to pronounce language in prose, or how an author expresses something that will be stated. Style is characterized by formal linguistic characteristics such as word choice, sentence structure, forms of figurative language and rhetorical means, use of cohesion, and others. Style is essentially a technique, namely a technique for selecting linguistic expressions that are felt to represent something that will be conveyed or expressed. Tarigan in (Abida, 2021) stated that language style is a beautiful language that is used to increase the effect by introducing and comparing a certain object or thing with other objects or things that are more general. In literary appreciation, the use of language style able to make it easier to enjoy, understand, and appreciate the sign system used in literary works which functions to find out the expressions that the author wants to express.

Language style as one of the important elements in literary works, will greatly assist readers in understanding and knowing the meaning of poetry as a whole (Marin, 2017). Language style approach to teaching poetry is still rarely given in lectures. The complexity and ambiguity of a language in poetry is one of the factors that make poetry less enjoyable. Situmorang in (Besse Darmawati, 1969) explains that it is not easy to understand or capture the meaning contained in the strands of poetry, even more so to enjoy its beauty. Situmorang's acknowledgment was also felt by most of the students who said that they had difficulty in capturing the meaning contained in the poem (Rana, 2020). Enjoying poetry is indeed much more difficult than enjoying fictional stories such as short stories, novels and romances. Therefore, to be able to enjoy poetry, perseverance and concentration of mind are needed because the contents of poetry contain many symbols and implicit meanings related to human life (Tahmasebi, 2019). Teaching language style in poetry is thus expected to be a provision for students in understanding poetry. Through the form of linguistic performance contained in poetry, the artistic function and meaning can be reviewed and studied in relation to the life itself. (Santillán, 2020) explained that figurative language contains the use of all elements of language used by the author to achieve aesthetic values and complex meanings

(Proitsaki, 2020). Therefore, this study apply the five elements of language style i.e vocabularies, sentence structure, cohesion, rhetoric, and figurative language to help students to analyse the selected poem of Robert Frost.

## **2. Method**

This research is classified as a qualitative descriptive research, because it only explains the formation of language style in a poem. This study was conducted on 5th semester students majoring English education program at State University of Surabaya. Data collection techniques are observation and documentation (Creswell, 2014). In the data collection stage, the authors carried out two research techniques, namely the listening technique and the note-taking technique. The data collected in this study comes from a collection of poetry by Robert Frost (Sugiyono, 2011). The data can be in the form of words, sentences, or expressions that are totally integrated into the overall content of the poem. The data analysis technique used in this study adopted the Analysis Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman (F. Abida & Kuswardani, 2018), which divides the steps in data analysis activities into several parts, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

The teaching of language style in poetry focuses on the language and intrinsic elements of poetry. It is characterized by formal linguistic characteristics such as word choice, sentence structure, rhetorical means, use of cohesion, and figurative language. For the first part i.e. word choice, language style and vocabulary have a close, reciprocal relationship. The richer a person's vocabulary is, the more diverse the style of language he uses Keraf (Kuswardani et al., 2022). Thus, student activities begin with understanding each word contained in the poem. Students look for the meaning of each diction in the poem and then write it in prose. In reflecting on poetry, students usually use a dictionary or discuss with the teacher to find meanings that they do not understand.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.

And sorry I could not travel both

First of all, teacher asks students to read the verse and find out each of the word meaning. Then they need to analyse why the author use a particular word to build a stanza. The word 'roads', 'wood', and 'travel' for example gives denotative and connotative meanings. Road means street as well as life, and wood means home as well as forest. Through this specific choices of words, the author wants to express the idea of life in a simple description of our daily vocabularies. Next, students need to examine the sentence structure and cohesion of the poem. The second line 'And sorry I could not travel both' correlated with the previous sentence. The word 'both' connected with 'two roads' which is imposible for the speaker to walk in, so that he should take a choice. The sentence structure that emphasize on noun phrase lead students to pay attention of this format and ease the students to apprehend the contents of the poem. The following stage is introducing the figurative languages occur in a poem. As a part of teaching language style in a poem, figurative languages are considered as a prominent element of poetry.

