

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the analysing of literary works that explain reader' responses to figurative language in a poem. The researcher analyzes the understanding of readers from different major, both literature and non literature in interpreting figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poem. As a general introduction, this chapter describes background of research, statement of problem, purpose of research, significance of research, previous studies, and definition of key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of Research

Poem is a beautiful form of literary work. One of its beauties is poured through complex words to create a meaning for the reader. Poem is able to represent human emotions, ideas, and experiences in a unique and creative way. In accordance with Pradopo's statement (2012, p. 7), that poem is a recording and interpretation of important human experiences, which are transformed into the most memorable form. Pradopo shows how poem can function as a medium for readers to represent deep feelings, thoughts, and messages. Because the poetic nature of poem is able to arouse emotions and attract the attention of readers. Thus, making it a means to connect the hearts and minds of readers in various situations. Many poem texts are used to comment on social, political, and environmental issues. The message through poem can create feelings and provide various meanings. Pradopo also said that the message through poem creates feelings and imaginations of readers and provides various meanings. In addition, poem is poetic, which can arouse feelings, attract attention, arouse various responses, and arouse the emotions of readers.

Poem uses various language descriptions, one of which is by using figurative language to create deeper meaning. According to Somad (2010), poem functions as a medium that can convey thoughts and ideas to readers. Through creative word choices and diverse structures, poem can arouse emotions and stimulate the reader's

imagination. Each stanza and line in a poem has the potential to convey a complex message, which invites various interpretations from the reader. Therefore, it is important to explore how the elements of poem contribute to the reading experience and how readers respond to these works.

Although poem is often considered a difficult form of literature to understand, many readers find beauty and depth of meaning in these works. There are many poems that use language as beauty. One of them is poem by Emily Dickinson, her poems often use several styles of language as one of the techniques of literary beauty. There are many types of figurative language, such as symbols, similes, personifications, metaphors, hyperboles, metonymy, alliterations, allusions, and so on. According to Perrin (in Johnson & Arp, 2019, p. 774), figurative language is language that deviates from the language used traditionally and literally to describe people or objects. The types of figurative language are; metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles, paradoxes, and irony. This can make readers feel the depth of emotion and will produce more complex and diverse meanings.

Figurative language is defined as language that uses words or phrases that have a different meaning from their literal meaning. Some words in figurative language have a different meaning from their usual meaning. Readers must use their imagination to understand the author's meaning. This makes figurative interpretation more difficult to understand because the meaning of figurative language cannot be found in a dictionary, unlike other vocabulary that we generally use in everyday discourse. To understand the meaning of figurative language, imagination is needed to visualize what the words are saying or referring to (Harya, 2017). In addition, according to (Khalida, 2013) figurative language helps improve one's fiction and can be a way to convey an image or a topic. Then figurative language is a way to say something other than what is actually meant by the words. Figurative language words or phrases are words or phrases that deviate significantly from everyday language for the purpose of comparison, emphasis, clarity, or novelty.

By using figurative language in a poem, it will not only make the poem rich in meaning but also have beauty in the text of the poem. Likewise according to Valéry (2007, p. 63), poem is the art of language, poem creates beauty through word play but still conveys deep meaning. Readers gain deep meaning through reading and understanding. As stated by Iser in Nurrachman (2023, p. 156) that literary works, including poem, have two poles, namely the artistic pole and the aesthetic pole: the artistic pole refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic pole refers to the manifestation achieved by the reader. The reader's understanding of a poem is formed through the interaction between the reader and the text. To achieve this goal, the reader must understand the meaning or message implied in the text and the structure of the poem itself, one of them is by understanding or interpreting the meaning in a style of language.

In this research, the researcher chose Emily Dickinson's poem because the researcher is interested in the figurative language aspects contained in the poem. In this case, such as personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole and others. The various figurative languages contained in Emily Dickinson's poems can trigger several perceptions from readers. Basically, poem is difficult to understand because unlike stories that are easy to understand the plot, such as novels and other literary works, poem requires readers to dive into the meaning of the poem in depth to get the meaning that the poet wants to convey. As stated by (Arp & Perrine, 2005) that poem requires readers to dive into the meaning of the poem in depth and rely on their senses, emotions, and imagination. Through Emily Dickinson's poems, it will be in line with the focus of the discussion in this research, which is to find out how readers understand the message contained in the poem through figurative language based on their imagination and experience. By using reader response theory, the researcher tries to analyze the reader's understanding of the structure and messages contained in Emily Dickinson's poem through the figurative language she uses.

