

FIGURE OF SPEECH ON ENGLISH SHORT STORIES WRITTEN BY AN INDONESIAN AUTHOR ON WATTPAD: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Kasmundari, Yulhenli Thabran, S.S., M.A., Indri Anastasia, S.S., M.A., M.Ed

Jambi University, Indonesia

Email: kasmundari@yahoo.com

Abstract

There is a lot of prose written in English by Indonesian authors that are posted on Wattpad. Bree Stonefield is one of those authors. The purposes of this study are to analyze the authorial style of Bree Stonefield in term of figure of speech and to find possible explanation of the style. The present study uses stylistic analysis model from Leech and Short (2007), where the data of figure of speech was collected, the pattern was identified, and the style was interpreted to see the possible explanation. The data of this study are derived from Bree Stonefield's two short stories entitled *White Dress* and *11 Reasons Why*. From the analysis, it is found that the author frequently used hyperbole, metaphor, personification and simile. The author's writing style shows a pattern where she used figure of speech mostly on abstract objects and verb and indirect forms. These styles can be explained by the stories' intrinsic element of plot development and theme and characterization building, the author's background where she learns English mostly informally from social media and other online platform, the Wattpad's trend that influences its writers, and first language interference that influences the author's choice of words as well. This suggested that the author's style was not only formed from authorial intention but also influenced by the author's situation.

Key words: Stylistic Analysis, Figure of Speech, Short Story, Wattpad

Introduction

Authors of prose transmit their meaning and idea of the story through the way they write literary works. Some ideas may be expressed explicitly or implicitly based on the style that the authors have or choose to use. Since many people read prose in the purpose of pleasure, it is much easier when the authors and the readers write and read the prose in the language that they have proficiency in. The authors will be able to express the story easily and the readers will be able to process the story comfortably. However, these days, it is a common thing to find works of prose that are written in the languages that are not the authors' mother tongue. English is one of the languages that are popular to be used in said prose, considering the fact that it is a universal language. It is a common thing nowadays to find authors from all over the world write stories in English and publish them online to approach new readers from across the world. Something intriguing from this phenomenon is that some authors may come from some different countries with different styles in their language use, yet their English works of prose are universally approachable for others. So, how about Indonesian author that write in English? What are their styles in expressing their story? In this study, the

researcher attempts to present a critical analysis of some of an Indonesian author's works, specifically short stories, in order to see the way the meaning and idea of the story are transmitted through English.

The short stories chosen in this present research are two English short stories written by an Indonesian author on Wattpad. Wattpad (wattpad.com) is currently the most popular writing-reading websites where people can write, share, and read literary works freely and universally. Since launched in 2006, Wattpad has already been a platform for amateur writers to distribute their works. Bree Stonefield is a particular Indonesian author on Wattpad whose two particular works have been analyzed in this study. She has been praised for her good English skill on her works, even though she is not a native. The two short stories of hers that have been analyzed are *White Dress* and *11 Reasons Why*. These two short stories are chosen due to a consideration that their words count, which were approximately thirty thousand words, are long enough to see the pattern of the author's writing style.

Regarding analyzing an author's style on literary work, one of the ways to analyze it is by analyzing the stylistics. Stylistics, generally, is the study of style. Since every author writes with their own language patterns, by analyzing the works stylistically, the characteristic or the style of the author can be seen. Figure of speech is chosen to be analyzed in this study since it is one of the characteristics of a literary work. It is one of literature's styles to utter one thing with the meaning of other things. To describe how a particular author uses figurative language in her short stories is what this study aimed to do.

To sum up, this study aims to find out Bree Stonefield's authorial style in terms of figure of speech as found in her two short stories. Then, the possible explanation for the style will be found out as well.

Conceptual Framework

The term stylistics is broadly defined as the study of style, whether in written and/or spoken texts. Leech and Short (2007:11) define it as the linguistic study to describe "what use is made of language". Leech (2008) defines style as the variation of language in varied circumstances. On the other hand, Junus (1989) claims that the style of a writer is the writer themselves. Furthermore, Leech (2008) likens the stylistics as a field stands between linguistic and literary studies. Here, stylistics identifies style in the differences of "what is said and how it is said" (Abrams & Harpham, 2012: 387). Additionally, by far the most important claim of basic form of stylistics is by Carter (2010) that states that a stylistic analysis is an analyst's analysis; it is not derived from others. It means that the analysis may differ from one analyst to the others in giving insight to the same work. As Carter (2010) argues on the concept of practical stylistics, it needs to be made restorable and remediable that others can argue it, which means others need to be able to see how the interpretation has been reached.

