

## An Analysis of Figurative Language in Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'

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### Received:

29 February  
2024

### Revised:

25 April  
2024

### Accepted:

13 May  
2024

### ABSTRACT

Figurative language is one of intrinsic elements of a poem. The use of figurative language is intended to beautify expressions or sentences. The purpose of this research was to describe the types of figurative languages used by Thomas Gray in his poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive approach. The object of this research was Gray's poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. Documentation was the instrument in collecting the data. The documentation was taken from Gray's poem entitled 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. After reading the poem, the researcher selected figurative languages in all stanzas. Then, the researcher identified the types of figurative language and described the meaning. As the result, the researcher found that there were some figurative languages found in Gray's poem, namely personification (17 data), transferred epithet (1 datum), metonymy (2 data), onomatopoeia (1 datum), inversion (7 data), interrogation (2 data), hyperbole (2 data), and euphemism (4 data). From the data, personification was the figurative language that mostly found in the poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' Written by Thomas Gray.

**Keywords:** *Figurative Language; Poem; Meaning.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of symbols designed for the purpose of communication. It can be said that language is a tool that people use for communication. They use language to express their feelings, ideas, thoughts or opinions to others Lyons, (1984). In expressing feelings, ideas, thoughts or opinions, someone can use figurative language. The use of figurative language is intended to beautify expressions. Figurative languages are mostly used in literary works, such as drama, novel, poem, etc. In a poem, for example, a poet mostly used figurative languages in his poem. The purpose of using figurative languages in a poem is to beautify the language in the poem. On the other words, figurative languages are some techniques for comparing dissimilar objects to achieve effects beyond the range of literal language Beckson & Ganz, (1975). In this research, the researcher formulated a research question, namely, what are the types of figurative language used by Gray in his poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'? Therefore, the purpose of this research was to describe the types of

figurative language used by Thomas Gray in his poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'.

There were some researchers that conducted research on figurative language. They analyzed the use of figurative language in poems, songs, and novels. The first research was entitled 'An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Coelho's Novel Entitled *Alchemist*' Harya, (2016). She used a descriptive qualitative method. The purpose of her research was to describe the types of figurative language found in the novel. The results showed that there were 30 items of simile (42.9%), 27 items of personification (38.6%), 12 items of metaphor (17.1%), and 1 item of hyperbole (1.4%). The dominant type of figurative language in the novel was simile. The author of the novel used simile to explain circumstances, to describe the characters, to express emotion of the characters, and to make his writing more vivid and entertaining.

The second research was entitled 'Analysis of Figurative Language in "Easy on Me" Song Lyrics' Swarniti, (2022). It is qualitative research. The data source was song lyric of Adele's song 'Easy on Me'. The aim of this research was to classify and analyze the lyric of Adele's song 'Easy on Me' based on figurative language used. The researcher found that there were 4 data of personification in comparative figurative language; there were 3 data of hyperbole, 2 data of litotes, and 1 datum of paradox in contradictive figurative language; there were 1 datum of allusion, 2 data of ellipsis, 2 data of metonymy, and 8 data of symbol in correlative figurative language. It meant that this song lyric tried to use figurative language to express the feeling or idea imaginatively. In other words, this song lyric tried to create a special image and to bring out one's emotions.

The third research was entitled 'An Analysis of Figurative Language in Online Short Story Posted on the Jakarta Post' Wibisono & Widodo, (2019). It was a library-research. The purposes of this research were to find some kinds of figurative language used and to study the meaning of figurative language used in selected short story on online the Jakarta Post. The researcher found that there were personification, simile, symbol, and onomatopoeia in the short story. Personification is one of types of figurative language that mostly found in the short story posted on the Jakarta Post.

The fourth research was entitled 'Analysis of Figurative Language in Song Lyrics "Make It Right" and "Permission to Dance" by BTS' Agustina & Mustikawati, (2023). This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. The purpose of this research was to examine the kinds of figurative language and the meaning contained in the lyrics of the songs 'Make It Right' and 'Permission to Dance'. The researcher found that there were 5 types of figurative language in the songs, such as metaphor (4 data), simile (4 data), personification (3 data), hyperbole (2 data), and alliteration (1 datum). Metaphor and simile were most commonly used in the songs. The meanings of the two songs were very different. In the song 'Make It Right', BTS are telling the beginning of their career journey that not many people knew. Meanwhile, the song 'Permission to Dance' encourages fans to remain optimistic in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.

