



# BAHA<sup>ST</sup>RA

**Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa dan Sastra**

- ❑ **IMPLEMENTASI PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER DALAM PEMBELAJARAN MEMBACA DI SMK**  
Sudaryanto
- ❑ **ON THE TYPOLOGY OF DETERMINER PHRASE STRUCTURE IN INDONESIAN AND JAVANESE LANGUAGES**  
Eri Kurniawan
- ❑ **IMPLEMENTASI PEMBELAJARAN MENULIS KARYA ILMIAH MELALUI WRITING WORKSHOP**  
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- ❑ **POETRY APPRECIATION**  
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Hendra Darmawan

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# POETRY APPRECIATION

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## Abstract

One way of understanding language use understands its artistic use. Literature makes use of language artistically. This paper describes how language is employed in literature especially in poetry. Rhyme and rhythm concern with a sound aspect of language while imagery concerns with the aspect of meaning of the language. All these things are twisted to achieve reliefs, admiration, satisfaction and happiness-human dignity in readers.

**Key words:** rhyme, rhythm, imagery.

## The Distinct Language

The value of art lies in making people happy (Santayana, 1962: coverpage). When sound of music pricks up our ears, it stirs our feelings and leaves us carried away. So does language in literature since literature is the art of language. Now we can conclude from the premises that literature is distinct from that of ordinary language in the sense that the former affects people by their feelings and the latter provides them with plain information.

## Resistance to Poetry

It is likely easy to say that the difference between literature and language in common lies in the presence and absence of feelings. Because language is a means of communication, it involves encoding and decoding processes-say what the speaker means and what the hearer understands. There should be mutual understanding between them. This is a bit difficult to achieve because people often find literature a peculiar form of language. So they lose interest in and sympathy with its beauty.

A clear example of difficulty of literature appreciation is shown in poetry-one form of literature. No matter how beautiful a poem is it fails to rouse sympathy among spectators and readers when there is no response to it. Wheelock (1971: v) says: "There exists in all men a deep intrinsic natural resistance to poetry". Furthermore he says: "Our natural and probably wholesome apathy is a deep and stubborn thing. This normal self perspective indifference is not easily overcome". The apathy is common and becomes normal because poetry makes use of words of familiar objects. By dealing with familiar things, by making use of them, by becoming accustomed to them, we lose sight of them. In this case Wheelock (1971: v) says: "Most of us 'pass through' life in a state of a semi anesthesia. The world about us has become so familiar that we are hardly aware of it".

## Ways of Arousing Feelings

To overcome the difficulty of poetry appreciation, we must re-experience familiar things. They must be revealed anew. And



poetry is revelation. The revelation a poem offers us is a re-awakened awareness, a fresh re-experience of the world in all its sensory and emotional impact. They are:

# 1. Rhyme

Our most frequently affected sense in language communication is our ears. They receive sound waves and these waves may impress us. In order to produce good and long lasting impression, a poem normally uses some techniques. One of them is rhyme. Even without meaning or signification rhymed sounds can produce hypnotic power and may be said to be a poem. Santayana (1962: 67) says: "Memorable nonsense or sound with a certain hypnotic power is really primitive and radical form of poetry". Rhyme as normally found in poetry is the sameness of sound of the endings of two or more words at the ends of lines of verse. Consider the following poetry written by Laura E. Richards (Curry 1987: 42)

## Eletelephony

Once there was an elephant,  
Who tried to use the telephant-  
No! No! I mean an elephone  
Who tried to use the telephone-  
(Dear me! I am not certain quite  
That even now I've got right)  
How'ver it was, he got his trunk  
Entangled in the telephunk;  
The more he tried to get it free,  
The louder buzzed the telephonee-  
(I fear I'd better drop the song  
Of elephop and telephong!)

After paying attention to the above poem, we find that there are pairs of words comprising similar sounds at the ends of the lines of the verse such as *elephant-telephant*, *elephone-telephone*, *quite-right*, *trunk-telephunk*, *free-telephonee*, and *song-telephong*. This kind of rhyme reveals astonishment to audience and attracts them or moreover compels them to have it in their mind or imprints on their memory so that it

becomes part of their mental experience. The acoustic rhyme as indicated above is strengthened by the writer's playing of words. He makes use of similar sounds of both words *telephone* and *elephant*. He manipulates the sound to make the poetry funny. Andrew Wright (1986:24) says: "A lot of the jokes in this section are funny because we don't expect the ending. The ending is a surprise." In fact we don't expect a word *telephant*. Because it is hard to believe that an elephant uses a telephone then the writer converts the word into *telephant*, a special new word. Realizing that he has created a wrong word, he puts it into the correct one but he purposely makes the subject of the sentence wrong *elephone*. In this case the writer has successfully move about from the conventional idea to the creative words. He does the same in the second verse. He plays the words of *telephunk* and *telephonee*. At last he feels it necessary to stop his playing of words and names it *elephop and elephong*.

