The Semantic Analysis of Figurative Language Used in DH Lawrence's 'Snake'

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Abstract

The present research delves into the nuanced world of figurative language within DH Lawrence's poem, 'Snake,' investigating its role in conveying emotional depth and symbolic resonance. The study is inspired by the intersection of figurative language in both poetry and, Lawrence's poetic craftsmanship giving a captivating subject. Through meticulous analysis, the researcher aims to elucidate the influence of figurative elements on the poem's emotional and symbolic dimensions, unraveling insights into the speaker's psychological aspects and the broader human experience. The research contributes to English language teaching by investigating the prospective of incorporating the poem, 'Snake' into pedagogy. By fostering an accolade for the pleasant features of studying literature beyond monotonous analysis, this study deals with a fresh perspective on the multifaceted layers of figurative language in poetry.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Unlike more straightforward forms of writing like prose or plays, poetry tends to be more metaphorical and evocative. The meaning in poems often lies between the lines. Poets creatively use language to hint at ideas without stating them directly. They carefully choose words for their sounds and connotations, allowing readers to sense emotions and concepts that cannot be described plainly. While prose simply says something, and drama shows it, poetry suggests it. A few skillfully chosen words make you feel what paragraphs of explanation cannot. The poet's art blends vivid imagery, poignant phrasing, and subtle symbolism to awaken feelings and thoughts in readers that their works merely allude to. So the essence of poetry is conjuring sensations and concepts without having to name them explicitly (Fahas et al., 2021). Frost claims (Arp & Perrine, 2005), that through the carefully crafted layers of symbolism, imagery, and well-chosen diction that poets weave into their works, the room is left between the lines for readers to sense something deeper than what is directly articulated. Rather than bluntly state an idea outright like in prose, poets deftly paint an impressionistic verbal picture to evoke sensibilities that exist just out of reach of straightforward literal description.

Where prose may meander circuitously before arriving at its meaning, poetry condenses images, symbols, metaphors, and wordplay down to their pithiest essence. Poets carefully curate each syllable, meticulously whittling away all unnecessary elements. What remains after this poetic distillation process is literature concentrated to its rich, core elements. Like reducing sauce down to an intensified broth, poets boil words down to their most vivid and evocative. Not a syllable is wasted in communicating the ineffable through sly hints and subtle word-craft. Poetry concentrates an impression or emotional sensibility into succinct lines loaded with significance. Other literary forms may use indulgent volume to convey their ideas, but poetry purposefully eliminates the extraneous. No wasted words, no dilution of meaning - just crystallized shards of imagery and insight that unlock an experience or concept in readers' minds in the shortest span of verses possible. Poetry accomplishes in a few taut lines what other literary forms stretch across pages (Fahas et al., 2021).

This study focuses on the figurative language employed in the poem, rather than other aspects that might be explored. Poetry often employs figurative language, making it challenging for non-native speakers to understand. Poets can use their liberty to express fresh experiences beyond the limitations of language. Poets may influence language through figurative speech, archaism, rhyme, and unconventional syntax (Sayakhan, 2018). Poems typically contain tricky phrases since the author employed implied phrases. Their ideas and emotions relate to their creative minds and memories (Sayakhan, 2014). Numerous studies on psycholinguistics indicate that most figurative language can be understood just as easily as most nonfigurative talk, yet there are some situations in which some figurative meanings might be difficult to grasp and result in unusual significance or cognitive repercussions (Gibbs, 1994).

1.2 The Rationale for Selecting the Topic

The researcher has several grounds for analyzing figurative language in DH Lawrence's poem, Snake. The rationales are given below.

1. Figurative language is often present in both songs and poetry. DH Lawrence's poetry incorporates figurative language, making it more intriguing to study.
2. Figurative language has a crucial role in conveying the content of poetry. The researcher aims to analyze and characterize the metaphorical language used in DH Lawrence's poem, Snake.
3. A poem is a written literary piece that pupils may comprehend and employ as material for reading to examine while learning drama, prose, and poetry. So, the researcher would want to investigate the possibilities of employing DH Lawrence's poem, Snake in English language teaching. That is why the researcher would want to encourage the reader to fully appreciate the author of the literary work by reading their works of fiction, particularly poetry.
4. Readers believe that reading poetry is highly routine. They just analyze identical components of poetry, such as topic and diction. In this research, the researcher asks the readers if there is a delightful side of studying literature, aside from figurative language.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research aims to address the following objectives

1. Elucidate the figurative language utilized in DH Lawrence's poem.
2. Elucidate the setting of every figurative language in DH Lawrence's poem.