Simpson (2004) claims that stylistics much prefers literature to other works as the object of study. Carter (2010) proposes practical stylistics as one of stylistics analysis methods which involves close reading of the verbal texture of texts, where it connects the observed linguistic choices and patterns on the text and the meaning they create. Carter (2010) concludes that practical stylistics performs in a systematic manner, where it sometimes follows some listed items such as Leech and Short (2007) model. Making a list of questions is necessary since the analyst will be able to "collect data on a fairly systematic basis" (Leech & Short, 2007:61).

Every analysis of style, in Leech's (2008) term, is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language. This is supported by Simpson (2004) who claims that stylicians are interested in why a particular style is chosen by the writer and how the choice affects the writing. From the style that is chosen, comes the transitivity, which is how they picture the reality, since there are several ways of using languages and styles in telling the same event (Simpson, 2004).

In Leech and Short (2007) term, stylistic analysis examines the lexical categories, grammatical features, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. These features, however, can be used separately, by examining one or some certain features without analyzing the rest, since Leech and Short (2007) have claimed that all writers and texts have individual qualities. Some works may have an artistic effect on lexical or grammatical features, while some other may have uniqueness on its figure of speech. They can be done individually as long as the analyst can fit the linguistic details into the artistic effect on the text (Leech & Short, 2007). That is why this proposed research will focus on the figure of speech feature, specifically on the use of figure of speech in transmitting the meaning and ideas of the stories. The figure of speech and textual details of it will be carefully analyzed following the stylistic approach.

Abrams and Harpham (2012: 130) define figurative languages as "a conspicuous departure from what users of language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect". Furthermore, in order to analyze the figures of speech of the selected stories in this proposed study, it needs to be specified what the figures of speech are.

1. Metaphor is a comparison of one thing to another directly by using some form of to be (Reaske, 1966).
2. Simile compares one thing to another directly by using "like" or "as" (Alm-Arvius, 2003).
3. Hyperbole employs exaggeration, sometimes for dramatic effect (Reaske, 1966) or for emphasizing a point as important (Florman, 2017).
4. Personification assigns human qualities to something nonhuman (Alm-Arvius, 2003).
5. Metonymy; it means that another word is used as a substitute for something else with close association (Reaske, 1966).
6. Synecdoche; it is the use of one part to refer to the whole (Reaske, 1966).
7. Pun is a kind of word play that has more than one meaning due to the ambiguity (Alm-Arvius, 2003).
8. Oxymoron is a figure of speech which combines words or expressions with opposite or antonymic senses (Alm-Arvius, 2003).

In analyzing a short story, looking at the intrinsic elements of the stories cannot be separated from the analysis. Intrinsic elements of short story are same as other prose's, they are theme, setting, character and characterization, and plot (Abdi, 2015), with an addition of point of view and style (Short, 1996). Abdi (2015) defines theme as the main idea that can be got from reading the story. A theme is basically what the story on the prose is about. Next, setting, as defined by McGee (2001), is the background of the event in the story. It is both the location and time period of the prose. Then, characters are the people included in the story (McGee, 2001) and characterization is how they are portrayed (Abdi, 2015). Plot is described by McGee (2001) as story line that usually has particular patterns of exposition, raising action, climax and resolution. Then, according to Short (1996), point of view is the vantage point from which the story

is told. There are three methods utilized by the author in telling the story, they are by telling it from first person point of view (using “I” in the narration), from second person point of view (using “you” in narration), and from third person point of view (using “he”, “she” or using name of the characters in narration). Finally, Short (1996) also defines style as a form of writing that is discernibly owned by a specific writer. It is also explained by Short that style on prose can only be seen by analyzing conventional choices and repetitiveness.

Besides the intrinsic element of a story, its extrinsic factors can also be used to analyze a prose. The extrinsic approach introduced by Wellek and Warren (1954) are divided into four factors, those are biography, psychology, society and ideas. This division is not only according to the author’s condition but also the environment he/she was in. The idea of further examining a literary work to ‘its world’ is very appealing in emphasizing the way in which literature is connected to the world (Wellek & Warren, 1954).

