

STYLISTICS ANALYSIS OF THE POEM “THE DOOR IN THE DARK” BY ROBERT FROST

Oleh:

Mochamad Raka Hendayana¹⁾, Fithriyah Inda Nur Abida²⁾

^{1,2)}Univesitas Negeri Surabaya

¹⁾meredien588@gmail.com

²⁾qingyinda@gmail.com

Abstract

The goal of stylistics is to not only explain the formal features of texts, but also to demonstrate their functional value in text interpretation; or to demonstrate the relationship between literary text and linguistic effects where these are regarded relevant. The study of stylistics is a branch of linguistics that deals with the qualities and variants of language. The purpose of this research is to examine the stylistic features of Robert Frost's poem “The Door in the Dark”. By looking at the choice of language at phonetic, morphology, graphitic, and semantics, it is found that *Robert Frost's writing, viewpoints, and themes are all connected. The data is analyzed using stylistics devices to achieve the goal.* It has been concluded that Frost used a philosophy of a number of stylistic devices including cacophony, alliteration, assonance, tone modulation, denotation, connotation, metaphor, personification, symbolism, and imagery to highlight the idea of life.

Keywords: Stylistics, Robert Frost, alliteration.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stylistics is a discipline of applied linguistics that focuses on the study of textual style. Stylistics only dealt with literary text before the twentieth century. However, it began to deal with non-literary texts in the twentieth century. Leech (2007: 167) highlights the relationship between language and artistic function by explaining stylistics as a linguistic approach to literature. Stylistics, according to Mugair (2013: 316) is an in-depth study of writing to achieve a specific effect by specific word selections. The goal of stylistics is to not only explain the formal features of texts, but also to demonstrate their functional value in text interpretation; or to demonstrate the relationship between literary text and linguistic effects where these are regarded relevant. There are various degrees of stylistic analysis, and a text is examined based on these levels, which are: The study of graphs is known as graphology. The science of sound is known as phonology. Grammatical level is analysing the words and sentence structure. Semantics level is the meaning of words and sentences (Bradford, 2005).

Robert Frost was an American poet who specialized in realistic depictions of rural life. He was nominated four times for the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. “The Door in the Dark” talks about someone who is in the dark and attempting to find their way to a dark door. The person reaches into the darkness to open the door. That individual obtains the door and attempts to open it. When the individual opens the door, it slams into his face, unguarded, and the door slams into him so hard in the face that he loses consciousness. In this poem, Frost is applying the short, pithy *versanelle* to describe a simple scenario of the man's story. “The door in the dark” is a

metaphor used by Robert Frost. The individual looking for the door represents the reader and, by extension, every human being on the planet, the room represents the world, and the door represents the truth about life. This poem is about most people who are still blindfolded by innocence (darkness) and are only gradually being exposed to the truth, or more accurately, hit by hit (of the door) to the darkness and dangers that exist in everyday life. According to Kaplan (2007: 42) Frost is recognized for his frequent use of coordinating conjunctions in his poems. Frost's poetry uses a variety of stylistic elements at the phonetic, phonological, graphitic, grammatical, and lexico-syntactic levels to communicate his own viewpoint.

Frost uses combination of different stylistic devices to make the poem lyrical. The importance of analyzing Robert Frost's poetry is to gain a better understanding of the symbolism and metaphors symbol or expression (Setiawan, 2014: 6). A symbol connects a word or idea to a physical object, scene, or action, even though they are fundamentally different. A linguistic sign whose interaction with its semiotic object is customary is one of Pierce's best qualifications (Martin B and Felizitas R, 2000). In this poem various of figurative languages are used to reveal the hidden message occur in line and sentences of the poem. As Riffatrr (1978) says that a poetry expresses concepts and thing by indirection. To put it simply, a poem says one thing and means another. Frost uses a lot of metaphors, antithesis, and symbolism in his word and sentence choices. As a result, stylistic methods are employed in order to analyze the poetry and answer the following questions: 1) What are the stylistic features of Robert Frost's poem “The Door in the Dark”? and 2) How