### **Types of Language Style in Robert Frost's poetry**

- a. Comparative language style or simile is figurative language that equates one thing with another by using comparative words such as: as, like, as if, such as, for example, and other comparative words Perrine (Rhana Saputra & Inda Nur Abida, 2021) . This language style can be seen from Robert Frost's poem entitled "Star"

As if with keenness for our fate  
Those stars like some snow-white

The appearance of the stars in the sky is likened to the formation of white snow that falls in winter. Frost uses a figurative language to delegate the meaning of life which is represented by the comparison of stars with snow-white.

- b. The following language style is metaphor. The metaphor states that something is the same or worth something else, which is actually not the same. This language style can be seen from the poem entitled "The Road Not Taken"

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.  
And sorry I could not travel both

We can infer that it is autumn because the speaker says the woods are yellow. The woods represent the speaker's life, which has a metaphorical significance. In addition, the fork in the road is a metaphor for a choice.

- c. Personification language style equates objects with humans, inanimate objects are made to act, think, and so on like humans Perrine (Kuswardani et al., 2022).

In the personification of direct and specific comparisons, namely the giving of human traits or characteristics to inanimate objects, animals or an idea Sayuti,in (Frost, 2022). This language style can be seen from the poem entitled "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.

Personification is exemplified by the idea of nature having an easy or difficult time clinging to something. Nature is not personified, but it is transformed into a female figure. The speaker substitutes "gold" for the human experience of beauty. In essence, "gold" is a very rare and valuable metal. The color "gold" is associated with materialism and wealth. Furthermore, "green" represents the human temporal cycle, i.e. youth. When a person is still young, she or he exudes the spectacular characteristics of a youthful figure. The audience was enthralled by her/his devious and beautiful performance.

- d. The next language style metonymy is the use of an attribute of an object or the use of something very closely related to it to replace the object Pradopo (F. Abida & Kuswardani, 2018). This language style can be seen from the poem entitled "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening".

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow

In the poem, frost uses wood in his poem refer to the metonymy of home or place. The use of the word wood which can mean forest was chosen to replace objects related to houses in rural areas. Thus, wood is interpreted as a cottage in a remote village.

- e. Synecdoche is a figurative language that mentions the important part of an object (thing) for the object or thing itself Pradopo in (F. Abida & Kuswardani, 2018) . In the poem, entitled "A Late Walk", there are four kinds of synecdodes. One of them is in the first verse:

When I go up through the mowing field,  
The headless aftermath,  
Smooth-laid like thatch with the heavy dew,  
Half closes the garden path.

The first stanza's synecdoche is smooth-laid like thatch with the heavy dew; it represents the entire lines with a simple image as synecdoche. It's how frost likes to make simple work with layered meaning by grasping the whole with a little bit of touch.

- f. Allegory is a figurative story or figurative picture. This figurative story or figurative painting illustrates other things or other events. In an allegory, a story has a second meaning that is hidden in the poem. In the poem "The Road Not Taken"

Robert Frost creates this allegory by using numerous symbols as well as metaphor. He tells the path of human life like a tree branch and like a crossroads where a person must choose one branch to continue his life journey.

Symbols also pretty much adorn the poems of Robert Frost. He is one of the poets who use a simple images and figures. He does not want to put any difficult words in order he can represent his idea well to the readers through his poems. In poetry, symbol is a form of figurative language which is a fundamental form of expression of poetry, because it is a container for the poet's mind and is needed to manifest his experience. In "Neither out Far or in Deep", the narrator uses simple images and figures. The plain sense, the rhyme scheme, the rhythm and the images; are seems to be simple. Actually, this poem is disarming us. Its figures and symbols are quite conventional, made so by repeated use and time. This means to beautify the poem in order easy to be read and understood. The symbol can also be seen in Robert Frost's poem "stopping by Woods on a snowy evening". In this poem, almost all of the lyrics in the poem contain symbols. Almost every single element in the poem in that sense is symbolic of something. The first line of Woods' lyrics represents a life journey and a movement towards death. The unidentified traveller on horseback resembles a knight in a heroic adventure during the Middle Ages. In the woods, the cool and the dead of night, as well as the frozen lack. The 'darkest evening of the year' – all of these elements combine to create an atmosphere in which death's imminence clashes with love's indestructible spirit, as exemplified by the traveller.



