

# FIGURATIVE SPEECH ANALYSIS IN HELENA NATASHA'S POETRY "DREAMS SPELLED IN POETRY"

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## **Abstract**

Poetry, as a form of literary expression, plays a significant role in conveying complex emotions and abstract ideas through imaginative language. This study aims to analyze the use of figurative speech in Helena Natasha's poetry collection *Dreams Spelled in Poetry*, which explores themes of dreams, identity, and personal aspirations. The research is significant in providing a deeper understanding of how figurative language contributes to meaning-making and emotional expression in contemporary poetry. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach as proposed. The data were collected through documentation techniques focusing on poetic lines containing figurative expressions. The analysis is based on theory of figurative speech, which classifies twelve types of figurative language. The data were analyzed using the interactive model, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that 402 instances of figurative language were identified, with metaphor (68%) and personification (14%) as the most dominant types. These results indicate that Helena Natasha predominantly employs metaphorical and humanizing expressions to convey emotional depth and abstract meaning. The study concludes that figurative language plays a central role in enhancing the aesthetic and interpretative value of poetry.

**Keywords:** *Poetry, Figurative Language, Metaphor, Personification, Perrine*

## **1. Introduction**

Literature encompasses a diverse body of written works that serve as a means of artistic expression and cultural reflection. Traditionally, it includes imaginative creations such as novels, poems, and plays, distinguished by their aesthetic quality and the intentions of their authors. Beyond mere storytelling, literature captures the complexities of human experience, exploring themes of love, identity, and societal issues, while also functioning as a vehicle for social critique and cultural preservation. The term has evolved to include not only written texts but also oral traditions that

have been transcribed, highlighting its role in transmitting knowledge and entertainment across generations (Saddiah & Tarihoran, 2021). Ultimately, literature is a fundamental aspect of human communication that enriches our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Poetry is a unique form of literary art that employs aesthetic and often rhythmic qualities of language to evoke emotions and meanings beyond the literal (Ambalegin & Arianto, 2020). It transcends conventional boundaries of prose, utilizing various techniques such as imagery, symbolism, and figurative

speech to create vivid mental pictures and deep emotional responses. Poets carefully select words for their sound and meaning, crafting concise and impactful lines that resonate with readers. The rhythmic quality of poetry, whether through structured meter or free verse, adds a musical dimension that enhances its emotional power (Syamsu & Weda, 2023). Overall, poetry serves as a profound reflection of the human experience, capturing complex themes and feelings in a way that invites personal interpretation and connection.

"Dreams, Spelled in Poetry," published in 2021 by Helena Natasha, is a poignant poetry collection that explores the themes of dreams and aspirations, encapsulating the multifaceted journey individuals embark upon in pursuit of their goals. The book is thoughtfully divided into three sections: "The Call," "Dreaming," and "Living," which correspond to different phases of the dream-chasing experience. Through these sections, Natasha invites readers to reflect on the emotional and psychological landscapes that accompany the pursuit of one's ambitions, addressing the excitement, challenges, and transformations that occur along the way (Safira, 2022).

The collection particularly resonates with young individuals, especially teenagers and young women, who often experience a unique set of challenges while navigating their aspirations. Natasha's poems delve into the complexities of self-doubt, fear, and uncertainty that frequently accompany the journey of realising dreams. By giving voice to these sentiments, the poems create a relatable space for readers, encouraging them to confront and embrace their struggles as they seek to define and achieve their aspirations. This focus on the emotional depth of the dream-chasing experience fosters a

connection between the poet and her audience (Natasha, 2021).

Despite its strengths, "Dreams, Spelled in Poetry" has received mixed reviews on platforms like Goodreads (Safira, 2022). Many readers appreciate the book's exploration of universal themes and the emotional resonance of Natasha's writing. However, some critics highlight the absence of illustrations and the simplicity of the book's design, which may detract from the overall reading experience. Nonetheless, the collection serves as a meaningful reflection on the emotional landscape of youth, offering insights into the pursuit of dreams and the various hurdles that come with it, ultimately providing a source of inspiration and connection for those navigating similar journeys.

Natasha, a poet, a dreamer, and a cat lover from Jakarta, Indonesia, is known for being the first (and only) writer in her family (Natasha, 2021). Other professions were initially pursued by her, only to discover her true desire was writing. Her writing career was built from her bedroom, and she was later discovered by a publisher through her Instagram account. Three poetry books have been written by her: 1. *Love, Spelled in Poetry* (2019), 2. *Dreams, Spelled in Poetry* (2021), 3. *Chances, Spelled in Poetry* (2024). When not writing books, stories from couples are listened to by her to create bespoke wedding vows, love letters, and poems.