1.4 Importance of Figurative Language in Poetry

The study of figurative language used in poetry frequently fascinates individuals to the extent that they believe they are an element of it (Aulia et al., 2023). Bennett & Royle (2023), define literature as writing that explores the complexities of experience, intellect, and empathy. Poetry might be the most challenging form of literature to completely understand. Poetry is distinguished by its use of symbolic language, which conveys the poet's perception through unique and appealing expressions. According to Pradipta (2009), poetry is more challenging to comprehend than other kinds of literature. Translating poetry can be challenging because of differences in phonology and visuals between languages (Preiss et al., 2020). Furthermore, it makes people lose fascination with poetry. Novels and short pieces of literature tend to include a broad range of personalities and intriguing conversations, making them appealing to readers (Aulia et al., 2023). Poets who share their poetry aim to create emotional connections with their audience. According to Bennett & Royle (2023), literature may engage readers by making them feel as if they are a part of the narrative. This is done mostly through literary or rhetorical aesthetics.

A performance might include more than just singing, dancing, music, and theatre. These methods make certain that the intended target audience hears the poet's desired content. Poetry, like narratives and rhythms, requires an emotional reaction from the audience to be meaningful (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 2022). Agarwal (2020), suggests that narrating poems aloud might inspire and motivate listeners by conveying passion and form. This research precisely offers a nuanced understanding of the poem's depth and symbolism. Investigating metaphors and symbols reveals layers of meaning, shedding light on Lawrence's exploration of primal instincts, societal norms, and the complexities of human nature. Uncovering the semantic intricacies enhances literary appreciation, providing insights into the psychological landscape of the speaker and the broader themes of the poem. This research contributes to the broader field of literary analysis, enriching interpretations of Lawrence's work and fostering a deeper appreciation for the nuanced interplay between language and meaning in poetry.

1.5 Research Questions

The present study discusses the figurative language used in the poem, 'Snake' by DH Lawrence. The following are the main research questions of the current research: 1. How does DH Lawrence employ figurative language in the poem 'Snake' to explore complex themes such as human-animal interactions, societal expectations, and the internal conflict between instinct and cultural conditioning?

1. How do the figurative elements contribute to the overall emotional and symbolic impact of the poem?
2. What insights do the figurative elements offer into the speaker's psyche and the broader human experience?

Review of related literature

Theoretical Framework of Figurative Language in Poetry

The first literary genre is poetry, which sprang from storytellers who performed tales from remembrance Poetry and other creative works differ only little from one another; poetry uses more concise language than prose or theater (Perrine, 1977). Poetry covers a broad range of topics and conveys a vast range of written and oral forms, genres, and structures. It is impossible to provide a single, all-inclusive definition due to the variability (Roberts & Jacobs, 2008). Poetry, according to Robert Frost, is what poets write (Miller & Greenberg, 1981). The voice, shape, the use of language, and sound are the four components of poetry identified by Kennedy & Dana (2010). Tone reveals how the speaker feels towards the other individual and their sentiments towards them. Shape is made up of stanza, scansion, rhythm, and meter—repeated syllables and meters. Poetry is rendered more exquisite and profound via the

division of language into imagery, diction, and figurative language. Onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, and rhyme all work together to create a magical spell that denotes meaning via sound. Alliteration repeats the same consonant sound at the beginning of each phrase, whereas onomatopoeia mimics the sound connected to an object or activity. Alliteration's opposite, assonance, happens when the same vowel sound is repeated. When the last words of a poem rhyme, as they do in the first and second lines with each other, alternatively the first and the third, second and the fourth, and so on (Kennedy & Dana, 2010).

Poetry has historically been viewed as "high" art, available exclusively to the elites who can comprehend it (Pike, 2000). Figurative language is used to draw readers' interest and present ideas and creativity in a manner that is more enjoyable. It will be high in significance or provide a lot of meaning. In addition to adding elegance and aesthetic value to poetry, figurative language may also have connotative meanings and elicit specific outcomes that enhance the texts and clarify and bring to life their meanings (Ogunsiji, 2000). Figurative language is a broad category of language that a poet might employ to explore different topics while crafting a poem. Saying something different from how you typically say it has a unique impact (Yeibo, 2012).