do those stylistic features contribute to construct the theme of the poem?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research uses library research with qualitative approach to analyze of Robert Frost's poem "The Door in the Dark". According to Moleong (2010:6), qualitative research is utilized to better comprehend the phenomenon of what the subject has experienced, such as behaviors, perception, motivations, and others, holistically and through the depiction of a unique natural context in the form of words and language, utilizing a range of natural methods. In order to comprehend the poem, stylistic analysis is employed to analyze the themes using various poetic devices and word items. The research looks at how the poet used basic narrative language to express complex thoughts. This research looked at four levels of language features: phonological, graphological, grammatical, and semantic levels. The study examines how the poet has presented the deep philosophy by using simple narrative language.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This poem is arranged with only a stanza that consist of nine lines. Hence, the rhymes pattern of this poem is ABBACCCDD. This poem does not use a common verse because it is composed entirely of the poet's own verse. Each line has a different number of feet; the poet utilizes five in the first, second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and ninth lines. In the third line, the poet employs six feet, and in the fifth and seventh lines, he uses four feet. Each foot should have a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. We may confidently state that the poem is written in trachio pentameters. Almost every line has ten syllables and follows the DUMda DUMda rhythm, with each stressed word followed by an unstressed syllable. A beat, or trachio, is a pair of syllables. As a result, when all of the factors are considered, "The Door in the Dark" is written in trachio pentameters because nearly every line contains 10 syllables (five beats) that alternate between stressed and unstressed. The poet has used only two punctuations such as comma and full stop. Mostly, they are placed at the end of the lines to give pause or end the sentence. This punctuation divides the poem into three sentences which contains of four line, three lines, and two lines making a sentence. The poet employs a comma in the first line to show that the sentence has a small break but is not yet complete. It describes the speaker's travel through each room, including the black room.

The information is insufficient since it does not describe what happens when the speaker enters the dark chamber. The second line likewise has a comma, indicating that it has a minor break. This statement describes how the speaker (I) reaches out hesitantly to emerge from the darkness. This line still bears a connection to the first, but the poet has not

yet used a full stop to signify the end of the sentence. Because the third and fourth lines, together with the first and second lines, do not contain any punctuation, they form a single phrase. However, the poet takes a breather, implying that the lacing finger of the speaker is significant. When the poet's fingers are disregarded when stretching out, the speaker lace his finger and closes his arms, the poet gives the room. The poet breaks apart the line to stress the importance of the overlooked part and the close arms. The fifth line uses comma to give a break. It is given a break to give an information that the poet wants to be focus on the slim door that already passing his guard. the sixth line contains no punctuation, we can deduce that it is truly a single phrase with the seventh line. These two phrases imply that the previous door slammed on the speaker's head, causing the speaker to be startled. The eighth line is likewise a whole phrase that combines with the last line. These two phrases emphasize that the speaker believes that human and things are not a couple after being hit by the door. Even if they had previously been paired.

Phonological Analysis

In this poetry, rhyming words are highly significant since they help to create the sounds of the poem. It's worth noting that the first four lines do not rhyme with the middle two lines or the last two lines. It provides a stumbling block in the first four stanzas since the rhyme is switched three times in the first, second, third, and fourth lines. The same rhyming strategy is used in the last five lines, which are similarly separated into two sounds. To generate an accentuating effect on the reader's consciousness, Frost employed predominantly spoken tones in the poem (words like dark, arc, guard, hard, and jarred). The fundamental idea of using harsh sounds in words like more and before with the 'r' sound is that the vowel 'e' in 'more' and 'before' adds no meaningful sound. As a result, the words 'more' and 'before' have a harsh 'r' ring to them. Not only that, but the words 'dark' and 'arc' have the same harsh sound as the words 'guard,' 'hard,' and 'jarred,' which have the same strong 'd' and 'r' sound. Similarly, the vowel 'e' in face and lace does not contribute significantly because they sound like the consonant's sound. We can deduct from this that the poet follows the standard rule of vowels and consonants, in which vowels share soft sounds and consonants share hard sounds. It is indicating that there is a normal role in the poem without any switches.

