



Analysis of the Use of Language Style in Poetry by Grade X Students of SMA Negeri 10 Padang

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ABSTRACT

Poetry is a medium of literary expression rich in the use of language styles and reflects students' creativity, imagination, and cultural experiences. This study aims to describe the types and characteristics of language styles used in poetry by tenth-grade high school students in Padang, identify the most dominant language styles, and reveal their implications for literature learning in secondary schools. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data sources in the form of 36 student poems with the theme of natural beauty, especially Lake Toba. The data collection instrument used was a performance test in the form of a poetry writing assignment, equipped with a language style analysis guide sheet based on Keraf and Tarigan's theory. After the data were collected, the poems were analyzed through the stages of classifying language style types, calculating the frequency of occurrence, and interpreting language style characteristics contextually. The results showed that metaphor and personification were the most dominant styles. Both styles have imaginative, concrete, and emotional characteristics, which reflect students' tendency to concretize natural experiences into poetic expressions. In addition, simile, repetition, and hyperbole were also found with the characteristics of emphasizing meaning and strengthening emotional expression. The dominance of these styles of language indicates that students are at a stage of literacy development that still relies on sensory experience and local cultural influences to express ideas. This finding implies the importance of more contextual poetry learning, oriented toward enriching the variety and characteristics of language styles, so that students' literary appreciation and creativity can develop optimally.

Keywords: language style, poetry, students

Analisis Penggunaan Gaya Bahasa dalam Puisi Karya Siswa Kelas X SMA Negeri 10 Padang

ABSTRAK

Puisi merupakan media ekspresi sastra yang kaya akan penggunaan gaya bahasa serta merefleksikan kreativitas, imajinasi, dan pengalaman kultural siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan jenis dan karakteristik gaya bahasa yang digunakan dalam puisi karya siswa kelas X SMA di Padang, mengidentifikasi gaya bahasa yang paling dominan, serta mengungkap implikasinya bagi pembelajaran sastra di sekolah menengah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa 36 puisi siswa bertema keindahan alam, khususnya Danau Toba. Instrumen pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah tes unjuk kerja berupa tugas menulis puisi, dilengkapi dengan lembar pedoman analisis gaya bahasa berdasarkan teori Keraf dan Tarigan. Setelah data terkumpul, puisi dianalisis melalui tahapan klasifikasi jenis gaya bahasa, perhitungan frekuensi kemunculan, serta penafsiran karakteristik gaya bahasa secara kontekstual. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gaya bahasa metafora dan personifikasi merupakan gaya yang paling dominan. Kedua gaya tersebut memiliki karakteristik imajinatif, konkret, dan emosional, yang mencerminkan kecenderungan siswa dalam mengkonkretkan pengalaman alam ke dalam ungkapan puitis. Selain itu, ditemukan pula gaya bahasa simile, repetisi, dan hiperbola dengan karakteristik penegasan makna dan penguatan ekspresi emosional. Dominasi gaya bahasa tersebut menunjukkan bahwa siswa berada pada tahap perkembangan literasi yang masih mengandalkan pengalaman indrawi dan pengaruh budaya lokal dalam mengekspresikan gagasan. Temuan ini berimplikasi pada pentingnya pembelajaran puisi yang lebih kontekstual dan berorientasi pada pengayaan variasi serta karakteristik gaya bahasa agar kemampuan apresiasi dan kreativitas sastra siswa dapat berkembang secara optimal.