Methodology

This research is a qualitative research with the type of a textual analysis. Stylistic analysis approach is applied since the main purpose of this research is to link linguistic form and literary meaning. Practical stylistics is considered as the most suitable method since, according to Carter (2010), it involves close reading and connects the observed linguistic choices and patterns on the text and the meaning they create. In Leech and Short (2007) term, stylistic analysis examines the lexical categories, grammatical features, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. This research focuses on the figure of speech feature, specifically on the use of figure of speech in transmitting the meaning and ideas of the stories. The figure of speech and textual details of it are carefully analyzed following the stylistic approach.

Data Collection and Analysis

The first step in this study was to do deep and critical reading toward the sources of the data. The two selected short stories were read closely to collect the figures of speech. Second, after collecting the data, it was then analyzed. The researcher scanned the data to identify the pattern. Making a list of questions was necessary since Leech and Short (2007) suggest it so that the analyst would be able to collect and describe the data systematically. To control for bias, the researcher did double-checking with the supervisors regularly. As suggested by Carter (2010), even though a stylistic analysis is an analyst’s analysis where it cannot be derived from others, it needs to be made to enable other people to see how the interpretation has been reached. Last, to be able to answer the question of possible explanation of the author’s style, the researcher put her knowledge of linguistics, along with theories by experts, to identify and make sense the findings. All of possible interferences that could influence the style, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, would not be ruled out. The question of “why” was asked through each style that was identified.

Findings and Discussion

From the classification of figure of speech, generally the author often used hyperbole, metaphor, personification and simile. There were many other figures of speech used by the author like oxymoron, metonymy, synecdoche and pun. However,

the occurrences of those figures of speech on both short stories were too little for the researcher to get to see the pattern of the author in using them.

Furthermore, from both of the sources of the data, it was found many sentences in which the language was used in a figurative way that gave more than one meaning of what was literally stated. The use of figurative language was found to consistently use state-of-the-art terms that could easily be found to be used customarily in this day and age. Whether it was a hyperbolic expression, metaphoric comparison or another figurative choice of words, it could be understood forthwith due to its familiarity. Besides her state-of-the-art diction, another Bree Stonefield's style in using figure of speech was her tendency to put it in place of verbs. Many figures of speech were found to be syntactically placed on verb forms to show action rather than on other parts of speech. Exaggerating some simple action, having some objects acted and been described as something else, and comparing something in implicit way are some constant occurrences in both short stories.

First, the short stories were rich in hyperbole. Hyperbole is an exaggerating way of telling something. It was found from the data that the author, Bree Stonefield, had tendency to exaggerate some things on both of her short stories. Firstly, the hyperboles were used in many sentences that showed the melodramatic side of both short stories. It stressed the dramatic atmosphere throughout the stories. The heavy theme on *White Dress* and the youthful spirit of *11 Reasons Why* were accented with hyperbolic expressions. Another style of Bree Stonefield's in hyperbole was her dominant use of hyperbolic verbs to narrate simple actions. Casual acts of moving some parts of body were narrated exaggeratedly by using verbs like throw, hang or bury. The last noticeably style of the author in term of hyperbole was the frequently used of adjective "crazy" on both short story. This choice of word was considered as hyperbole where it was placed on the sentence which gave exaggerating description or explanation on some parts of the stories.

Second, the second most dominantly used figure of speech is metaphor. Metaphor is a figure of speech that compared two objects directly or indirectly. It was found on both short stories that Bree Stonefield preferred to use indirect metaphor on both short stories. The indirect metaphors were used by giving a semantically irrelevant verb, noun, or adjective to the object on the stories. This indirect metaphor was called submerged metaphor, which meant that the comparison was made implicitly by only mentioned one of the two objects being compared. Besides the submerged metaphor, it also found from the analysis that the author tended to concretize the object. Abstract things such as action that the characters did and the emotion that they had were given metaphor that compared them to something more concrete. Last, the metaphor also indirectly compared two dissimilar objects by referencing an intended object with something else. This kind of metaphor that was found on both short stories was slightly similar to metonymy in its substitution style.