In this poetry, assonance appears in the first, second, and fourth lines. The 'o' sound appears in the first sentence in the words room, going, and from. In the second sentence, the 'e' sound appears in the words 'save' and 'face.' In the fourth line, however, the letters 'a' appear in the word's arms, a, and arc. These vowel sounds were employed in a certain order to create a rhythmic impression in the reader's head. The consonance in this poem can be found in the

first, fifth, and sixth line. In the first line, there is 'm' sound in from and room to room. Not only that, but there is also 'g' sound in the fifth line in the words got and guard. Last, in the sixth line there is 'h' sound in hit, head, and hard. In this poem, consonance creates a melodious affect to the poem and Frost tried to create a lyrical feeling in the poem. There are multiple alliterations in the poem. In the first line, the word 'room to room' has a 'r' sound. There is a 'h' sound in head, hit, and hard in the sixth sentence. The last line has the 'w' sound in 'with' and 'what.' As a result, there are three alliterations in this poem. Frost can utilize alliteration to draw the reader's attention to the distinct situations of the entering room by room, as well as the speaker's condition after being hit by the 'door.'

Morphological Analysis

This poem uses of simple and formal diction without any kind of slang. The language is descriptive and evaluative as it describes the scene as well as expresses the speaker's ideas and feelings. Here we will classify various parts of speech of this poem.

Noun	Pronoun	Action Verb	Adjective	Adverb	Preposition	Conjunction
Room	I	Going	Dark	From	In	But
Face	My	Reached	Slim	Blindly	To	However
Fingers	Me	Save	Hard	Lightly	Out	And
Arms	They	Neglected		Past	With	So
Arc		Lace		Blow		Before
Door		Got		Jarred		
Guard		Hit		Anymore		
Head		Had				
Native		Used				
Simile		Pair				
People						
Things						

We may deduce from the table above that the poet uses a very clear diction, despite the fact that it has a very profound and mysterious meaning for the audience. As we can see, the nouns employed in this poem are related to the speakers and the items stated. Concrete nouns emphasize physical presence and natural imagery, whereas abstract words imply the speaker's state of mind. The verbs convey his current situation and compulsions by being in continuous tense for one and present indefinite and infinitive for the other. In this poetry, it's more likely that the speaker is attempting to flee. Pronouns allude to places and people, and they highlight two of the poem's personas: the speaker and his possessions. The speaker's perception of the situation is described via adjectives. Here, the black represents his condition, the slender represents the door that

slammed him, and the hard represents the way the door slammed him. Adverbs and prepositions indicate location, while co-ordinate and sub-ordinate conjunctions join phrases to give the poetry coherence.

The sentences are declarative and come in three types: simple, compound, and complicated. The length of the sentences is determined by the ideas they express. The poem has noun phrases, prepositional phrases, and verb phrases. 'My fingers,' 'my arm,' 'my guard,' and 'my native simile jarred' are noun phrases. 'In the dark' and 'in an arc' are prepositional phrases. 'I reached out,' for example, while infinitive expressions include 'to rescue,' 'to room,' and 'to lace.'

The poem contains a lot number of both free and bound morphemes. Mostly used are the free morphemes while less used bound morphemes are in the form of suffixes. Suffixes are in the form of plural nouns, the different forms of verb and adverb. There are two kinds of affixes; derivational and inflectional. Woods, darkest, gives, bells, promises, miles and stopping are inflectional while frozen, sound's, lovely and before are derivational. Allomorph sounds present in bound are of 's' and 'z'.