Kata kunci: gaya bahasa, puisi, karya siswa

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INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a literary medium rich in the use of figurative language; elements such as metaphor, personification, comparison, and hyperbole not only beautify the text but also function as a channel for emotions, imagery, and cultural reflection (Arcilla, 2024; Haq et al., 2024; Komala et al., 2025; Sharma, 2025). In the current era, when the Independent Curriculum demands a more contextual and creative literary learning, students' ability to not only produce poetry but also understand and analyze figurative language is an important aspect in developing holistic language competencies, namely a combination of technical, aesthetic, and critical (Noviadi et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024; Rihatmi et al., 2025; Syahrir et al., 2024; Widartono et al., 2025). The motivation for this research arose because, although there are several recent studies examining figurative language in students' poetry and literary works, few have focused on eleventh-grade high school students in Padang and the specific learning contexts that influence their choice and use of figurative language. Several recent studies highlight relevant aspects while also opening up opportunities for further research. For example, Hos et al. (2021); Wirata & Putera (2022), analyzing the types and meanings of figurative language in the poetry of eleventh-grade students in Lamongan, found 38 pieces of figurative language data, including various figurative and rhetorical styles. Andania et al. (2024) provided important data on the variation in the types and meanings of figurative language in upper-grade students, but their scope was limited to a single school and did not link local cultural factors or learning contexts in different regions. Another study, by Hutauruk (2019), demonstrated figurative language types such as simile, metaphor, personification, satire, and hyperbole in the free poetry of tenth-grade students in Padangsidempuan. However, these studies focused on 10th-grade free verse poetry, and did not deeply link the dominance of style and meaning to the local cultural background, and how the learning context in high school influences the choice of lan-

guage style. Furthermore, Harya (2017); Raihan & Nezami (2018); Yulianda & Sunra (2022), which were descriptive in nature, also inventoried types of language style such as allegory, allusion, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile, and synecdoche in poetry anthologies.

From these studies, a pattern is apparent: (1) research on student language style often uses qualitative descriptive methods, (2) the focus is often on early grades of high school or junior high school, or on free verse without linking cultural context or teaching background, (3) although there is research in 11th-grade students (e.g., Lamongan), research conducted in Padang has not been widely explored. This indicates a research gap, as no study has systematically analyzed the style of language in poetry by eleventh-grade high school students in Padang, linking the type, frequency, and dominance of style to the learning context, local cultural background, and the functional meanings that emerge from these style choices.

Conducting research in Padang high schools is strategic because Padang, as a large city with a strong Minangkabau cultural heritage, regional languages, oral literary traditions, and local wisdom, allows for variations in style that may differ from other regions. Furthermore, high schools in Padang have implemented the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), thus triggering an empirical need to examine the role of eleventh-grade students in utilizing style in their poetry.

This research takes a descriptive-analytical and interpretive approach. In addition to describing the types and frequency of figurative language used in the poetry of eleventh-grade high school students in Padang, it also attempts to relate the findings to the learning context, curriculum, and classroom teaching practices. Its contribution is expected to address the gap in contextual data, serve as a reflection for teachers in designing more relevant literature teaching strategies, and provide recommendations for strengthening students' creativity and aesthetic sensitivity.



The research question is: what are the types and characteristics of figurative language used in the poetry of eleventh-grade high school students in Padang? What are the most dominant figurative language styles? And what are the implications of this use and characteristics for poetry learning in secondary schools? In line with this research problem, the purpose of this study is to describe the types and characteristics of figurative language in the poetry of eleventh-grade high school students in Padang, identify the most dominant figurative language styles, and uncover their implications for poetry learning, ensuring a more contextual and effective literature learning process.

With this approach, it is hoped that this research will not only inventory the phenomenon of figurative language but also interpret it as a reflection of students' cultural experiences, ways of thinking, local characteristics, and learning practices that influence their language expression. Comparisons with the recent studies mentioned (in Lamongan, Padangsidempuan, Pangkep, etc.) will serve as a benchmark in identifying what is unique and distinctive about the poetry of eleventh-grade high school students in Padang.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach because it aims to understand and describe the use of figurative language in poetry written by eleventh-grade students in depth. (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Creswell, 2003; Razak, 2017). A qualitative approach allows researchers to generate data in the form of words that are analyzed semantically, allowing the meaning of the poems to be understood contextually (Manajemen et al., 2021; Sugiyono, 2017).

The research subjects were 36 tenth-grade students at MA Negeri 10 Padang, Padang City, who were selected intentionally based on their involvement in poetry writing lessons.

Data collection was conducted once in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year by asking 36 tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 10 Padang to write poems on the theme of natural beauty. Students' work was collected using a data collection tool, namely an observation guide. Data were transcribed and analyzed using a stylistic classification sheet (Dasril et al., 2013; Tarigan, 2009).