Reader response is a literary criticism that ignores the author and its content. This criticism is based on the reader's experience or imagination when reading a particular work. This is a theory about the reader as the party that leads the existence

of a work and completes its meaning through interpretation. Each reader brings knowledge, experience, imagination, and background that cause different interpretations to emerge. According to Blackburn (2005, p. 308), meaning is not in the text. The function of the text is only as a canvas projected by the reader, whatever their reaction. Through this statement, that reader response gives the reader the freedom to express their thoughts through interpretation. Thus, reader response gives each individual the freedom to express their thoughts through interpretation, which makes the process of understanding subjective and dynamic, depending on the reader's own experience.

The freedom of readers in interpreting of a reading text will not only produce different interpretations for each reader but also new meanings will be formed. In this case, the text will become a dialogue space that allows new meanings to emerge. This is in accordance with Barthes (1992) which states that with the presence of readers, the author will die. This statement provides a view that places the reader as the center in the process of forming meaning from the interpretation of a text that is read. Therefore, the text is not only a space of expression for the author but also a means to produce diverse interpretations and understandings for the reader.

The diverse understanding of each reader, one of which is influenced by different backgrounds. The reader's background is also influenced by their education, culture, and social experiences. Stanley Fish (Fish, 2004, p. 220) explains that the community in which the reader is located can influence the way they understand the text. Likewise, according to Iser (1972), readers build meaning from the text through their personal background and experiences. However, each reader's understanding of a text can be very diverse because it is influenced by their respective backgrounds. For example, readers who have a lot of knowledge about literature, such as literary theories, literary history, or symbolism in the text. These readers are usually able to understand the hidden meaning or complex messages in the text. They may view the text from a more critical and analytical perspective, such as analyzing the use of language or the relationship of the story to a particular

cultural and historical context. Then Iser continued that each reader has unique experiences and views, so they read by filling in the meaning in the text according to their understanding. In other words, the reader's background knowledge and experience are important factors that influence how they interpret a literary work.

There are also readers who approach texts in a simple way. They read to enjoy the story or get a direct experience of what the text conveys. These readers may not delve into the aspects of the poem, these readers only read to enjoy the story without thinking too much about structure or hidden meanings. They focus more on what is immediately visible, such as the plot, characters, or atmosphere created by the text. This type of reader usually reads for pleasure or entertainment, without feeling the need to relate the story to a particular theory or context. However, even though readers do not delve into the elements of literature, their understanding is still valid because each reader has a different perspective and relationship to the text. Because according to Barthes (1992), in his theory of the "death of the author," states that the meaning of the text does not actually depend on the author, but on how the reader interprets the text. With that, the reader is free to interpret the text as they wish. This shows that understanding a text depends largely on who is reading it and how they perceive the story, so that each reader makes a unique contribution to the meaning of a work. This diversity of reader backgrounds creates variation in how a text is interpreted, enriching literary discussion and interpretation. There is no one "right" way of reading than another, as each reader brings their own unique perspective. This confirms Iser's view (1972) that literary texts are dynamic and come alive through the interactive relationship between reader and text.

Based on the background above, this research has an object related to the reader's point of view, namely poem. The researcher will analyze five poems by Emily Dickinson that contain some figurative language in them, including those entitled *The Sun just touches the Morning*, *The Mountain sat upon the Plain*, *The Frost of Death was on the Pane*, *The Day came slow till Five o'clock*, and *Hope is a subtle Glutton*. The poems will be analyzed using the reader response theory according to Louise Rosenblatt (1994). The data for this research will be taken from

twenty respondents, consisting of ten seventh-semester students majoring in literature at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, who have studied figurative language and reader response. In addition, the other ten respondents are seventh-semester students from non-literary majors who have not studied literature and have never studied reader response.

The purpose of the differences in respondent majors is to see the differences in understanding figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poem. Based on this, the purpose of this research is to analyze readers' understanding of the definition and types of figurative language and to identify types of readers based on their understanding of figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poem using Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory.

### **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the background in this research above, the researcher concludes that there are two questions that will be the main focuses on this research:

1. How is the difference between readers of literature and non-literature majors in understanding the definition and types of figurative language used in Emily Dickinson's poem?
2. What types of readers can be identified based on Rosenblatt's reader response theory of the readers understanding of figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poem?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

Based on the statement of problems, this research has two objectives gained by the researcher:

1. To find out the differences in understanding between literature and non-literature majors regarding the definition and types of figurative language used in Emily Dickinson's poem.
2. To find out the types of readers based on Rosenblatt's reader response theory of the reader's understanding through figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poem.