## 2. Literature Review

This study adopts Laurence Perrine's theory of figurative speech as the primary analytical foundation, particularly as presented in *Sound and Sense* (2017). Perrine defines figurative language as a form of expression that goes beyond literal meaning to convey ideas, emotions, and imagery in a more imaginative and impactful way. Within this framework, this study focuses

specifically on selected types of figurative speech that are most relevant to poetry analysis, namely metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism. These elements are considered central because they frequently appear in poetic texts and play a significant role in shaping meaning and aesthetic effect. By narrowing the scope to these dominant categories, the analysis becomes more focused and aligned with the objectives of this study. This study includes Rizqiyah Safira's 2022 thesis, "Conceptual Metaphor Analysis in the Dreams, Spelled in Poetry," the use of metaphors in Helena Natasha's poetry collection was explored, with a specific focus on the theme "The Call." A descriptive qualitative method was employed by Safira, drawing upon the theories of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and Kovecses (2007) to identify and analyse the metaphors. The dominant metaphor used by Natasha was revealed to be the ontological metaphor, which conceptualises her experience with inanimate objects. Two key concepts that shape the reality of 'life' in Natasha's poetry were further identified: Ambition Is Fire/Light and Life Is Journey. While Safira's research focuses on conceptual metaphor, the present study differs by concentrating on various types of figurative speech based on Perrine's classification to provide a broader stylistic analysis of the poems. (Safira, 2022).

Next, the paper by Dita Ainul Nirmawati and Vera Kristiana, published in August 2022, examines the figurative speech in Mark Twain's novel "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," aiming to analyse its types and significance within the narrative. It identifies ten types of Figurative Speech—simile, personification, metaphor, synecdoche, allegory, paradox, metonymy, hyperbole, symbol,

understatement, and irony—highlighting personification and hyperbole as the most common. Using a qualitative research methodology, the authors conducted a detailed analysis of the text to enhance understanding of the characters and engage readers more effectively. Although their research highlights the richness of figurative speech in prose, the present study differs in its focus on poetry, where figurative language tends to be more condensed, symbolic, and emotionally expressive. (Nirmawati & Kristiana, 2022).

Laurence Perrine's concept of Figurative Speech, as articulated in *Sound and Sense* (2017), is encapsulated within a method of expression that transcends the literal meanings of words. By figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, and personifications, vivid imagery is created, deep emotions are evoked, and complex ideas are presented more imaginatively and compellingly by writers. For instance, the feeling of losing precious moments is subtly conveyed by a metaphor like "time is a thief," without it being explicitly stated. The reader's experience is enriched by figurative speech, allowing for deeper interpretation and engagement with the text, thus enhancing the overall impact of the literature (Perrine, 2017).

Particular importance is placed on this type of language in poetry and literature, where the goal often extends beyond mere communication to the expression of intricate thoughts and emotions (Perrine, 2017). Scenes are crafted and feelings are conveyed through the creative use of figurative speech, which might be challenging to describe with straightforward, literal language. The dramatisation of a situation is achieved by a hyperbolic phrase like "My blood keeps flowing like a river," creating a strong visual and emotional effect. Not only is the text

embellished by such language, but readers are also invited to explore the underlying meanings and emotions, making the literary work more resonant and memorable (Hutauruk, 2019).

Perrine identifies twelve types of Figurative Speech, which include: Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Apostrophe, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Symbol, Allegory, Paradox, Hyperbole (Overstatement), Understatement, and Irony (Perrine, 2017). Figurative language enriches literary expression by conveying meaning through creative and symbolic forms. According to Perrine (2017), there are twelve major types of figurative speech. Simile compares two different things using words like *as* or *like*, creating vivid imagery (Anggraini et al., 2022). Metaphor, unlike simile, implies comparison by directly identifying one thing with another, enhancing depth and imagination (Monny, 2023). Personification attributes human traits to nonhuman entities, fostering empathy and emotional resonance (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Apostrophe addresses absent or nonhuman entities as though they were present, intensifying emotional expression and engagement (Putri et al., 2022). Synecdoche substitutes a part for the whole or vice versa, offering concise yet powerful representation (Sandy et al., 2021), while Metonymy uses something closely related to stand for the actual object or idea, adding richness and association (Rejeki et al., 2022). Symbol represents deeper meanings beyond the literal, inviting multiple interpretations and emotional depth (Anggiamurni, 2020). Allegory conveys dual meaning—surface and deeper—allowing readers to explore moral or political messages beneath the narrative (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018). Paradox reveals truth through apparent contradiction, encouraging reflection and critical thinking (Swarniti, 2022).

