Do Teenage Writers Figure Their Stories?

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Abstract— **This article discusses types of figures of speech used by teenage writers in their story texts. Eighteen writers as students of Junior High Schools were selected to get a training of how to effectively exploit Indonesian language to compose a story text. Data in the forms of figures of speech were collected, of which then were analyzed to their classification and how they are used by the writers in the texts. The findings show that most the writers only select two types of figures of speech, i.e. personification and simile for their texts. Such figures of speech are classified into two functions, namely for describing the events and the setting of the stories. The teenage writers show strategies in using the figures of speech. Some of them are represented directly in naration of the story, while some others are executed through utterances in dialogs. The limited variations of figures of speech performed by the writers might suggest that most of them do not have good power of expression, especially with many types of figures of speech. Language teachers should consider this phenomenon in relation to the process of language learning at school.**

Keywords— figures of speech; teenage; writers; story

I. Introduction

Studies of figures of speech are increasingly attracting current language researchers. As Alm-Arvius (2003: 9) stated that the interest in using and also examining figures of speech is more focused on the exploitation of word choices and constructions that are able to present figurative meanings rather than the literal meanings of these language units. Although many of the studies discussed more about figurative language, some recent studies have begun to examine how figures of speech are produced (Corts & Meyers, 2002).

This article is also more interested in studying how figures of speech are produced and used by teenage writers in their story texts. Eubanks (2011: 3) says that students are expected to be able to use figures of speech in their writing because they can write whatever they meet outside the classroom something that can accommodate them to express it through various means. figures of speech. The by exploiting various expressions including figures of speech. Such a skill to use figures of speech itself can be related to the level of creativity (Moreno, 2007: 5) —writers who are good in using various figures of speech are writers with better creativity than those who are not.

In connection with this phenomenon, this article presents the results of an analysis that examines the skills of teenage writers in using figures of speech in their story texts. The writing mode is chosen to see whether the types of figurative language used for this mode will be different from the types of figures of speech used in oral texts. This is related to the opinion of Boerger (2005: 31) who said that the communication mode affected the types of figures of speech used. Therefore, the author of the story text will be led to use figures of speech that are adjusted to the mode of the story delivered.

II. Method

Data for the research were collected by hiring 18 teenage writers who are students of Junior High Schools in Solo City. They got a one-day training on story writing, especially how to select words and figures of speech for their story texts. In the end of the training, the teenagers got an on the spot assignment to write a short story using figures of speech they were introduced in the training. The story texts were then analyzed to see types of figures of speech used by the teenage writers and how they are exploited for the texts.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Although they were introduced with types of figures of speech in the training program, five teenage writers did not exploit any expression representing figures of speech; the rest have such expressions for their stories. Simile and personification become the two most popular figures of speech for the writers. Some of them exploited both of these figures of speech; some other only use one of them—either simile or personification only for their stories. The interesting phenomenon is that the language units representing expressions to be a simile or a personification vary. Put, in other words, most or the writers are skillful in selecting various language units to produce their simile and personification.

As a simile is a figure of speech which uses comparison, then specific words in Bahasa Indonesia like *seperti, bagaikan,* or *bak*—all mean "like"—are used to compare two entities—these actually do no have anything in common. There are six expressions representing similes which were exploited by six writers—one writer used one simile for the story texts. As all the similes were created to compare two things to give dramatic effect for the story, then they can be classified into types according to the way the comparison is facilitated through language as shown in the following table.

TABLE I. SIMILES IN THE STORIES

No.	Title	Simile
1.	Hari Bahagia	Setelah rapi, Chiara keluar dari kamar dan segera membereskan rumahnya yang **seperti** kapal pecah
2.	Psycopath	--
3.	Zahra Amelia	Malam itu, bulan purnama bersinar terangnya **bak** matahari.
4.	Kisah Arina	--
5.	Sabar, Puasa	
6.	Puasa, Tau!	--
7.	Planet Mars	
8.	Keluarga Istana	Kedatanganmu membuat istana harum **bak** melati
9.	Nightmare	--
10.	Senja	
11.	Presiden Pembohong	--
12.	Burung yang Tak Bisa Terbang	--
13.	Fatiha	Mungkin, kamarku **tidak akan mengembari** kuburan
14.	Kesepian	--
15.	Maaf	--
16.	Misteri Rumah Tua	--
17.	Chelvica	**Bagai** rekaman kaset, memori itu terekam kembali dalam kepalanya
18.	Al Isra	Kini tubuhku **tak ada bedanya dengan ayah**, kaku.

As comparison is accommodated by grammar, then similes created by the teenage writers show two types of grammar aspects, namely comparing by using preposition and comparing by using verbs. The former is presented by using the words *seperti, bak*, and *bagai*—which all mean *like*. The words *bak* and *bagai* sound more archaic as they are from Malay language—the original language from which Bahasa Indonesia has been developing. Meanwhile, the rest of the similes perform the comparison through verbs of the clause. As such verbs compare two things represented by nominal groups, then from the grammar point, the things are represented by the subject and object for a transitive verb, such as in *Kamarku **tidak mengembari** kuburan* "My room **does not resemblance** griefyard", and a subject and an object of preposition for an intransitive verb as in *Kini tubuhku **tak ada bedanya** dengan Ayah, kaku* "Now my body **is not different** from my Fathers, frozen."