Research data was collected using a performance test in the form of a poetry writing assignment. This test was deemed valid because it was structured following systematic and objective procedures, resulting in a framework that served as a basis for developing test items. This statement is in line with the views of measurement experts (Azwar, 2016; Budiaji, 2013).

The analysis included reading, identifying, grouping, calculating frequencies, and interpreting the meaning of comparisons, contrasts, linkages, and repetitions (Razak, 2015; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Nurfajriani et al., 2024).

Validity was maintained through semantic validity, intra- and inter-rater reliability, and theoretical triangulation using the perspectives of (Razak, 2025; Rahmatin et al., 2024).

RESULT

1. Types and Characteristics of Style in Students' Poetry

Based on an analysis of a collection of 36 poems by eleventh-grade students on the theme of Natural Beauty, focusing primarily on Lake Toba, a variety of styles were identified to enrich the aesthetic expression. Across the poems, 28 uses of style were identified, with metaphor and personification dominating. This indicates a tendency for students to bring natural elements to life through imaginative comparisons and depictions of nature as possessing human characteristics.

To clarify the distribution, characteristics, and functions of the styles identified, the analysis results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Types, Characteristics, Examples, Number, and Explanations of Style in Poetry by Eleventh-Grade Students

Types of Language Style	Characteristics	Examples of Student Poetry	Explanation
Personification	Giving human characteristics to inanimate or natural objects.	"Lake Toba embraces the mirror of the blue sky" "Danau Toba memeluk cermin langit biru"	Making natural elements feel alive and interactive, thus creating an emotional closeness between the writer and the reader with nature.
Metaphor	Direct comparison without comparative words, concise and concise.	"Lake Toba, a green paradise" "Danau Toba, surga yang menghijau"	Presenting philosophical and symbolic meanings, making Lake Toba a symbol of heavenly beauty and eternity.
Simile	Explicit comparisons use the words like or as.	"Samosir Island is like a bride who descended from heaven" "Pulau Samosir bagai pengantin yang turun dari surga"	Makes it easier for readers to understand the author's imagination through concrete analogies, even though they sometimes tend to be hyperbolic and still elementary.
Repetition	Repetition of words or phrases to build rhythm and emphasis.	"Lake Toba, the green Lake Toba" "Danau Toba, Danau Toba yang menghijau"	Creates a musical effect, strengthens emotions, and increases the intensity of admiration for the object depicted.
Hyperbole	Exaggeration for dramatic effect.	"Lake Toba, the light that captivates all of nature" "Danau Toba, cahaya yang memukau seluruh alam"	It gives a grand and magnificent impression, although in the context of students it often feels excessive as a form of creative exploration.

Based on the distribution shown in Table 1, it can be concluded that the language styles used by students tend to be descriptive, imaginative, and sensory, with an emphasis on visual and emotional aspects. Although in some cases they may appear simple and elementary, these language styles have proven effective in creating an atmosphere of awe for nature. Complex language styles such as irony or profound symbolism were not found, which is normal considering the level of aesthetic development of high school students.

These findings demonstrate that students have been able to utilize linguistic devices to present nature not merely as a landscape, but also as a living entity with a "voice." Thus, the use of language styles in their poetry not only reinforces the aesthetic message but also has the potential to provide educational value, particularly in raising awareness of the importance of preserving the beauty and sustainability of nature.



2. Dominance of Language Styles in Students' Poetry

This discussion of the dominance of language styles is presented to answer the research problem formulation and objectives related to identifying the most dominant language styles in students' poetry.

An analysis of 36 poems by students in grade X-F10 shows that the works generally focus on the theme of natural beauty, with Lake Toba as a local icon associated with Batak cultural values and a symbol of religiosity. This theme consistently emerges because the learning is directed at

exploring the "Natural Beauty of North Sumatra" through the students' imaginative lens.