Previous Studies

Ahadovich & Isakovna (2023), study on 'In the poetry of Abduvali Qutbiddin expression of symbolism' looks at how hues, emotions, and symbols may be used to analyze symbolism in Abdulvali Qutbiddin's poetic works. The goal of Hasanah's (2018), research on "An analysis of figurative language used in some poems by Oscar Wilde" is to recognize instances of figurative language by comprehending their overall meaning in the poems. The study's goals were to elucidate the many forms of figurative language that Oscar Wilde employed in his poems as well as the contextual significance of each figure of speech. The research "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Hotel Books' Spoken Word Poetry" was carried out by Aulia et al. (2023). The research looked at how using figurative language might improve poetry's beauty and artistic quality while also adding intrigue and originality. The purpose of the study was to categorize the several types of figurative language that may be found in the spoken word poetry of Hotel Books and to determine the situational significance of every form of figurative language. The research's findings indicate that the research will be helpful to many individuals, especially IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro students studying English who want to carry out studies of this kind.

Another research on 'How poetry evokes emotions' by Johnson-Laird & Oatley (2022), reveals that poetry stirs feelings. We provide a notion that it accomplishes so from three sorts of simulations. They may all elicit feelings which are messengers in the brain and between individuals. Initially, models of the semantic aspects of a poem might arouse feelings, just as templates that appear in various portrayals, such as books or perceptions. Secondly, mimetic copies of prosodic cues, such as meter, rhythm, and rhyme, elicit specific feelings. Thirdly, humans may experience an artistic feeling in the event of being immersed in a piece of poetry because of their self-simulations, which allows them to realize that they are doing so. Specific kinds of feelings are predicted by the three simulators; for example, prosodic cues have the ability to evoke the basic feelings of joy, grief, rage, and fear. Empirical evidence backs up the theory, which we relate to different interpretations of poetic emotions (Richardson & Matlock, 2007; Gibbs Jr & Colston, 2006; Giora, 1999; Mahyudi et al., 2017).

2 Materials and Methods

The researcher employed the descriptive qualitative method to carry out this study. In qualitative research, methods of gathering data are largely used to produce non-numerical, open-ended data, which is subsequently evaluated predominantly using non-statistical techniques (Dörnyei, 2007). Every line in DH Lawrence's poem, "Snake" serves as the source material for the current study. The documentary method was used to gather the information. A documentary technique gathers data through reading, researching, and classifying information in order to identify and compile the necessary study-related data. The methods used to analyze the data for this article were: (1) locating figurative language used in the poem; (2) categorizing figurative language according to types; (3) tallying the occurrences of each type of figurative language; and (4) determining which figurative language type predominated in the selected poem.

3   Results and Discussions

Table 1
Figurative language used in the poem, Snake

Line No.	Text	Figurative Language Used
1	"A snake came to my water-trough	Personification
2	On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,	Hyperbole
3	To drink there.	Literal (no figurative language)
4	In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree	Imagery
5	I came down the steps with my pitcher	Literal (no figurative language)
6	And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.	Repetition
7	He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom	Personification
8	And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone trough	Imagery
9	And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,	Personification
10	And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,	Imagery
11	He sipped with his straight mouth,	Personification
12	Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,	Personification
13	Silently.	Literal (no figurative language)
14	Someone was before me at my water-trough,	Imagery
15	And I, like a second-comer, waiting.	Simile
16	He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,	Simile
17	And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,	Simile
18	And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment,	Imagery
19	And stooped and drank a little more,	Literal (no figurative language)
20	Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of the earth	Imagery
21	On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.	Allusion
22	The voice of my education said to me	Personification
23	He must be killed,	Literal (no figurative language)
24	For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.	Metaphor
25	And voices in me said, If you were a man	Personification
26	You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.	Hyperbole
27	But must I confess how I liked him,	Rhetorical Question
28	How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough	Simile
29	And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,	Alliteration
30	Into the burning bowels of this earth?	Metaphor
31	Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?	Rhetorical Question
32	Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?	Rhetorical Question
33	Was it humility, to feel so honoured?	Rhetorical Question
34	I felt so honoured.	Repetition
35	And yet those voices:	Personification
36	If you were not afraid, you would kill him!	Personification
37	And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,	Repetition
38	But even so, honoured still more	Repetition