#### **1.4 Research Significance**

This research aims to provide significant contributions in both theoretical and practical areas regarding readers' responses to figurative language in Emily Dickinson's poems.

##### **1. Theoretical Significance**

This research can provide new ideas for this research and for readers, especially the topic of reader responses to the use of figurative language in a poem. The researcher provides further information and knowledge about understanding Emily Dickinson's poem through the reader response approach. This research can enrich the knowledge of literary analysis on how figurative language affects readers' perception emotionally and aesthetically. This research enriches the foundation of reader response theory, especially on how readers' responses to figurative language can vary depending on their background, experiences, and how this affects the meaning they interpret. This research also contributes to the theory of figurative language in poem, highlighting the role of language style in creating deeper meaning and emotional resonance.

##### **2. Practical Significance**

This research can be a source of reading that contains information about the results of the analysis supported by reliable sources. This research can also be a reference for prospective researchers who are interested in analyzing the same topic on different objects. In addition, this research provides a theoretical basis that can help other researchers in understanding the differences in interpretation influenced by different majors towards the interpretation of figurative language in literature. The results of this research can open new insights into how readers from different backgrounds appreciate and understand literary works. Thus, this research contributes to enriching studies related to reader responses and understanding of literary works, especially poem.

#### **1.5 Previous Studies**

By referring to previous research, researchers can understand the development of relevant studies and gain in-depth insights into issues that have been discussed in previous studies. Previous research also helps researchers

identify research gaps, so that they can formulate more specific and significant research objectives. In addition, a review of previous research provides substantial information as a theoretical and methodological basis for the research being conducted. Therefore, the following discussion will outline relevant previous research as a basis for supporting this research.

The first research has the same topic of discussion and theory related to reader response, but different objects. The research is entitled “Reader Response on Two Novels: The Changing Tides and The Hungry Tide” by Dr. Sumathi.K.Sripathi (2023) which was published in *The International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*. The analysis is about reader understanding using subjective strategies with a comparative approach. The results of this research are that the author presents the reader's personal reaction to the conditions of heritage and culture presented by the author. In the process of understanding the reading of the two novels, the author involves individual interpretation and emotional interaction with the text, forming understanding and meaning based on personal experience and perspective.

The second research contains another thesis that discusses different topics and research objects using the same theory. This research is entitled *Woman Faithfulness in Lone Scherfig's One Day Movie: As A Reader Response Research* (2021) by Vera Ananda Kharisma Putri and Teguh Kasprabowo. The analysis of reader responses uses a transactional strategy, according to Louise Rosenblatt (1982). Researchers collect data by watching films, reading scenarios, then interpreting the data and analyzing it. The results of this research are that the author presents the reader's personal reactions using knowledge, feelings, and emotions. In the process of understanding the reading of the two novels, the author involves individual interpretation and emotional interaction with the text, forming understanding and meaning based on personal experience and perspective.

The third research is a thesis that discusses the same topics and objects in general, but with different theories. This research is entitled *Bahasa Kiasan Dalam Puisi-Puisi Karya Emily Dickinson* (2020), written by Stevanus Aruperes. This research analysis discusses the use of figurative language, categorizes it



according to its type, and describes the meaning of figurative language itself. The researcher chose five poems that have the most interesting titles from Emily Dickinson's work to research. The results of this research state that there are three types of language styles, namely personification, simile, and hyperbole. Then the meaning of the language style used by Emily Dickinson in her poems generally describes her own life experiences.

The fourth research is a thesis that discusses the same topic and theory, but with different objects and discussions. This research is entitled *Readers Understanding and Interpretation Toward the Figurative Language Use on Morissey's lyric of "You Are the Quarry" Album*, written by Yanti Siti Hajaroh in 2011. This research discusses how readers understand the figurative language used in the song lyrics, and how readers interpret the lyrics. Data collection was carried out by taking samples through questionnaires from five respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5). The results of this research state that all readers have a good understanding of the use of irony and metaphor in song lyrics. They mention song lyrics that contain irony and metaphor correctly, and they can also define irony and metaphor correctly according to the theory of figurative language. Some readers (R1, R2, R3, and R5) have difficulty mentioning which lyrics contain hyperbole. Therefore, most of their understanding of the use of hyperbole is classified as poor understanding.