Another technique to produce long lasting impression is repetition. In this case the same word is repeated. Consider the following quotation of a poem written by Langston Hughes (Curry 1987: 67).

## LET AMERICA BE AMERICA AGAIN

Let America be America again  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free

.....  
In the above lines of poem some words are repeated. The word *America* is repeated in the first line. The words *Let it be* in the second line are repeated in the third line. This technique may strengthen the impression of the words in our mind.

Sometimes a writer purposely makes use of alliteration that is employing the same first letters of words or the same first accented



syllables in a series of words. Look the alliteration of the following phrase: *a lanky lonely-looking lady lulling little lad*. This technique may help retain a good memory of the words expressed.

## 2. Rhythm

Besides employing rhyme, a poem especially the traditional one makes use of rhythm to attract audience. This regular succession of weak and strong stresses, accents, and sounds may affect deep feelings of the spectators and readers. Rhythm in poetry is known as meters or versification. In English literary forms there are rising meters and falling meters. The rising meters includes a weak followed by a strong stress, which is commonly called *iambic* and two weak stresses followed by a strong one, which is known as *anapestic*. The reverse forms of the above-mentioned meters are called *trochaic* and *dactylic*. An example of trochaic meter is found in the following poem written by Richard Armour (Curry 1987: 48)

### Money

Workers **earn** it,  
Spendthrifts **burn** it,  
Bankers **lend** it,  
Women **spend** it,  
Forgers **fake** it,  
Taxes **take** it,  
Dying **leave** it,  
Heirs **receive** it,  
Thrifty **save** it,  
Misers **crave** it,  
Robbers **seize** it,  
Rich **increase** it,  
Gamblers **lose** it...

I **could** use it.

The above poem shows the rhythm of falling meter called *trochaic*. The syllables in bold have the strong stress followed by the weak one.

Apart from rhythm, the poem shows another good example of rhyme as shown in

the pairs of words of *earn-burn, lend-spend, fake-take, leave-receive, save-crave, seize-increase, and lose-use*. These pairs of words have contradictory meanings so that the rhyme sounds more interesting. As workers earn money, spendthrifts burn it. When Bankers lend money, women spend it. While foggers fake money, tax collectors take it. As dying men leave money, heirs receive it. When thrifty persons save money, misers crave it. While robbers seize money, rich people increase it. As gamblers lose money, the writer could still use it. This antithetical rhyme is expressed vividly in accordance with natural phenomena such as day and night, good and bad, happy and sad etc. Such kind of rhyme is easy to remember that is easy to accept and to appreciate.

## 2. Imagery

When we speak of poetry, we should realize the power of words. Therefore, diction or the selection of words plays an important role. Considering accuracy, appropriateness, and specificity of the words should do the selection of words. All words convey meanings, which involve imagination. In a rather complete fashion Levin (1966 : 152) says:

Usually we think of images as visual impressions. Images may, however, appeal to any of these senses. Thus, in addition to being visual, images may be auditory (sound), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), or gustatory (taste).

According to Kirsznier (1984 : 187 ) there are two kinds of imagery. Those are images or word pictures and figures of speech like similes, metaphors, etc. Images or word pictures are words conveying common impressions to our mental faculty. When we read Armour's *Money* once again, we are confronted with words of different professions.