Free	Bound	Prefix	Suffix	Two Morphemes
In, From,	Going		Go-ing	
Room, Dark,	Reached		Reach-ed	
Out, To, Save	Blindly		Blind-ly	
My, Face, But,	Neglected		Neglect-ed	
However, Lace	Lightly		Light-ly	
And, Close, Arc	Fingers		Finger-s	
Slim, A, Door	Arms		Arm-s	
Got, Past, Guard	Jarred		Jar-ed	
An, Hit, Me	Things		Thing-s	
The, Head, So	Before		Be-fore	
Had, Native,				
Simile, so, Do				
Not, People,				
Pair, Any, More				
With, What, They				
Hard, Blow				

From this table we can see that bound morphemes mostly related with the sense of human body (fingers and arms) and an action (going, neglected, reached) and also a condition of something (blindly, lightly, jarred). While free morphemes consist of person (I, me, my, people, they), location (in and to) and action (save, lace, hit, blow) and things (door, arc, head, room, face). The poet employs bound

morphemes and free morphemes to connect the encounter of human and the difficulties and the condition they face. Human and the difficulties will be always walk together due to the relation of them. Frost uses the concept of life to describe the difficulties that human always face in their life. He also shows the possibility that will be happened when we face the difficulties like trying and failed. The poet employs diverse words and techniques to convey his meanings and create a great impact on the reader. The analysis of words and devices incorporated help the reader comprehend the message and theme of the poem in a better way. Frost has made use of words in such a way that these descriptions create a visual image in front of reader and the figurative language even make it more decorative.

We can observe from this table that bound morphemes are usually associated with human body sensing (fingers and arms) and action (going, neglected, reached), as well as a condition of anything (blindly, lightly, jarred). Person (I, me, my, people, they), location (in and to), and action (save, lace, hit, blow) are among the free morphemes (door, arc, head, room, face). The poet uses bound and free morphemes to connect the human encounter with the challenges and conditions people face. Because of their relationship, humans and obstacles will always walk hand in hand. Frost uses the concept of life to describe the challenges that humans confront on a daily basis. He also demonstrates what might happen if we confront problems such as attempting and failing. To transmit his concepts and make an impact on the reader, the poet uses a variety of words and strategies. The analysis of words and devices incorporated help the reader comprehend the message and theme of the poem in a better way. Frost has made use of words in such a way that these descriptions create a visual image in front of reader and the figurative language even make it more decorative.

This poem by Robert Frost also has several figurative meanings that can be found in it and here is the explanation to all the figurative language found.

*In going from room to room in the dark,
I reached out blindly to save my face,
But neglected, however lightly, to lace
My fingers and close my arms in an arc.
A slim door got in past my guard,
And hit me a blow in the head so hard
I had my native simile jarred.
So people and things don't pair any more
With what they used to pair with before.*

Denotation in this poem can be found in these words:

- Room: space that can be occupied or where something can be done, especially viewed in terms of whether there is enough.
- Face : the front part of a person's head from the forehead to the chin.

- Fingers : each of the four slender jointed parts attached to either hand (or five, if the thumb is included).
- Arms : each of the two upper limbs of the human body from the shoulder to the hand.
- Door : a hinged, sliding, or revolving barrier at the entrance to a building, room, or vehicle, or in the framework of a cupboard.
- Things : an inanimate material object as distinct from a living sentient being.

Connotation in the poem can be found in this words :

- Room : symbol of the difficulties that has been faced
- Face : our own self
- Fingers : the spirit of trying
- Arms : the struggle
- Door : chance that comes
- Things : Lucky

Metaphor

Frost conveys his point of view in this poem with astute use of metaphorical language, as he says: in walking from chamber to room. In a metaphorical sense, the poet explains the concept of all he has already experienced. There's also the dark, which indicates that it's not a nice thing. Or it encountered difficulty here.

Personification

In this poem, the personification that is found is the door. The personification of the slim door that hit the speaker's head is important, since the speaker talks about the reality and the change that comes but it does not work as it should be.

Symbolism

In this poem, the author uses the image of a room in the dark to represent the problems that we may face in life. There's also the native simile jarred, which refers to all of the lessons learned by the speaker after working so hard and fighting for his life. The door also represents the possibility of improving one's situation. However, the reality is symbolized by the head. As a result, the chance that we discover also has the potential to break the truth. It could also fail. And things represent luck, because the speaker in this poem does not have any luck at all. As a result, he gives up.