Line No.	Text	Figurative Language Used
39	That he should seek my hospitality	Personification
40	From out the dark door of the secret earth.	Metaphor
41	He drank enough	Literal (no figurative language)
42	And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,	Simile
43	And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,	Simile
44	Seeming to lick his lips,	Personification
45	And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,	Simile
46	And slowly turned his head,	Imagery
47	And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice a dream,	Repetition, Simile
48	Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round	Personification
49	And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.	Metaphor
50	And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,	Imagery
51	And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,	Personification
52	A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole,	Imagery
53	Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,	Imagery
54	Overcame me now his back was turned.	Literal (no figurative language)
55	I looked round, I put down my pitcher,	Literal (no figurative language)
56	I picked up a clumsy log	Literal (no figurative language)
57	And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.	Onomatopoeia
58	I think it did not hit him,	Rhetorical Statement
59	But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in an undignified haste,	Personification
60	Writhed like lightning, and was gone	Simile
61	Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,	Imagery
62	At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.	Imagery
63	And immediately I regretted it.	Personification
64	I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!	Hyperbole
65	I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.	Personification
66	And I thought of the albatross,	Allusion
67	And I wished he would come back, my snake.	Personification
68	For he seemed to me again like a king,	Simile
69	Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,	Simile
70	Now due to be crowned again.	Metaphor
71	And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords	Metaphor
72	Of life.	Metaphor
73	And I have something to expiate:	Personification Metaphor
74	A pettiness." (Lawrence, 1923)	Metaphor

Table 2
Classification of figurative language used in the poem, Snake

S.No	Type of figurative language	Occurrence
1	Personification	18
2	Imagery	12
3	Simile	11
4	Metaphor	9
5	Repetition	5
6	Rhetorical Question	4
7	Hyperbole	3
8	Allusion	2
9	Onomatopoeia	1

The poem 'Snake' reveals a nuanced and diverse usage of figurative language. The predominant figurative language used is personification, occurring 18 times, indicating Lawrence's proficiency in attributing human-like qualities to elements within the poem. Imagery and simile are also prevalent, appearing 11 and 12 times, respectively, providing to vivid and evocative descriptions. Metaphors are employed tactically nine times, intensifying the depth of the poem's symbolism. The presence of rhetorical questions (4 times) engrosses readers, prompting reflective thought. Repetition, hyperbole, allusion, and onomatopoeia are used more sparingly, yet they show crucial roles in accentuating precise moments or thoughts within the poem. The rich and varied usage of this figurative language collectively contributes to the poem's emotional resonance and symbolic complexity (Kreuz & Roberts, 1993; Benedek et al., 2014; Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 2022; Zaidi, 2016).

Research Question 1: How do the figurative elements contribute to the overall emotional and symbolic impact of the poem? The poem 'Snake' by DH Lawrence is significantly more impactful emotionally and symbolically owing to its figurative elements. Personifications, imageries, metaphors, and similes weave a complex emotional tapestry by eloquently portraying the struggle between human nature and social conventions. The poem's evocative image, the snake, captures the conflicts between culture and primitive instincts, drawing the reader in deeper.

Research Question 2: What insights do the figurative elements offer into the speaker's psyche and the broader human experience? In "Snake," figurative components offer deep insights into the speaker's psychology as well as the larger human experience. Personifications that reveal the speaker's complicated emotions—remorse, honor, and fear—include the snake as a guest or the ruler. The poem is thought-provoking and accessible because of the figurative language, which reflects prevalent issues and invites readers to consider their own internal conflicts (Cronin & Hawthorne, 2019; Furman, 2003; Giora, 2002; Colston & O'Brien, 2000).

4 Conclusion

Figurative language is an important aspect of poetry (Yeibo, 2012), and one technique to use the beauty of language to communicate a message is through figurative language (Putri & Marlina, 2023). By exploring the figurative language's semantic nuances in DH Lawrence's poem "Snake," the researcher has uncovered a complex tapestry of literary components that not only contribute to the poem's aesthetic appeal but also act as channels for its deeper meaning. The investigation of personification gives the snake life and gives it human characteristics, creating a bond between the reader and the animal. The imagery is elevated by similes and metaphors, such as the snake "lifting its head like a king," which lets readers clearly picture the scenario. Furthermore, the deliberate use of rhetorical questions draws readers into the speaker's psychological state and fosters a dialogue that appeals to human reflection. Lawrence creates a complex emotional environment that speaks to shared human experiences through the deft use of a variety of figurative elements, such as repetition and hyperbole. This study provides educators who teach English with a useful tool for teaching by means of the examination of figurative language in a real-world literary setting, while also serving the academic goal of comprehending the poetic art by highlighting the practical implications. In the end, the research process has not only split down language; it has also revealed the layers of meaning entwined within the lines, allowing readers to see the fascinating complexity that figurative language in the world of poetry.

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