Hyperbole emphasizes ideas through deliberate exaggeration for dramatic or emotional effect (Wibisono & Widodo, 2019), whereas Understatement deliberately minimizes reality to evoke irony or subtlety (Sandy et al., 2021). Lastly, Irony highlights the contrast between expectation and reality, enriching literary works with humour, critique, or revelation (Leech, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). Altogether, these devices function as essential stylistic tools enabling poets to communicate complex emotions, ideas, and imagery creatively and effectively.

By adopting Perrine's framework in a more selective manner, this study emphasizes how specific types of figurative language function within Helena Natasha's poetry to convey meaning, emotion, and thematic depth. This focused theoretical approach ensures that the analysis remains coherent, relevant, and directly connected to the research objectives

### 3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach as proposed by (John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell 2018) to identify and analyze types of figurative speech in Helena Natasha's poetry collection *Dreams Spelled in Poetry*. The data consist of selected poetic lines containing figurative expressions, which were collected using documentation techniques as suggested by (Sugiyono 2019).

The data analysis applied the interactive model of analysis introduced by (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña 2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In analyzing the figurative expressions, this study adopts (Laurence Perrine's 2017) theory of figurative language, focusing on selected types such as metaphor,

simile, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism. Contextual interpretation was also applied to examine the meaning and function of each figurative expression within the poems.

Furthermore, the data were categorized based on Perrine’s classification and interpreted to reveal their stylistic and emotional impact. The findings are presented descriptively to illustrate how Helena Natasha’s poetic style conveys imagery and emotion through the use of figurative language.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Result

The results of this study present the distribution of figurative speech types found in Helena Natasha’s poetry collection *Dreams Spelled in Poetry*. The analysis is based on Laurence Perrine’s (2017) classification of figurative language, focusing on the frequency and percentage of each type identified in the data. A total of 402 instances of figurative expressions were found across the selected poems.

Table 1 illustrates the types of figurative language and their occurrences

**Table 1. Kinds of Figurative Language and Occurrences Found in Endless Love Lyric**

NO	FIGURATIVE SPEECH	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
1	Metaphor	281	68%
2	Simile	13	3%
3	Personification	60	14%
4	Symbol	10	2%
5	Paradox	17	4%
6	Apostrophe	2	0%
7	Synecdoche	0	0%
8	Metonymy	0	0%
9	Allegory	0	0%
10	Hyperbole	12	3%
11	Understatement	3	1%
12	Irony	4	1%
TOTAL		<b>402</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the result of the analysis, the writer concluded that the “DREAMS SPELLED IN THE POETRY” by Helena Natasha has FIGURATIVE

SPEECH in each stanza of the poetry, respectively: Metaphor 68%, Simile 3%, Personification 14%, Symbol 2%, Paradox 4%, Apostrophe 0%, Synecdoche 0%, Metonymy 0%, Allegory 0%, Hyperbole 3%, Understatement 1%, and Irony 1%. The FIGURATIVE SPEECH in poetry is dominated by Metaphor. When poetry is dominated by metaphor, it signifies a deep reliance on figurative language to convey complex ideas, emotions, and themes in a more imaginative and impactful manner. Metaphors allow poets to draw connections between disparate concepts, enabling readers to see familiar subjects in a new light and to evoke emotional responses that might be less accessible through literal language.

For instance, when a poet describes life as a "journey," they invite readers to consider the experiences, challenges, and growth associated with that journey, rather than merely stating facts about life. The author's intention in using metaphors is often to express nuanced feelings or abstract ideas that resonate on a personal level, encouraging readers to engage with the

text in a reflective and interpretive way. This technique not only enhances the aesthetic quality of the poem but also enriches its

thematic depth, allowing for multiple interpretations and a more profound

connection between the poet and the audience.