The fifth research was conducted by Putu Diah Kanserina (2015) entitled "Reader response analysis in *Gone with the wind* novel by Marga Mitchell" was published in *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya*. The focus of this analysis is the reader's response to the factors that influence the personality of the main character in this novel. The data of this research were taken from two readers using technical explanations and making conclusions. The results of this research are that there are several data that reflect the personality of the main character. Among them are factors of love, marriage, and patriotism. Then the conclusion of this research is that we must respect the institution of marriage, because if not, true love will not be established.

The sixth research is a thesis written by Rizka Rizlia (2015) entitled *Children's Responses to Cinderella and Snow White: Children's Responses to Cinderella and Snow White*. This research discusses how child readers respond to the two fairy tales. The data for this research were taken from the responses of five eight-year-old children as data sources through questionnaires and interviews. The results of this research are that there are two types of children, namely active and can get meaning from the story and are able to retell it to others. While the second type is passive and has difficulty retelling the story to others. In addition, this research also found a solution that teachers and parents are advised to introduce children to various types of reading, so that children's interest in reading will develop better.

The seventh research is a thesis written by Muna Wahida Dzulhija in (2019) entitled *Reader Response Analysis on The Plot Twist of Flannery O'Connor's Good Country People*. The data for this research were taken from four reader respondents, including two male readers and two female readers. The results of this research indicate that the response of each reader is influenced by their background, knowledge, and personal understanding through the process of reading the story. Respondents are marked with an X for male readers, and Y for female readers. X1 thought that the plot twist in the story was interesting but did not surprise him at the end of the story. While Y1 said that the plot twist was surprising and made the story more interesting. In addition, a different response was also given by X2 who said that he had guessed that the ending of the story was that the character Hulga was deceived by the character Manley. While Y2 said that the ending surprised him and realized that the plot was interesting to read.

The eight research contains an article about the analysis of figurative language in a poem written by Gede Nika Wirawan (2021) entitled "The Figurative Language in David Campbell's Poem 'Night Sowing' and Their Translation into 'Menyemai di Malam Hari'" was published in *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa*. This research aims to find the types of figurative language found in David Campbell's poem. The data in this research were obtained through reading attentively and accurately with a focus on the figurative language in the poem.

The results of the research revealed that metonymy, idioms and personification are the types of figurative language found in the data source. In translating idiomatic expressions, the right strategy is needed so that the meaning in the source language can still be maintained.

The ninth research conducted by Edi Pujo Basuki, and Tiyas Saputri (2022) entitled “Analysis of Figurative Language of Jalaluddin Rumi's Poems In The "Book Of Love Poems" Book” which was published in *Education and Human Development Journal*. The data from this research is the author himself as the main instrument. The figurative language found by the author is metaphor, simile, paradox, synecdoche, anaphora, personification, allusion, allegory, and alliteration. The verses that use metaphorical figurative language appear 51 times, simile 16 times, paradox 23 times, synecdoche 10 times, anaphora 13 times, personification 8 times, allusion 5 times, allegory 31 times, hyperbole 3 times, and alliteration 1 time. In addition, there are several major themes that can be underlined from all the poem titles in this book. Namely: (1) Going Beyond Limits, (2) How to Find God, (3) Dissolving oneself in the attributes of God, (4) Becoming One with God, (5) Love.

The tenth research is an article conducted by Jaya Kurnia Sandy, M Natsir, and Chris Asanti (2021) entitled “An Analysis of Figurative Language in Selected Hardy's Poems” which was published in *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni dan Budaya*. This research discusses the types of figurative language used in four selected poems by Hardy, and analyzes the meaning of the figurative language. The results of the analysis show that there are 24 figurative languages in Hardy's poem. Among them are the types of figurative language simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, hyperbole, and understatement.

The eleventh research is a thesis conducted by Sulistina Ningsih, a student at the Raden Intan State Islamic University of Lampung (2022) entitled *Figurative Language Analysis on Billy Collins Poems*. The researcher used seven types of figurative language in analyzing Billy Collins' poem, including simile, personification, synecdoche, metaphor, metonymy, allegory, and parable of the

epic. The data from this research are three selected poems by Billy Collins entitled *I Ask You*, *The Art of Drowning*, and *Forgetfulness*. The three poems were read by the researcher and looked for the types of figurative language contained in the poems. The results of this research indicate that in the three poems there are twelve personifications, two metonyms, three synecdoches, three metaphors, and two similes. In addition, according to the author, the use of figurative language in the poems aims to beautify the poem and make the poem interesting to read.