Next, personification is one of the dominant types of figure of speech found on both short stories. It is a figure of speech that gives an inanimate object human identity. Many inanimate objects on both short stories had human qualities. One of the important findings from the analysis was that personification occurred mostly on the narration where the author figuratively told what action happened, expressed the emotion, and indirectly indicated the time setting. Additionally, the author had two ways of delivering personification in the story; those are by directly giving inanimate objects human qualities and by having the character treating the inanimate object humanly. The former

way was the conventional way where the subject was directly given action that was semantically fitted to human identity, while the later was an indirect way where the inanimate object was placed at the receiving end of the action.

Last, simile was the last figure of speech that was used frequently on both short stories and showed pattern of the author's writing style. Simile is a comparison between two different objects using the word "like" or "as". This comparison using "like" occurred in order to give imagery, impression, and exaggeration. Imagery purpose was also applied on the little amount of simile using "as" on both stories. In addition, there was another construction of simile using "as" that was also used by the author on both of her short stories, it was "as if" construction. This term was used by the author to compare two different situations that had one shared trait of situation that was then being used to describe the other. Its occurrences were quite often on both short stories where the author used it for three purposes: to show other character's intention (since each scene of the stories was told from one character's side); to pinpoint a contrast on someone's reaction to the situation; and to describe some situation in exaggeration. Last, there was this tendency of the author to give hyperbolic comparison in simile term. Whether it used simile term "like" or "as", the author sometime made an exaggeration statement by comparing something in the story with something more magnified.

In order to answer the second research question, some possible explanations of Bree Stonefield's authorial style in term of figure of speech were given based on the analysis that the researcher had done. The data showed that she had tendency to use figure of speech in the form of verbs. This could be explained by the intrinsic element of the story where she mostly tried to maintain the plot while slipping aesthetic aspect in it. Next, analysis that was done to the data found that the author had a state-of-the-art style of writing. Many figurative expressions that she used on both short stories were up-to-date and easy to relate by young readers. This might be explained by looking at Bree Stonefield's background in which she had learnt her English mostly informally by involving herself on online platform. The Internet communication traits might had influence her authorial style. Moreover, there was also a possibility of the influence of the platform that she used. Wattpad is a twenty-first century online platform where people read, share and write stories on. This platform is surely different from conventional reading-writing media like magazine or anthological books which also influenced her contemporary style of writing. Furthermore, there was also found another possible alternative explanation of the author style, that was her first language interference. The data showed that Bree Stonefield's first language characteristic appeared once in a while on both short stories. The occurrences were not that many, but the stylistic analysis that was done by the researcher found that this interference could not be ruled out. Therefore, below would be presented the discussion of these three possible explanations of the author's style in using figure of speech.

One of the reasons for an author to use or have particular style is by intentionally choosing it for specific purpose. As claimed by Junus (1989) that style involves choice. There are many forms in language to be chosen but one specific form is used instead of the others. On Bree Stonefield's case, the researcher found that she intently chose to use particular style in using figure of speech on both of her short stories. The use of hyperbole to maintain the theme and characterization and the use of figure of speech in verb form to maintain the plot were two intentional styles she chose to use.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis was that many actions were narrated with figure of speech like hyperbole, metaphor and personification instead of with literal expression. This surely helped the author to freshen her narration. First, Bree Stonefield used over exaggeration terms not only in phrases like “laughed to tears” but also with semantically unrelated verb attached to a body part like “throw” head, “bury” face or “lock” eyes. Next, metaphor which impliedly compared two objects was also used, like instead of stating that the character was blushing, the author used metaphoric expression where the blush “bloomed” on the character’s cheeks. Last, personifying inanimate objects was also done to narrate what happened in the story, where instead of simply stating that a character played a guitar, Bree Stonefield used expression in which the character’s fingers were “dancing” on the guitar’s strings. This use of figure of speech in place of simple action showed that the author’s need to beautify the language and avoiding monotonous sentences on her chaptered short stories.

There were two main factors of Bree Stonefield’s personal background that were believed to affect her authorial style, especially on figure of speech. Those factors were her English learning sources and her experience of reading and writing English literary works. Background research shows that Bree Stonefield is a twenty years old young adult that still studies on her third year at Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia. She had learnt English to be used as her foreign language both in formal and informal ways. However, Bree Stonefield mostly got to learn by practicing her English skill since her teenage years informally on online platform, both on social media and fandom discussion sites. Furthermore, she is a young female author who has written in English since 2012 up until now. This fact shows that she has had more than 5 years of writing experience that she has started since her early teenage years. In addition, she is also a romance-preference reader, in which it was reflected on her writing style as well.