These types include:

**Metaphor:** An implicit comparison between two unlike things without using "like" or "as."

- 7 They're already waiting to be felt (3,55)
- 8 and my petals fall, serving their land (11,57)
- 9 This silence is building an invisible wall between us (5,65)

**Symbol:** Using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning.

**Table 1.1 Shows Some Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	They befriended the sea (3,3)
2	Their minds and hearts belonged to the ocean (8,3)
3	You could escape, take the costume off (9,7)
4	I live in stories (1,37)
5	I want more hands (4,39)
6	hands holding the stars (5,47)
7	The stars are made of broken glass (4,53)
8	We were each other's worlds (1,65)
9	I left my head in the clouds (15,82)
10	words spinning, grasping for a meaning (8,73)
11	The only way we can rewind and start over (6,135)

**Table 1.4 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE	PHASE
1	Count your breath, it might be taken soon (6,7)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
2	We are all sunflowers (1,57)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
3	thirsty for the light (2,57)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
4	leaving me to eat their shadows (7,39)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
5	before they become a tall dense forest (10,57)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
6	my time with family (4,71)	PHASE THREE: LIVING
7	the cold side of the bed (3,79)	PHASE THREE: LIVING

**Paradox:** A statement that appears contradictory but reveals a deeper truth

**Simile:** A direct comparison between two unlike things using "like" or "as."

**Table 1.2 Shows Some examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	Their feet-swift from riding the waves (5,3)
2	Count your breath, it might be taken soon (6,7)
3	with a rhythm that sounds like the beat of my heart (6,9)
4	Dreaming feels like boarding a magic carpet (1 & 2,47)
5	From afar, the stars glimmer like glitters (1 & 2,53)
6	your eyes dart around my face (7,59)
7	reality settles in like a wake-up call (2,79)

**Table 1.5 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE	PHASE
1	finding me (3,11)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
2	Why should I fall asleep when I could dream awake? (1&2,3)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
3	I want every possible thing for the cause (10 & 11,63)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
4	but it's only the beginning (10 & 11,63)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
5	Eventually, love leaves who it's dreaming in hope for everything (11,71)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
7	in hope for everything (11,71)	PHASE THREE: LIVING

**Apostrophe:** Addressing an absent or imaginary person or a personified abstraction.

**Personification:** Attributing human characteristics to nonhuman entities.

**Table 1.3 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	Their tongues could taste the storm in the air (6,3)
2	chasing the sunset chasers (13,3)
3	Feel the wind of freedom kissing your bare skin (10,7)
4	but keep hope on at all times (3,43)
5	But it's better to answer the call to adventure right away (6 & 7,45)
6	imagination shaping the clouds (4,47)

**Table 1.6 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE	PHASE
1	A warning for my past self (4,4)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
2	Thank you for everything (4,4)	PHASE ONE: THE CALL
3	Feel the wind of freedom kissing your bare skin (10,7)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
4	but keep hope on at all times (3,43)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
5	But it's better to answer the call to adventure right away (6 & 7,45)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
6	imagination shaping the clouds (4,47)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING

**Synecdoche:** A figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa.

**Table 1.7 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE	PHASE
1	A warning for my past self (4,4)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
2	Thank you for everything (4,4)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
3	Feel the wind of freedom kissing your bare skin (10,7)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
4	but keep hope on at all times (3,43)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
5	But it's better to answer the call to adventure right away (6 & 7,45)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING
6	imagination shaping the clouds (4,47)	PHASE TWO: DREAMING

**Tabel 1.12 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	as if no one would have me (13,23)
2	it's in your nature (11,24)
3	it's impossible (8,27)
4	you'd crave magic (18,54)

Metonymy: Substituting the name of one object for another closely related object.

**Tabel 1.8 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
	The findings reveal a clear stylistic tendency in Helena Natasha's poetry. The high concentration of metaphor and personification (82% combined)

Allegory: A narrative in which characters and events represent broader themes and concepts.

**Tabel 1.9 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
	interpetive, inviting readers to actively engage in meaning-making. The absence of figurative forms such as allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche further implies that the poet does not emphasize extended narrative symbolism or structural substitution but rather focuses on immediate emotional resonance and conceptual depth. Overall, these findings collectively support the conclusion that

Hyperbole (Overstatement): Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

**Tabel 1.10 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	I want to name every indescribable feeling (1,38)
2	a home for every furry soul who never feels at home (20,38)
3	I want to hold everything all at once (2,39)
4	You have a huge heart - big enough to replace the sun (4 & 5,54)
5	my everything - every single thing I have (11,71)
6	A stop for a break, a snack, a nap, a shop, and a bop (2,81)
7	a sentence that screams yes (5,89)

Understatement: Presenting something as less significant than it is.