2.1 Analysis of Each Poem

Each of the 36 poems is unique in terms of theme, structure, and style. Some poems highlight Lake Toba as a "living persona," some relate it to Batak culture, while others emphasize religious dimensions or experiment with form. For efficiency, the five main poems are presented in detail in Table 1 as a representative group, while a summary of the overall themes is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
 Analysis of Students' Poems in Grade X-F10

Poetry Title	Main Theme	Source of Representation	Structure	Dominant Language Style	Plus	Minus	Implication
Persona Danau Toba	Lake Toba as a living persona that holds ancestral secrets	Nature persona group	4 stanzas, 16 lines, free	Personification, Metaphor, Repetition, Simile	Imajinatif, sensoris	Inconsistent spelling	Potential to be developed into prose
Keindahan Sumatra Utara	Harmony of nature and Batak culture as an eternal heritage	Cultural groups and harmony	4 stanzas, 16 lines, semi-rhyme	Metaphor, Personification, Simile, Hyperbole	Integrasi budaya kuat	Random spelling	Relevant for cultural tourism
Keagungan dan Keindahan Alam	Nature as a majestic person, invites human respect	Eco-religious groups	4 stanzas, 16 lines, free	Personification, Metaphor, Simile, Repetition	Emosional kuat	Broken spelling	Potential ecospiritual themes
Surga di Pelukan Dunia	Nature is a paradise full of grace	Experimental group form	3 stanzas, 12 lines, list & poem	Personification, Simile, Metaphor	Kreatif dengan format "list"	Random structure	It could be visual poetry
Indahnya Hidup Bersama	Life as a gift from God through nature	Religious groups	3 stanzas, 12 lines	Metaphor, Hyperbole, Simile	Religius, positive	The diction is difficult to understand	Potensial untuk teks motivasi

Table 2
 Collective Summary of Themes of 36 Poems by Grade X-F10 Students

Theme Category	Sum of Poetry	Title Example	Explanation
Persona Alam (Lake Toba alive)	12	Persona Danau Toba	Making Lake Toba seem "alive" and interacting with humans.
Batak Culture and Harmony	9	Keindahan Sumatra Utara	Highlighting the relationship between nature and Batak tradition, culture and identity.
Religious-Spiritual	7	Indahnya Hidup Bersama	Nature is seen as a gift from God, full of religious nuances.
Shape Experiment	5	Surga di Pelukan Dunia	Using non-conventional poetry formats, such as word lists or visuals.
Others	3	-	Minor themes that are not dominant

2.2 Collective Distribution of Styles

The figurative language throughout the poem shows that metaphor and personification are the most dominant means of expression. This is followed, in turn, by simile, repetition, and hyperbole.

DISCUSSION

1. Types and Characteristics of Language Style in Student Poetry

The analysis shows that metaphor and personification are the most dominant language styles in the corpus of 36 student poems, both in the core summaries and the full recapitulations. Cumulatively, these two figures account for more than half of all examples of stylistic devices. This dominance needs to be understood within a cognitive, pedagogical, and cultural framework.

1) Cognitive Aspect

This finding is consistent with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which explains that abstract thought is understood through mapping it to concrete domains (Garello, 2024; Huang, 2020). Students tend to map emotional and spiritual experiences onto natural im-

agery, making metaphors such as "Lake Toba as heaven" an economical and imaginative means of expression.

Recent research also supports this. According to Jelcic Colakovic (2020); Rechsteiner et al. (2020); Wnuk & Ito (2021) argue that conceptual metaphors are not only universal but also heavily influenced by local culture and experiences. This explains why the image of Lake Toba, steeped in Batak cultural values, provides fertile ground for the birth of distinctive metaphors and personification.

2) Emotive Strategy through Personification

Personification strengthens the reader's emotional connection to the poem's subject. Attributing human qualities to natural elements ("the lake that embraces," "the waves that sing") creates an intimate atmosphere, supporting the themes of longing and reverence for nature. This aligns with the function of prosopopeia in rhetoric, which aims to evoke empathy.

Peyma (2025); Talgorn & Ullerup (2023) emphasize that personification in modern literary texts serves as an empathetic strategy that facilitates the reader's emotional connection to ecological



themes. Thus, the dominance of personification in students' poetry can also be read as a form of eco-poetics born of the growing environmental awareness in contemporary education.

