

## FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD

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### Article History

Received : 10-06-2023

Revised : 20-06-2023

Accepted : 10-07-2023

Published : 24-07-2023

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### No. Contact:

### Cite This Article:

**Abstract:** *The readers of literary works are not limited by age and background. Not only grown-up adults, but children also have their own literature texts. This research discussed the figures of speech in one of the children's literatures, namely a fairy tale. The purposes of this research are to find the figures of speech in the tale, classify them into categories, and analyze their implementation in the story. Since the data and analysis of this research are in the form of words, this research used a qualitative method. The source of the data is a famous fairy tale by Charles Perrault entitled The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood. The results show there are thirty-one figures of speech that cover two metaphors, three similes, four synecdoches, eleven personifications, eight hyperboles, two meiosis or understatements, and one paradox.*

**Keywords:** *figures of speech, figurative language, metaphors, literature, literary works*

### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.56127/jushpen.v2i2.804>

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is something we are all familiar with. From the past, present, and future, they are there at all times. As a matter of fact, practically everyone must have come into contact with literary works, either as authors or readers. Poetry, novels, short stories, prose, and dramas are some examples of these works.

When reading literary works, we often feel awe at the author's writing style, in addition to being fascinated by the topic or tale [1]. Readers of literary works are not limited by age or background. Even today, many adults and parents are starting to realize the importance of reading for their young children or relatives. Examples of children's literature include poetry and rhymes, myths, folktales, fables, epics, legends, or religious stories [2].

This research used one type of children's literature as its source of data, namely the folktale—specifically *fairy tale*. Some people tend to use the terms *fairy tale* and *folktale* interchangeably, when in fact, most folktales do not have any fairy characters in them. Therefore, experts categorize fairy tales under *magic tales*, which is a kind of folktale that has magical characters, such as fairies and the like [2]. The fairy tale used in this research is *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* by Charles Perrault.

There are ways to appreciate the beauty of literary works, one of which is by analyzing them. As Leech and Short mentioned in their book, "... examining the language of a literary text can be a means to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the writer's artistic achievement" [3]. The application of style of

speech is merely one of the many aspects that may be studied in the literature. As defined by Minderop, literature is artistic writing that expresses ideas, thoughts, experiences, hopes, and feelings in appealing language, and also includes ethical values and criticism [1]. The beauty of language style is often reflected in the use of interesting figures of speech.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to find the use of figures of speech in *The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods*, identify the types of figures of speech found, and analyze their implementation. To analyze the figures of speech, the researcher applied the theory proposed by Stephen J. Adams.

Adams divided figures into two types, i.e., *schemes* and *tropes*. Schemes are more closely related to the patterning of the physical language, such as meter, rhyme, and stanza. Meanwhile, tropes involve a change of meaning and concept. The current research focused only on the latter, which is tropes. Adams classified tropes into four groups: 1) metaphor and simile, 2) metonymy and synecdoche, 3) personification, and 4) irony (hyperbole, understatement) and paradox [4].

Some researches related to figures of speech or fairy tales have also been conducted previously. Sharofat carried out an analysis of a figure of speech in fairy tales. However, her focus of figure of speech is the metaphor, whilst the current research covers metaphor and simile, metonymy and synecdoche, personification, irony and paradox [5]. Rizkyani and Harmoko also conducted a study on figurative language. However, her source of data or the object of the research is a short story about an impoverished girl, while the current research uses *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* fairy tale [6]. Thus, even though similar topics have been carried out, the current research has its own novelty and uniqueness.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

As mentioned in the introduction section, the researcher analyzed the fairy tale using the theories of figures of speech proposed by Adams [4]. The focus of figures of speech in this research is the tropes or “figures of thought”. He classified these figures into four groups, namely

- Metaphor and simile,
- Metonymy and synecdoche,
- Personification, and
- Irony (hyperbole, understatement) and paradox.

### Metaphor and Simile

Of all other figures of speech, metaphor is the type that is the most widely known and talked about [7]. This makes some people loosely use the term for any figure of speech in general [4]. Adams stated that “metaphor refers specifically to an assertion that two things in some way similar are identical”.