**Tabel 1.11 Show Some Of Examples**

NO	POETRY IN THE LINE, PAGE
1	you're just getting started (3,49)
2	I'm still horrible at it but I'm dying to learn (6,105)
3	But, I breathe easily (19,150)

Irony: Expressing meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite.

**Discussion**

This section discusses the findings of the study by interpreting the distribution and function of figurative speech found in Helena Natasha's poetry collection *Dreams Spelled in Poetry*. The discussion aims to explain how the identified types of figurative language contribute to emotional expression and stylistic characteristics of the poems. The analysis is grounded in Laurence Perrine's (2017) theory, which emphasizes the role of figurative

language in enriching literary expression beyond literal meaning.

The findings show that metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative speech, accounting for 68% of the total data. This dominance indicates that Helena Natasha frequently uses implicit comparison to express abstract ideas such as dreams, identity, and life experiences. Metaphor allows the poet to transform intangible concepts into more concrete and relatable imagery. For example, expressions like “I live in stories” and “The stars are made of broken glass” illustrate how metaphor is used to construct deeper meaning and evoke emotional responses. This supports Perrine’s view that metaphor enhances imaginative engagement and interpretative depth in poetry.

Personification, as the second most dominant type (14%), reflects the poet’s tendency to attribute human characteristics to nonhuman entities. This technique creates emotional intimacy between the reader and the poetic subject. For instance, phrases such as “the wind of freedom kissing your bare skin” demonstrate how natural elements are humanized to intensify emotional resonance. The frequent use of personification suggests that the poet seeks to make abstract or distant experiences feel more immediate and personal.

Other types of figurative language, such as paradox, simile, and hyperbole, appear in smaller proportions. The limited use of simile (3%) indicates that the poet prefers implicit comparison (metaphor) rather than explicit comparison using “like” or “as.” Similarly, the relatively low occurrence of hyperbole suggests that exaggeration is not a primary stylistic device in this poetry collection. Paradox, although less frequent, contributes to expressing complex and sometimes contradictory ideas, reflecting the inner conflicts

associated with dreams and personal growth.

Meanwhile, figurative forms such as synecdoche, metonymy, and allegory are not found in the data. This absence indicates that Helena Natasha does not rely on structural substitution or extended narrative symbolism. Instead, her poetic style emphasizes immediate, concise, and emotionally driven expressions. The minimal presence of irony, understatement, and apostrophe further supports the idea that the poems focus more on sincerity and emotional clarity rather than indirect critique or rhetorical complexity.

Overall, the findings suggest a clear stylistic tendency in Helena Natasha’s poetry. The dominance of metaphor and personification demonstrates that the poet primarily relies on imaginative and symbolic language to convey meaning. This tendency reflects a poetic style that prioritizes emotional depth, personal reflection, and interpretative engagement. In line with Perrine’s theory, figurative language in this collection functions not only as a stylistic ornament but also as a fundamental tool for expressing complex human experiences.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that figurative speech plays a significant role in shaping meaning and emotional expression in Helena Natasha’s poetry collection *Dreams Spelled in Poetry*. A total of 402 instances of figurative language were identified, with metaphor (68%) and personification (14%) emerging as the most dominant types. These findings indicate a strong stylistic tendency toward metaphorical and humanizing expressions, which enable the poet to convey abstract ideas such as dreams, identity, and emotional experiences in a more imaginative and impactful way. The uneven distribution

of figurative types also shows that not all categories are consistently used, suggesting that the poet selectively employs certain devices to achieve specific aesthetic and thematic effects. Overall, the study demonstrates that figurative language functions as a central tool in expressing complexity, depth, and emotional nuance in Natasha's poetry.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis is limited to a selected number of poems from the collection, which may not fully represent the entirety of Helena Natasha's poetic style. Second, the study focuses only on Perrine's classification of figurative language, without incorporating other theoretical perspectives that could provide deeper interpretative insights. Third, the analysis relies on qualitative interpretation, which may involve a degree of subjectivity in identifying and categorizing figurative expressions. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to expand the scope of data by analyzing more poems or comparing multiple poetry collections. Additionally, applying different theoretical frameworks—such as conceptual metaphor theory or stylistic analysis—could enrich the findings. Further studies may also explore reader-response perspectives to understand how figurative language is interpreted by different audiences, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of poetic meaning and impact.

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