Reading through them, different human characteristics appeal to us. When we say *workers* we may think of a flock of busy sweaty and probably dirty people, whose time is lacking to finish the targeted achievement. They do so in order to collect money little by little from their activities. The word *spendthrifts* indicate people, who spend money extravagantly. That is why we can say that they *burn* money. In this case the word *burn* is the second type of imagery. The word *bankers* indicates people, who own banks and from the banks they make life by providing people, who are in need of money, with necessary amount of it. In return they get interests. The word *women* suggests that naturally they spend money and possibly have shopping hunger. The word *forgers* indicates that some people makes copies of money illegally that is produce it against laws. That is why they fake it. *Taxes* in the next line suggest that money should be spend because of law. The word *dying* in the following line means a person or any one, who no more needs earthly things. Therefore they leave money. The word *heirs* indicates people, who inherit things from their predecessors. That is why they receive money. The word *thrifty* in the next line means people, who are economical. That is why they always save money. *Misers* in the following line indicates people, who love wealth for its own sake and spend it as little as possible. So they crave or long it all the time. *Robbers*, on the other hand, means people, who take money or wealth by force illegally. The word *rich* suggest rich people, who are generally greedy and keep gathering money and wealth. They always increase it. *Gamblers* depict people, who always look for more money but they always lose it. No one is rich because of gambling. In the last line the writer say that he could still use it. Now we can understand how words impress us.

The second type of imagery is called figures of speech. According to Conbertt (1977: 102): "Basically a figure of speech is the use of a word in a transferred sense. It departs from the common literal meaning of a word and gives the word another meaning". Included in this type, he adds, are metaphor, simile, synecdoche, metonymy, puns, peripheries, personification, hyperbole, litotes, oxymoron, and irony. Here are their meanings and examples.

Firstly, metaphor suggests a comparison between two things of different nature that nevertheless have something in common. The expression *Spendthrifts burn it*, has made use of the word *burn* in its figurative meaning. It means spend money for no purpose.

Secondly, simile directly suggests a comparison between two things of different nature that nevertheless have something in common. So the words *as*, and *like* are used to compare the things. For example we can say: *The mountains look like thirsty giants*.

Thirdly, synecdoche suggests that a part stands for the whole. For example: *Male teenagers often get caught up in love affair with their wheels*. The word *wheels* stands for the entire cars or motorcycles.

Fourthly, metonymy suggests that a thing stands for a person, position, or state of affairs that use it. For example: *He could not defend his crown*. The word *crown* stands for power.

Fifthly, puns is a play of words, such as repeating a word in two different sense or using words that sound alike but have different meaning. For example: *If you feel alone, come to us for a loan*. The same pronunciation of *alone* and *a lone* suggests different meaning.

Sixthly, periphrasis substitutes a descriptive word or phrase for a proper name or substitutes a proper name for a quality associated with that name. For example: *Last*



*year I went to Uncle Sam's home country.* The expression *Uncle Sam's home country* means United States of America.

Seventhly, personification assigns human qualities or abilities to abstractions or to inanimate objects. For example: *His naiveté would make stones weep.*

Eighthly, hyperbole is a way of expressing things exaggeratedly for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. For example: *Her sunny smile would melt ice.* This example combines with metaphor in the expression of *sunny smile.*

Ninthly, litotes underestimates or downplays for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. For example: *She lives in New York city, which, you may say, has a few people in it.*

Tenthly, oxymoron puts together two contradictory terms. For example:

*He was a cheerful pessimist about his chances.*

At last, irony is a word intended to convey a meaning just the opposite of the ordinary or literal meaning. For example: *Robbing a widow of her life savings was a certainly noble act.*

### **The Nature of Poem.**

After discussing some ways of appreciating poetry, let us state once again that a poem gets its value of its beauty from which we can refresh or re-experience things around us so that we are happy, relieved, restful, and dignified. There is no reason to look for unnecessary problems such as finding what is the real message behind the poem. Since a poem is multi interpretable, searching such a thing is futile. Let us consider the following quotation (Duffey 1978: 17): "Poems existed only to create effects. As they did so, they were successful and as they sought any other end they were self-contradictory. They ceased to be poems and wandered instead into a

prose". In line with this idea Edgar Allan Poe (Duffey: 1978: 18) says:

A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its immediate object pleasure not truth; to romance, by having for its objects, an indefinite instead of a definite pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with indefinite sensations, to which end music is essential, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music when combined with pleasure idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definitiveness.

Through poems the whole soul of man is brought into activity. Imagination is brought into play by the will and understanding through gentle and unnoticed control. The sense of novelty is roused to come to the final end-deep impression and satisfaction.

### **Closure.**

In this occasion, we should remind ourselves that poetry appreciation does not necessarily uncover hidden things-say the message- because a poem is multi interpretable. People can say many aspects of it. They may all be right. We are not finding problems. We are playing images. We are relieving our needs, our feelings, and our dignity. We are not scientists, who are always annoyed with ringing questions, formulating hypotheses, keeping trying to get them answered.



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