That means, in implementing a metaphor, one uses the common meaning of a word or expression to describe another thing that is distinctly different but at a particular point has the same quality. For example, when someone says “*My sibling is a snail*”, he or she does not really mean that they are blood-related to a shelled gastropod. That person merely describes the sibling as very slow at doing something.

On the other hand, in a simile, one will compare two distinct things explicitly by asserting the word “like” or “as” [8], such as *your skin is as cold as ice*.

### Metonymy and Synecdoche

Metonymy, which means “a change of name”, means using an item (or idea) to represent another that it is closely or logically connected to. Not to be confused with metaphor, the relationship in metonymy is not about similarity as in metaphor, but more of common association [4]. For example, we often use the word *blood* to refer to *self-sacrifice*, or *cold shoulder* for *indifference*.

Going further, synecdoche is a type of metonymic association where a part is used in place of the whole, or a genus is used in place of a species, or vice versa [4]. For example, you just bumped into your old friend on a street and she said “I haven’t seen your nose in a while.” The word *nose* there is a synecdoche. Your friend used a part of you to refer to yourself as a whole.

### Personification

As the term suggests, personification is denoting that an inanimate thing possesses human qualities. Abrams elaborated personification as “in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept

is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings” [8]. For example, the sentence *the wind blows my hair* suggests as if the wind has the ability to blow like humans.

### Irony (Hyperbole, Understatement) and Paradox

Adams said that irony is fundamental to satire, to expressions of ridicule and rejection [4]. This means irony is the usage of expressions that has the opposite—or nearly opposite—meaning of what is literally said. For example, you were an hour late to an appointment with your friend, then your displeased friend curtly spoke, “Oh, wow, you’re so early!” The expression clearly means the opposite meaning with the intention to sneer.

Irony has two more specific forms, i.e., *hyperbole* and *understatement* (also called *meiosis*). Hyperbole is an exaggeration of what it actually is. For example, the expression of *I am so hungry that I could eat a horse*.

On the other hand, meiosis or understatement is a lessening of the true message. This can be used as politeness, such as when one does not want to be heard bragging. An example of this politeness is as simple as replying “It’s nothing, don’t mention it” when someone thanks you. However, meiosis can also involve negation when one does not want to sound rude. For example, *I wouldn’t mind some peace and quiet for a change*.

The last one, there is a paradox. A paradox tends to violate common sense, usually with a seemingly contradictory or impossible statement.

## RESEARCH METHODS

According to Bhattacharya, *methods* refer to the ways in which data collection occurs in research [9]. Since the data and analysis of this research are in the form of words, this research used a qualitative method [10]. The data in this research are gathered from the collecting and examining methods. Collecting means compiling the objects of the data, in this case, the figures of speech found in the fairy tale of *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*. After that, the data are examined using the applied theories.

This research used *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* story as its source of data. It is a fairy tale written by Charles Perrault in *Perrault’s Fairy Tales* book translated by A.E. Johnson, and published by Dover Publications, Inc. in 1969 [11]. The original French title of this tale is *La belle au bois dormant*.

In conducting this research, the researcher has done the following procedure:

1. Read *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* fairy tale carefully and thoroughly, so the researcher can grasp the story and the message completely.
2. Re-read the story once more, but this time, the researcher focused on the words, phrases, or other expressions that are figures of speech.
3. Marked down all the figures of speech found in the story as the data.
4. Classified the collected data into four groups of tropes suggested by Adams.
5. Analyzed the data based on the applied theory.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results of the Research

After collecting the data from *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* fairy tale, the researcher found 31 (thirty-one) figures of speech that cover all the four groups proposed by Adams. The details are as follows: five data of *metaphor and simile* that consist of two metaphors and three similes; four data of *metonymy and synecdoche* that consist of zero metonymy and four synecdoches; eleven *personifications*; eleven *irony (hyperbole and understatement)* and *paradox* that consist of zero irony, eight hyperboles, two understatements, and one paradox.