The rhetorical style found among others are (1) tautology, (2) pleonasm, (3) enumeration, (4) parallelism, and (5) paradox. Tautology is a style of language that uses more words than necessary to express a thought or idea. The reference is called a tautology if it uses words that are synonymous, have the same meaning and meaning. Tautologies are statements that are true in every possible situation, as defined by linguistics. Because tautology is context-dependent, Writes you could as well argue that there is no such thing as tautology or that the entire world is a tautology, depending on where you choose to stand on the scales of sameness and difference and pertness and wholeness.

Tree at my window  
window tree,  
My sash is lowered when night comes  
But let there never be curtain drawn  
Between you and me.

In the poem "Tree at my window" there is a meaningless equative tautology in this poem. When Frost speaks about nature, he actually speaks of Man behind the scenes. Nature is used as an expression to bring about the actual image. The speaker is giving more than required by adding nothing: 'tree at my window, window tree' that is verbally stressed empathic speech in this poem. The function of this tautological expression is to create a sense of obligation that is, respecting nature is something mandatory.

Pleonasm is a figure of speech that has the same meaning to emphasize something. Pleonasm is usually used for affirmation or to strengthen the expressive nature of sentences. In pleonasm there is repetition of words in sentences that have the same or clear meaning. For example, the word wood which represents life or house or rule in several poems entitled stopping by woods on a snowy evening, the pasture, and the road not taken. the needless repetition of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas are used by Robert frost to emphasize the philosophical meaning of the word he was used.

Parallelism is one of the devices used by Frost in this poem. Frost used it to connect the parallel or connected words or phrases to the theme. When a moving field is mentioned in the poem A Late Walk, it refers to a farmer's action of cutting off the plant during harvest time. People will not think of a moving field in the city center, where the activities are inappropriate and there is no open space. Frost gives his reader the first impression of a late walk in his poem in order to connect their mage to the countryside. It's a kind of work-function parallelism. While paradox is a contradictory statement, situation or idea. In Robert Frost, "The Tuft of Flowers" "Men work together," I told him from the heart, "Whether they work together or apart," are represent paradox since together and apart are opposites of each other so it seems impossible to work together and apart at the same time.

In the learning process in the classroom, teachers use vocabularies, grammar, and figurative languages to adapt the students to the elements of language style. By understanding the overall style of language in poetry, automatically the reading of the poem becomes deeper considering that the meaning given is express and implied. Teachers take figurative language as the final steps as the students need to define the vocabularies first, then analysing the

sentence structure and cohesion of each part then move on to analysing figurative languages.

Through this method of learning, Information is gradually imparted to students and facilitate their understanding of how to evaluate poetry. Based on the class results, students found that the personification and symbol metaphors are the most dominant and almost always appear in every poem written by Robert Frost. The dominance of this language style shows that Frost's writing style prioritizes deep meaning on life but is packaged in a light and simple choice of words. Therefore, parable language styles such as metaphor and personification are used. Likewise, the use of symbols used to represent a meaning behind what is seen. Finally, poetry reading is not limited to reading but also understands the content and message that the poem wants to convey. Thus, the teaching of language style in poetry is significant in order to improve students' ability to understand literary works of poetry.

#### 4. Conclusion

The method of using language style in poetry learning consist of word choice, sentence structure, cohesion, rhetorical style, and figurative language. Understanding the overall elements of language style in a poem help students comprehend the poem. Automatically the reading of the poem becomes deeper considering that the meaning given is expressed and implied. Teachers have students define their vocabulary first, then analyze the sentence structure and cohesiveness of each section before moving on to the analysis of figurative language. Students absorb information progressively through this approach of instruction, which helps them better comprehend how to analyze poetry. Students are better prepared to comprehend complex vocabulary, the structure of sentence writing in a poem, and can grasp the underlying meaning when language style in poetry is taught to them. According to the class outcomes, students learned that personification and symbol metaphors are the most common and almost always appear in every poem written by Robert Frost. This linguistic pattern is frequently used, which shows that Frost values significant life meaning while still employing straightforward language. Reading poetry involves more than just reading; it also involves understanding the ideas and messages that the poet is trying to get through. Thus, it is important to teach students about language style in order to enhance their comprehension of literary works of poetry.

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