Imagery

Frost has used many images to transport the idea of dismay. The use of imagery here is for helping the audiences get the feel of the senses that they have. Here the imagery that contained in this poem :

- Visual imagery: dark
- Tactile imagery : A slim door hit in the head
- Light/dark imagery: "room in the dark " vs "a slim door."
- Man-made imagery: room, door

The poem is 72 words long. Only 12 of the 108 words include more than one syllable. To put it

another way, this poetry is primarily made up of monosyllabic words. Monosyllabic words serve to keep the poetry moving along, and they also make it appear simpler than it is. We can see that "The Door in the Dark" is a straightforward poem with a straightforward term, but it contains deeper and more complicated themes. There are 74-word types in which 'the' is a referential article that is used twice to draw the reader's attention to specific ideas. The word 'and' appears twice in the poem to represent the writer's mind's plethora of ideas. The first-person pronoun 'I' is repeated twice, giving the poetry a subjective feel. Room, face, fingers, arm, arc, door, guard, head, native, simile, people, and objects are among the 12 nouns. These nouns are used to subtly portray various images and symbols. Going, reached, saved, neglected, lace, got, hit, had, used, and pair are the 12 verbs. This is utilized to show whether the speaker's condition or movement and conduct are correct. The adjectives dark, thin, and hard are used to make a strong effect on readers and to stress the poem's main themes.

Syntax Analysis

From the beginning till the end, the whole poem is linked and there is a constant connection between all parts of the poem. All the sentences are linked, and the poem moves smoothly carrying its theme and ideas in a flow. It starts from one point and then referring to it, connects all other concepts.

*In going from room to room in the dark,
I reached out blindly to save my face,
But neglected, however lightly, to lace
My fingers and close my arms in an arc.
A slim door got in past my guard,
And hit me a blow in the head so hard
I had my native simile jarred.
So people and things don't pair any more
With what they used to pair with before.*

The speaker says in the first line, "In walking from room to room in the dark," which is not a complete sentence because there is no verb. The second line, 'I stretched out blindly to rescue my face,' is a clear sentence since it includes I as a subject, 'reached out' as a verb that indicates something happened in the past due to the use of verb 2 in 'reached,' and my face as the object that needs to be saved. 'But neglected, however lightly, to lace,' says the third sentence, which is unclear because there is no verb. When we move a line to the previous line, though. It demonstrates that they are both linked to one another. 'My fingers and close my arms in an arc,' says the fourth line. Give the current precise time when the speaker wants to 'close' his arm, which has been neglected since the use of verb 2. 'A slim door slipped in past my guard, And dealt me a smack in the skull so hard,' says the fifth and sixth lines, implying that it is set in the past. That indicates that the door had already passed him by and collided with his head. 'I had my native simile jolted,' says the next line. The use of the past verb 'had'

indicates that after experiencing the prior incident, he has now learned that he can come to a conclusion. And he's already reached the conclusion indicated in the last two lines. 'As a result, people and things no longer pair with what they used to pair with.' Which, by utilizing the present tense, indicates that it is a statement he has previously stated. And the usage of the word 'used to' here emphasizes the notion that he may have been associated with some 'things' in the past, but he is no longer doing so.

Semantics Analysis

Semantic deals with the study of meaning in which this poem titled "The Door in The Dark" explores the theme of difficulties in life as we can see from the poem.

*In going from room to room in the dark,
I reached out blindly to save my face,
But neglected, however lightly, to lace
My fingers and close my arms in an arc.
A slim door got in past my guard,
And hit me a blow in the head so hard
I had my native simile jarred.
So people and things don't pair any more
With what they used to pair with before.*

The speaker is drawn to the dark reality of life, which represent the difficulties and obstacles, but the speaker does not only accept his destiny, but he tries so hard to struggle and escape from all the difficulties. The speaker is drawn so deep by all the obstacles he faced but then he also given chances to flip back the condition, yet he gets failure. Looking at it line by line is a great way to get submerged in its meaning. The whole poem describing the someone's distress in which he is struggling to overcome the affliction that he faced.