Table 1. Classification of the Data

No.	Figures of Speech	Number of Data
1.	<b>Metaphor and Simile</b>	
	Metaphor	2

	Simile	3
2.	<b>Metonymy and Synecdoche</b>	
	Metonymy	-
	Synecdoche	4
3.	<b>Personification</b>	11
4.	<b>Irony (Hyperbole and Understatement) and Paradox</b>	
	Irony	-
	Hyperbole	8
	Understatement or Meiosis	2
	Paradox	1
Total		<b>31</b>

Source: Primary data of the research

## DISCUSSION

The data found are all taken from the fairy tale of *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* by Charles Perrault. The main theories of figures of speech used to analyze in this section are those proposed by Adams. The researcher analyzed the data randomly that represent each trope or figure of speech.

### Datum of Metaphor

*The first, a daughter, was called “Dawn,” while the second, a boy, was named “Day,” because he seemed even more beautiful than his sister* (p. 16).

Both data of metaphor are contained in this sentence. As shown above, the princess and the prince named their two children with metaphors. The first one is named *Dawn* to show the similarity of the beauty of dawn and their daughter. Meanwhile, the second child, a son, is named *Day* which is also a metaphor for the brightness and beauty of a day.

### Datum of Simile

*... the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale ...* (p. 4)

The context of the datum above is each of the seven invited fairies started to bestow pleasant traits and characters on the princess, and the fifth fairy wishes her to be able to *sing like a nightingale*. That wish contains a simile, as the definition of simile is comparing two things using the word *as* or *like*. In addition, the nightingale is a kind of bird that is well-known for its melodious voice.

### Datum of Synecdoche

*Reclining upon a bed, the curtains of which on every side were drawn back, was a princess of seemingly some fifteen or sixteen summers, whose radiant beauty had an almost unearthly luster* (p. 13).

In the scene above, the prince first set foot in an abandoned palace in the middle of a forest covered with thorny trees that are difficult to pass. When he finally entered a room plastered with gold, he noticed a sleeping princess that looked very young, with an approximate age of fifteen or sixteen years. However, to add an aesthetic element to the story, the writer used the synecdoche *summers* to refer to years. *Summers* technically last only around three months, but in the hemisphere where the princess lived, every year would have its summer. Therefore, the author implemented a part of a year, i.e., summer, to refer to the whole year, which is also known as a synecdoche.

### Datum of Personification

*They passed into an apartment hung with mirrors, and were there served with supper by the stewards of the household, while **the fiddles and oboes played some old music and played it remarkably well**, considering they had not played at all for just upon a hundred years* (p. 15).

As the bolded part of the sentence shows, fiddles and oboes are inanimate objects. However, in the story, they are depicted to be able to play. This expression is an example of personification. Fiddles and oboes can produce sounds when played, but they cannot play themselves.

#### **Datum of Hyperbole**

*... the next, that she should have **the temper of an angel** ...* (p. 4).

The datum above is another gift bestowed by one of the good fairies. However, no matter how virtuous one's character is, he or she will not be as impeccable as an angel. Therefore, the gift blessed by the fairy is a form of hyperbole or exaggeration.

#### **Datum of Meiosis or Understatement**

*But just as all were sitting down to table an **aged fairy** was seen to enter ...* (p. 3).

The datum above tells a scene where suddenly the old evil fairy came to the ceremony without invitation. The author of the fairy tale used the word *aged* to describe the evil fairy as *very old*. This lessens the hideousness of the fairy in question. Since it is an understatement of what truly is, the datum above can be classified as meiosis.

#### **Datum of Paradox**

*The less there is of eloquence, the more there is of love* (p. 15).

The context in the above sentence is when the princess finally awoke and found her prince in front of her. After a few hours of conversing, none of the two expressed their feelings. Then the author stated that love is stronger when it is not spoken out loud. This sounds paradoxical, but love itself often repletes paradoxes.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

There are thirty-one figures of speech (tropes) contained in the fairy tale of *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* written by Charles Perrault [11]. However, not all of the figures are represented in the story. Only eight out of the ten figures implemented, which include two metaphors, three similes, four synecdoches, eleven personifications, eight hyperboles, two meiosis or understatements, and one paradox. Meanwhile, the other two figures that are not represented include metonymy and irony.

Studies that examine figures of speech are abundant. However, more people will still be intrigued to carry it since the scope is vast and there are many more to explore. For future researchers who are interested to conduct the same topic, the current researcher suggests covering not only the tropes but also the schemes. That way, the collection of references and literature will be more varied and useful for both fellow researcher or readers in general.

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