Wattpad as a new platform for reading and writing stories had its own style that the works posted on it shared. As a modern reading-writing media that could be accessed and managed readily, it differed from conventional media where the literary works had to wait for a certain interval to be published and read by the readers. Therefore, the researcher provided some factors on Wattpad styles and trends that could possibly explain Bree Stonefield’s authorial style. Said factors that might affect Bree Stonefield’s authorial style were the good English that most featured stories had, the domination of romance and teen fiction published there, and its one special feature of quotation.

Another factor that might influence Bree Stonefield’s style in terms of figure of speech was her first language interference. From both short stories, it showed that Bree Stonefield’s first language characteristic appeared once in a while. Even though it was not constantly showed, this interference could not be ruled out. It had been showed the data how word “crazy” had been used constantly by the author. It was claimed to be an interference of Indonesian language’s characteristic because the literal translation of crazy, that is *gila*, is often used in informal language use of Indonesian people, while in English there are many terms that could be used to replace the word. This characteristic of her first language, subconsciously or not, had interfered with Bree Stonefield’ choice of words.

Conclusion

The purposes of this research are to describe Bree Stonefield's writing style in term of figure of speech and to give possible explanation of the style. The finding of the research showed that Bree Stonefield mainly used the figure of speech indirectly. Many sentences use figure of speech in implied way that differed from basic definition of it. Moreover, the data shows that figures of speech that Bree Stonefield dominantly used are hyperbole, followed by metaphor, personification and simile. The preference of using hyperbole more than other figures of speech is based on the expressive language that it has that can match with the stories' themes and characterization. Furthermore, each figure of speech that was used by Bree Stonefield has its own style, but they share one similar pattern, that is to be used to replace verbs that have literal meaning. Narration of the plot and description of the objects of the story are two aspects that mostly used figure of speech on their sentences.

There are several possible explanations to the author's style in using figure of speech. Intrinsic element of the story was the main reason. Bree Stonefield often uses figurative language in narrating her short stories in order to keep the development of the plot up while still maintaining the artistic aspect of her literary work. Besides the plot, Bree Stonefield also intentionally use a certain style in using figure of speech to keep up the other intrinsic elements like theme and characterization. Next, even though Bree Stonefield has good English writing skill that is shown on her short stories, there is still her first language interference that influences her style of using figure of speech. She still tends to use certain word that its translation is commonly used on her first language. Bree Stonefield's indirect way of using figure of speech is also believed to be based on the platform in which she learned English, that is the informal one where no language structure rule is strictly applied. She knows many English terms and uses them on her short stories, so that there is no dull repetition that can bore her readers in reading her works.

References

- Abdi, F. (2015). Intrinsic elements of prose. Retrieved from: <http://literary-face.blogspot.co.id/2015/12/intrinsic-elements-of-prose.html>
- Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2012). *A glossary of literary terms* (10th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Alm-Arvius, C. (2003). *Figures of speech*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Carter, R. (2010). Methodologies for stylistic analysis: Practices and pedagogies. In McIntyre, D. (2010), *Language and style* (pp. 34-46). Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Florman, B. (2017). Figure of speech. Retrieved from <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/figure-of-speech>
- Junus, U. (1989). *Stilistika: Satu pengantar* [Stylistics: One introduction]. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia
- Leech, G. (2008). *Language in literature: Style and foregrounding*. New York: Routledge.
- Leech, G., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose* (2nd ed.). London: Pearson Education Limited.
- McGee, S. J. 2001. *Analyzing literature: A guide for students*. New York: Longman.
- Reaske, C. R. (1966). *How to analyze poetry*. New York: Monarch Press.

- Short, M. 1996. *Exploring the language of poems, plays, and prose*. New York: Longman.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for student*. New York: Routledge.
- Wattpad. (2018). Wattpad: The world's largest community for discovering and sharing stories. Retrieved from <http://www.wattpad.com/>
- Wellek, R. & Warren, A. (1954). *Theory of literature*. London: Jonathan Cape.