The twelfth research is also a thesis conducted by Sindi Werdiningsih (2021) entitled *An Analysis Figurative Language on Emily Dickinson's Poem*. The focus of this research is to see the types of figurative language used and express meaning in Emily Dickinson's poem entitled *I'll Tell You How The Sun Rose*. The results of this research indicate that there are thirteen types of figurative language. Among them are four metaphors, three personifications, two alliterations, two imagery, one simile, and one symbolism. In this research, the researcher concluded that the figurative language in the poem *I'll Tell You How The Sun Rose* is about life and death, and the theme is that everything that lives will eventually die like the sun, it rises and eventually sets too.

The thirteenth research is an article conducted by Aprilia and Naifa Safina Amalia in (2024) entitled "Figurative Language Analysis in Emily Dickinson's Poem 'Hope Is The Thing With Feathers'" which was published in *ASPIRASI: Publikasi Hasil Pengabdian dan Kegiatan Masyarakat*. The focus of this research is to discuss how Emily Dickinson uses figurative language in her poem. The results of this research are the use of figurative language used by Emily Dickinson aims to deepen the meaning and emotional impact of the poem, describing hope as a pure force that does not seek rewards and remains in the human soul, even in the most difficult times. Then there are five types of figurative language in the poem. Among them are metaphor, personification, irony, symbolism, and hyperbole.

The fourteenth research is an article conducted by Dewi Safitri and Melisa Marlinton (2018) entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language used in Edgar Allan Poe's Poems" which was published in *Linguistic, English Eduvation and*

*Art (LEEA) Journal*. The focus of this research is to discuss the types and meanings of figurative language used in Edgar Allan Poe's poems. The selected poems analyzed were eight poems by Edgar Allan Poe, including Annabel Lee, The Sleeper, A Dream Within A Dream, To One in Paradise, Alone, Spirit of the Death, The Lake, and Evening Stars. The results of their research were that there were ninety-six figurative languages. Among them were twenty-five personifications, six similes, sixteen paradoxes, six metonymies, and twenty-one symbols. Then the meaning of the figurative language contained in his poems was classified into forty-two connotative meanings, thirty social meanings, sixteen reflexive meanings, and eight collocative meanings. They concluded in this research that Edgar Allan Poe's poems are important to read because they are rich in the use of figurative language that can attract the reader's attention and arouse the reader's imagination.

#### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

This section contains definitions of key terms frequently used in this research. Each term is chosen because it has important relevance in describing the focus of the research and supporting data analysis. Explanations are provided to avoid ambiguity and ensure a common understanding between researchers and readers. Terms that frequently appear in the research will be explained based on theoretical views that are in accordance with the scope of this research. Thus, readers can understand the main concepts more deeply in the context of this research, some of these terms include:

##### **a. Reader Response**

According to Rosenblatt, reader response is recognizing the reader as an active agent who gives real existence to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 228). Based on this statement, reader response is a literary criticism that ignores both the author and the content, which is based on the reader's experience when reading a particular work. This criticism is a theory about the reader as the party that leads the existence of a work and completes its meaning through interpretation.

b. Figurative Language

According to Perrin's theory (in Johnson & Arp, 2019), figurative language is language that deviates from the language used traditionally and literally to describe people or objects. Figurative language is characterized by language that compares, exaggerates, or interprets something other than what it initially appears. Figurative language is defined more narrowly as a way of saying one thing and interpreting another. The purpose of figurative language is to attract the reader's interest and convey ideas and imagination in a more entertaining way. Figurative language will present many meanings or be rich in meaning.

c. Efferent Reader Type

Efferent readers are readers who only take information or facts that are actually written in the text they read. This means without linking it to personal experiences, emotions being faced, and others. Likewise, according to Rosenblatt (1994, p. 47) said that their main focus is on what can be taken from the text, not on the experience or beauty of reading itself. The meaning produced will remain the same between one reader and another.

d. Aesthetic Reader Type

Aesthetic readers are called readers who go beyond the literal meaning of the text. Aesthetic readers are readers who try to imagine a deeper meaning than just the information contained in the text they read. According to Rosenblatt (1994, p. 32) that the meaning produced by this aesthetic type of reader is based on the reader's imagination. With that, each aesthetic type of reader will produce different and diverse meanings.