The teenage writers produce more expressions representing personification; moreover, the types of such a figure of speech is numerous. As a personification is used to personify or to represent a non human entity like human, then linguistically verbs play role in performing this function. The following table presents expressions produced by the writers in making the figure of speech.

TABLE II. PERSONIFICATION IN THE STORIES

No.	Title	Personification
1.	Hari Bahagia	--
2.	Psycopath	-Hanya suara serangga yang **mengiringinya**. -Ha..ha..ha, tawa bahagia itu **menyertainya** dengan gembira.
3.	Zahra Amelia	--
4.	Kisah Arina	--
5.	Sabar, Puasa	Angin sepoi *menerobos* masuk jendela, *membelai* lembut wajahnya.

6.	Puasa, Tau!	--
7.	Planet Mars	Setelah beberapa saat terguncang, akhirnya roket astronot itu seperti jatuh ke bawah dan *tertelan* Mars.
8.	Keluarga Istana	Mentari **menyapa** dengan senyum.
9.	Nightmare	--
10.	Senja	- Bulan malam itu tampak indah, dipadu padankan dengan gemerlap bintang yang **memukau**. - Senyum Senja mengembang
11.	Presiden Pembohong	--
12.	Burung yang Tak Bisa Terbang	--
13.	Fatiha	- Pikiran negatif **memenuhi** kepala Aira - Di sebelahnya, seharusnya ada kipas angin yang **berdiri** manis. - Di luar, bulan sedang **bermain** dengan bintang - Sesekali ada tuan Komet **berlari** ke kantor - Malam itu, tuan bulan, nyonya bintang, dan tuan komet **menertawai** Aira yang penakut
14.	Kesepian	--
15.	Maaf	- Suara itu sukses **membuat** gadis itu tersentak. - Selaput bening yang **menghias** matanya **membuat** hati Kirana seakan tengah tercabik sakit. - Cukup 1 kalimat, tetapi mampu **meruntuhkan** seorang Samara - Tetapi bagaimana ia selalu ada, sedangkan tumor itu mulai **mengganas** did kepalanya
16.	Misteri Rumah Tua	- Pandangannya **menyapu** jalanan yang sepi.
17.	Chelvica	- Malam itu, angin **berhembus** lembut **menerpa** wajah seorang gadis.
18.	Al Isra	- Mentari tampak lelah **menatap** dunia - Raungan kedua mobilnya **datang** dengan petugas yang berbeda.

The table above shows four types of verbs which accommodate the process of personifying non thing to be human. As a human has characteristics as an entity who can *do, happen, sense, behave* and *say* things then the writers select verbs which represent such characteristics. Personifying through doing verbs dominates the production. The writers exploit these representing physical action verbs which are usually performed by human being to non human thing such as the verbs of *mengiringi* "play a background music", *menyertai* "go along", *membelai* "stroke", *berdiri* "stand", *bermain* "play", *berlari* "run", and so on. In addition, the writers also selects happening verbs to personify things such as mengembang "grow", memenuhi "fulfill", etc. The other types of verbs which also represent the process of personifying are sensing, behavioring, and saying as in the words of *memukau* "attract", *menertawai* "laugh at", and *menyapa* "greet". Indeed, to see whether the verbs are personifying things can be seen from the sentence context in which the verbs are used. For example, the word mengiringi in the clause of *hanya suara serangga yang mengiringinya* will be functional to make the expression personify things as this verb presents a non human entity—suara serangga "sound of insects"—to act like a human, that is *mengiringi* "to play a background music".

The teenage writers know types of figures of speech as they were introduced in the training program to compose stories. However, there are two most popular types which were exploited by the writers in their stories, i.e. simile and personification. No writer used metaphor, even though this figure of speech is almost similar to simile in production. In addition, simile is more easily to construct than personification; yet, the latter figure of speech was produced in more numbers and in more various sub types that the former. Similes collected from the story texts are only constructed in two sub types such as those which present comparison with prepositions and with verbs. On the other hand, personifications in the texts are constructed by using five types of verbs such as doing, happening, behavioring, sensing, and saying verbs. These represent characteristics of human being. All of the figures of speech were exploited to increase the dramatic effect of events in the story—therefore, texts which have such figures of speech in them sound more lively than those which do not.

IV. CONCLUSION

Similes and personification are two types of figures of speech the teenage writers used in their stories. The figures of speech are very helpful in making the stories more interesting and more lively. The writers are more skillful in constructing personifications than similes. Practices to use figures of speech should be performed frequently so that the writers will get familiar with them and can use them to figure their stories.

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