The poet begins the poem by stating a condition, "In walking from room to room in the dark," as the poet phrased it. We can deduct from this that the speaker has encountered a wide range of challenges. He may frequently confront challenges in his life as a result of the 'room to room' symbolizing hurdles and the 'black' symbolizing negative impulses. The second phrase reads, "I reached out blindly to save my face," implying that the speakers are attempting to overcome all hurdles. The word 'blindly' is used to emphasize how difficult his efforts are. And the word 'face' represents himself, in which he is desperately attempting to save himself from negativity. "But omitted, however softly, to intertwine My fingers and close my arms in an arc," says the third line, which is also related to the fourth line. Which indicates that all of his efforts were futile because the word 'neglected' elicited no response, prompting him to "close his arm" in order to reduce his spirit. The next line, which says that the speaker gets hit by the "door," which signifies the chance, makes it further clear that he is lowering his spirits (again). His chances are continuously letting him down. As a result, he came to the conclusion that luck was not on his side, as stated in the last two

lines, "So people and things don't pair with what they used to pair with before." The luck is symbolized by "items."

4. CONCLUSION

The poem 'The Door in the Dark,' written by Robert Frost, depicts the lives of an ordinary person. During his voyage from one dark room to the next, the speaker tries to find a way to glimpse the light so that he can save himself. However, the speaker never receives assistance from anyone. He has been abandoned. As a result, he tries to accept his situation. But one day, he discovers a light that enters his dark room successfully, but when he tries to obtain it, he fails. It has vanished. The one item he can think of that might be able to aid him is never found. He is enraged, and he realizes that there will never be an opportunity to flee. Even if he's almost there, he'll never get there. As a human being, we will always face with two things. They are positivity and negativity. We cannot avoid that negativity will be always haunting us. Sadness, failure, obstacles, death are some of the examples of the negativity which may be found by us as a human being. In this poem, the speaker emphasizing that life is not about the happiness only. There are numerous factors that can cause you to fail. Starting with entering the "black room," we will encounter any situation in which we are "neglected," whether by society or by the luck that God may bestow despite our best efforts, there is still the possibility of being "neglected." Not only pointed about the sadness, but it also gives a little hope as what life usually does. Chances exist at all times. But, once again, this poem slaps us in the face as readers as it reminds us that chances do not always succeed. It is possible to fail. Whatever the case may be. The conflict in this poetry is eerily similar to reality itself. Failure-related conflict is well-known in society. The speaker asserts that not everything that is difficult will turn out to be as good as we had hoped. As the speaker states in the poem's two final lines, we cannot rely solely on luck because it may disappoint us.

5. REFERENCES

- Bradford, R. (2005). *Stylistics*. New York. Routledge.
- Frost, Robert. (1950). *The Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. Limited Editions Club.
- Ichwan Setiawan. (2014). *Symbols in Robert Frost's Poem*. Unpublished Thesis. UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim.
- Leech, G. (1981). *Style in Fiction*. London: Longman
- Leech, Geoffrey. (2007). *An Introduction to English fictional prose 2nd edition*. Pearson
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2008. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Rosda.
- Riffaterre, Michael. 1978. *Semiotics of Poetry*. London: Indiana of University Press.
- Sarab Kadir Mugair. (2013). *A Stylistic Analysis of "I Have a Dream"*. International

- Journal of English and education. Vol.2. Issue 2. April 2013
- Short, Michael. (1996). *Exploring the language of poems, plays, and prose*. Routledge
- Simpson. (2004). *Stylistics*. New York: Routledge.
- Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wales, K. (2011). *A Dictionary of Stylistics 3rd edition*. New York: Routledge.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1975). *Stylistics and The Teaching of Literature*. London: Longman.