There are many previous studies related to figurative language. Some researchers are interested in analyzing figurative language in songs, such as An Analysis of

Figurative Language Used in the Lyric of I Wanna be Yours by Arctic Monkeys Awaliyah & Rinaepi, (2023), An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in the Lyric of "A Whole New World" by Zayn Malik and Zhavia Ward (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020), An Analysis of Figurative Language in the song Lyrics by Saif Adam Milana & Ard, (2020). Some researchers also analyzed figurative language in book, newspaper, and magazine, such as An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Mark Manson's Book Entitled "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life" Maulidia, (2022), An Analysis of Figurative Language in Views (Opinion Column) of Online Padang Ekspres Newspaper Nurhaida & Marlina, (2017), An Analysis of Figurative Language in the Times Magazine Advertisement Dewi, (2010). The object of figurative language analysis mostly taken by researchers is poetry, such as An Analysis of Figurative Language in Selected Hardy's Poems Sandy et al., (2021), An Analysis of Figurative Language on the Poems Entitled 'Classic Poetry Series' by William Blake Padang & Dameria, (2020).

From those previous studies above, it could be seen that the researchers only showed the types of figurative language found in their research objects and also mentioned the data of figurative language found in their research objects. However, in this research, the researcher not only described the types of figurative language found in Gray's poem entitled 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', but also analyzed the Gray's reason of using a certain dominant type of figurative language in his poem. By knowing his reason, the reader can easily comprehend the meaning and the intention of Thomas Gray in his poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'.

### **Definition and Types of Figurative Language**

Figurative language is an expressive use of language where words are used in a non literal way to suggest illuminating comparisons and resemblances Crystal, (1991). Figurative language is also a form of expression (as simile and metaphor) used to convey meaning or heightened effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener Encyclopedia, (1995). Figurative language or figure of speech can be classified into five categories as follows:

1. Figures of resemblance (simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism)
2. Figures of emphasis (hyperbole, litotes, antithesis, climax, paradox, oxymoron)
3. Figures of sound (alliteration, onomatopoeia)
4. Verbal games (pun)
5. Errors (malapropism, periphrasis, and spoonerism)

Furthermore, figurative language can be defined as a conspicuous departure from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect (Abrams & Harpham, 2013). They also divide figurative language into two classes, namely:

1. Figures of thought or tropes in which words or phrases are used in a way that effects a conspicuous change in what we take to be their standard meaning. The standard meaning, as opposed to its meaning in the figurative use, is called the literal meaning.
2. Figures of speech or rhetorical figures or schemes in which the departure from standard usage is not primarily in the meaning of the words but in the order or syntactical pattern of the words.

George Puttenham (as quoted by Childs & Fowler, (2006) also defines figurative speech as a novelty of language evidently (and yet not absurdly) estranged from the ordinary habit and manner of our daily talk and writing, and figure itself is a certain lively or good grace set upon words, speeches, and sentences to some purpose and not in vain, giving them ornament or efficacy by many manner of alterations in shape, in sound, and also in sense, sometime by way of surplusage, sometime by defect, sometime by disorder, or mutation, and also by putting into our speeches more pith and substance, subtlety, quickness, efficacy, or moderation, in this or that sort tuning and tempering them, by amplification, abridgement, opening, closing, enforcing, meekening, or otherwise disposing them to the best purpose.

Meanwhile, in Bahasa Indonesia, figurative language (figure of speech) is known as *majas*. *Majas* can be divided into four main categories Keraf, (1991), such as:

1. *Perbandingan* (comparison), for example personification, metaphor, euphemism, allegory, hyperbole, litotes
2. *Sindiran* (allusion), for example irony, sarcasm
3. *Penegasan* (affirmation), for example pleonasm, repetition, parallelism
4. *Pertentangan* (opposition), for example antithesis, paradox

Furthermore, a figure of speech can be defined as a departure from the ordinary form of expression, or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect Wren & Martin, (1990). The definition means that a figure of speech is used to produce a greater effect for readers and to beautify an expression as well. Figures of speech can be classified as follows:

1. Those based on Resemblance, such as Simile, Metaphor, Personification, and Apostrophe
2. Those based on Contrast, such as Antithesis and Epigram
3. Those based on Association, such as Metonymy and Synecdoche
4. Those depending on Construction, such as Climax and Anticlimax

The explanation of some types of figures of speech is described as follows:

1. Simile

Simile is made between two objects of different kinds which have however at least one point in common. Simile is usually introduced by such words as 'like', 'as', or 'so', for example:

- a. He is as strong as a lion.
- b. He fought like a lion.
- c. How far that little candle throws his beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

2. Metaphor

Metaphor is similar to Simile. However, metaphor does not use 'like', 'as', or 'so', for example:

- a. He is the lion of the battle.
- b. Life is a dream.