3) Pedagogical Influence

Classroom instruction that emphasizes the theme of natural beauty likely encourages students to use metaphors and personification. Teacher examples act as scaffolding, according to Ivic (2019), allowing students to imitate rhetorical patterns deemed appropriate to the objectives of the assignment.

Recent creative literacy studies by Ayu et al. (2025); Jin et al. (2025) show that students tend to adopt rhetorical strategies presented by teachers or model texts, especially in the early stages of learning to write poetry. This means that pedagogical factors are an important catalyst for the emergence of a dominant style.

4) Genre Conventions and Cultural Values

Poetry with nature themes is generally lyrical and descriptive. Batak culture, which views Lake Toba as a sacred space, enriches metaphors and personification, making the use of these styles more natural for students. This aligns with the findings of Han (2025); Huszka et al. (2025); and Zhang (2020), Elmustian et (2024) who emphasize that metaphorical constructions in Asian students' poetry often reflect collectively inherited cultural values.

5) Literacy Development Stage

High school students tend to use concrete and sensory rhetorical devices. According to Huszka et al. (2025), at the formal operational stage, they are already capable of abstract thinking, but multi-layered symbolism or irony is still rarely used because it requires broader literary experience. Supporting this, research by Lee (2025); Li et al. (2024), found that adolescent literacy development tends to emphasize mastery of visual tropes (metaphor, personification) before moving on to more

complex rhetorical devices such as irony or symbolic ambiguity.

The analysis was conducted using manual coding, which potentially introduces two major biases. First, inter-coder reliability has not been calculated, even though Coleman et al. (2024), Halpin (2024), Yatim et al., (2024) emphasize the importance of a clear codebook, coder training, small-scale pilot testing, and reporting measures such as Cohen's Kappa or Krippendorff's alpha with a minimum threshold of ≥ 0.60 . Second, transparency is needed regarding the differences between the core summary and the full corpus, as research by Oktavianti et al. (2023); Poucke (2025); and Siricharoen & Wijitsopon (2020) indicates that samples often emphasize certain rhetorical features that do not always represent the actual distribution. Reporting sample selection criteria, data representativeness, and replication procedures is recommended to maintain the validity of claims.

The finding of the dominance of metaphor and personification in students' poetry indicates a tendency to use prototypical stylistic strategies because they are easily cognitively accessible and often implicitly taught. Ningrum & Gustina (2025) emphasize the importance of explicit instruction in figurative language, accompanied by gradual practice and formative feedback, to enrich figurative language production. Birello & Pujolà (2023); Pager-McClymont & Papathanasiou (2023); Soysal (2024) recommend practice with varying levels of metaphorical familiarity and transparency to enable students to interpret and modify new expressions. Hani et al. (2024); Net et al. (2024); Widodo (2023) suggest providing diverse reading materials containing symbolism, irony, and sound play to broaden understanding of the function of figurative language.

Thus, the dominance of metaphor and personification in students' poetry can be understood as a reflection of cognitive, pedagogical, cultural factors, and literacy development levels (Rezeki et al., 2025). Recent studies consistently emphasize

that explicit and gradual instruction, corpus support, and measurement of analytical reliability are three key strategies that can strengthen the validity of findings and simultaneously increase the effectiveness of stylistic learning interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the most dominant figurative language styles in poetry written by eleventh-grade high school students in Padang are metaphor and personification, followed by simile, repetition, and hyperbole. The dominance of metaphor and personification indicates students' tendency to express ideas in concrete, imaginative, and emotional ways, consistent with their stage of literacy development and the inherent influence of local culture. The strength of this study lies in its analysis, which not only describes the types of figurative language but also links them to cognitive, pedagogical, and cultural aspects, thus providing a practical contribution to more contextualized literature teaching. However, this study still has limitations due to its manual coding-based analysis technique, which has relatively limited reliability, and its sample size, which focuses only on a single learning context, making the results less generalizable. Therefore, further research is needed to develop corpus-based analysis using software, implement pedagogical experimental designs to test the effectiveness of figurative language instruction, and involve in-depth interviews with students to explore their creative motivations and stylistic strategies. These steps can strengthen the validity of the findings and provide broader implications for literature learning in secondary schools.

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