3. Personification (Prosopopoeia)

In personification, inanimate objects and abstract notions are spoken of as having life and intelligence, for example:

- a. The storm attacked the town with great rage.
- b. The earth thirsts for rain.
- c. Death lays his icy hand on kings.

4. Apostrophe

Apostrophe is a direct address to the dead, to the absent, or to a personified object or idea. It is a special form of personification, for example:

- a. Come back to me, dear Cleopatra, in the pride of thy beauty.
- b. O Death, the poor man's friend and the best.

5. Euphemism

Euphemism consists in the description of a disagreeable thing by an agreeable name. On the other hand, euphemism is a figure of speech that uses polite expressions with the aim of not offending people, for example:

- a. He has fallen asleep (he is dead).
- b. You are telling me a fairy tale (you are a liar).

6. Antithesis

In antithesis, a striking opposition or contrast of words or sentiments is made in the same sentence. It is employed to secure emphasis, for example:

- a. Man proposes, God disposes.
- b. To err is human, to forgive is divine.

7. Oxymoron

Oxymoron is a special form of antithesis, whereby two contradictory qualities are predicted at once of the same thing, for example:

- a. He is an honorable villain.
- b. She accepted it as the kind cruelty of the surgeon's knife.

8. Epigram

Epigram is proverbs that have hidden meanings, for example:

- a. Familiarity breeds contempt.
- b. A gift is never little.

#### 9. Irony

Irony is a mode of speech in which the real meaning is exactly the opposite of that which is literally conveyed. On the other hand, Irony is a figure of speech that uses two different words with an intended meaning (Leech, 1981), for example:

- a. What a fine friend to forsake others in trouble.
- b. I fear I wrong with the honorable men whose actions have put me into trouble.

#### 10. Litotes

In litotes, an affirmative is conveyed by negation of the opposite, the effect being to suggest a strong expression by means of a weaker. It is the opposite of hyperbole, for example:

- a. The man is no fool (very clever).
- b. I am not a little (greatly) surprised.

#### 11. Transferred Epithet

In this figure, an epithet is transferred from its proper word to another that is closely associated with it in the sentence, for example:

- a. He passed a sleepless night.
- b. The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.

#### 12. Paradox

Paradox is an apparent contradiction that is nevertheless somehow true (Perrine, 1982), for example:

- a. The child is the father of man.
- b. More haste, less speed.

#### 13. Metonymy

In metonymy (a change of name), an object is designated by the name of something which is generally associated with it, for example:

- a. The pen is mightier than the sword.
- b. My purse is exhausted.

#### 14. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is divided into two types, namely:

- a. *pars pro toto* (a part used to designate the whole), for example 'In the tournament of badminton, Taufik Hidayat won after defeating Lin Dan'
- b. *totem pro parte* (the whole used to designate a part), for example 'In the tournament of badminton, Indonesia won after defeating China'.

### 15. Interrogation

Interrogation is the asking of a question not for the sake of getting an answer, but to put a point more effectively. It is also known as rhetorical question because a question is asked merely for the sake of rhetorical effect, for example:

- a. Can flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?
- b. Am I my brother's keeper?

### 16. Exclamation

Exclamation is used to draw greater attention, for example:

- a. What a piece of work is man!
- b. How are the mighty fallen!

### 17. Climax

Climax is the arrangement of a series of ideas in the order of increasing importance, for example:

- a. I came, I saw, I conquered
- b. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties!  
In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god!

### 18. Anticlimax

Anticlimax is the opposite of climax, a sudden descent from higher to lower. It is chiefly used for the purpose of satire or ridicule, for example:

- a. And thou, Dalhousie, the great god of war, Lieutenant-Colonel to the Earl of Mar.
- b. Pride goeth forth on horseback, grand and gay, but cometh back on foot, and begs its way.

### 19. Hyperbole

Hyperbole (overstatement) is a figurative language that contains exaggeration element about something (Potter, 1967), for example:

- a. He would draw the stage with tears.
- b. If the river were dry, I am able to fill it with tears.

### 20. Tautology

Tautology is a redundant statement, for example 'He dwelt in a lonely isolation'.

### 21. Pun

Pun is a figure of speech that contains words play, for example 'Is life worth living? That depends upon liver'.

### 22. Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of similar letters or syllables at the beginning of two or more words, for example 'Fair fowls have feathers fair'.

### 23. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is verbal imitation of natural sounds (Klarer, 1998), for example 'The bull bellowed'.

### 24. Inversion

Inversion is a reversing subject and predicate in a sentence, for example:

- a. Were I rich, I would buy an expensive car. (If I were rich, I would buy an expensive car)
- b. Here comes the teacher. (The teacher comes here)

In making literary works, especially poem, the poets use figurative languages. However, not all types of figurative language, as mentioned above, are used by poets. The poets usually use some types of figurative language in their poems because they relate the types of figurative language to the background of their poems. Therefore, in this research finding, the researcher only described some types of figurative language found in Gray's poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'.

### A Short Biography of Thomas Gray

Thomas Gray was born on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1716 at 41 Cornhill, London, near St. Michael's Church. He was the fifth child of twelve children born to Dorothy (1685-1753) and Philip Gray (1676-1741). From 1725 to 1734 Thomas Gray attended Eton College, located opposite Windsor Castle on the other side of the Thames. Thomas Gray was a studious and literary boy and he flourished at Eton. Thomas Gray was a famous English poet. Around 1745, Gray embarked on a long meditative elegy in the tradition of the Retirement Poem, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. It was composed over a long period of time and it was probably taken up again in the winter of 1749, upon the death of his aunt Mary. The poem, though certainly inspired the deaths both of West and of his aunt, in time turned into a meditation on and lament for the inevitable fate of all human beings. This Gray's poem is one of the famous English poems. The poem shows the tension and synthesis between Classicist and Romantic tendencies, and remained influential for generations to come Huber, (2023). Here is the Gray's poem Poetry Foundation, (2024).

### *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;



Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,  
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
     Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
     Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
     Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;  
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
     And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
     The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
 Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,  
     And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
     The little tyrant of his fields withstood;  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
     Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,  
     The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
     And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone  
     Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
     And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
     To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
     With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
     Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
     They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,  
     Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
     Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply:  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech  
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,  
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,  
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,  
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array  
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.  
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,  
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

## THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth  
 A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.  
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,  
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:  
 He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,  
 He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose)  
 The bosom of his Father and his God.*

## METHOD

In this research, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques, such as survey, interview, questionnaire, and qualitative research is a research study that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, and materials Fraenkel & Wallen, (1993). Qualitative approach is also used to explore and understand the meaning of an object Creswell, (2003). Documentation was the instrument in collecting the data. The documentation was taken from Gray's poem entitled 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. There were some steps in analyzing the data. First, the researcher read the poem. Second, the researcher classified the sentences that contain figurative languages. Third, the researcher described the reason why the sentences belong to a certain type of figurative language. Fourth, the researcher concluded the data that had been analyzed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were some figurative languages found in Gray's poem. They were as follows:

### 1. Personification (17 data)

Personification describes inanimate objects and abstract notions are spoken of as having life and intelligence. In the following examples, it can be found in the underlined words that inanimate object and abstract notions are spoken of as having life.

- a. The curfew tolls the knell of parting day (stanza 1, line 1)
- b. And all the air solemn stillness holds (stanza 2 line 2)
- c. And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds (stanza 2, line 4)

- d. Let not Ambition mock their useful toil (stanza 8, line 1)
- e. Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile (stanza 8, line 3)
- f. The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r, (stanza 9, line 1-4)

And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

Awaits alike th' inevitable hour

The paths of glory lead but to the grave

- g. The rod of empire might have swayed (stanza 12, line 3-4)

Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre

- h. But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page (stanza 13, line 1-4)

Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll

Chill Penury repress'd their noble age.

And froze the genial current of the soul

- i. The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide, (stanza 18, line 1-4)

To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride

With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

- j. And many a holy text around she strews, (stanza 21, line 3-4)

That teach the rustic moralist to die

- k. Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth, (stanza 30, line 3-4)

And Melancholy mark'd him for her own

- l. The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn, (stanza 5, line 1-4)

The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

- m. The pealing anthem swells the note of praise (stanza 10, line 4)

- n. Their growing virtues, but their crimes cinfm'd; (stanza 17, line 2-4)

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,

And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

- o. Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse (stanza 21, line 1)

- p. And many a holy text around she strews, (stanza 21, line 3-4)

That teach the rustic moralist to die.

q. Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate (stanza 24, line 4)

## 2. Transferred epithet (1 datum)

The plowman homeward plods his weary way (stanza 1, line 3)

In this figure of speech, a certain word is transferred from its proper word to another that is closely associated with it in a sentence. In the above example, the word 'weary' is transferred from its proper word 'plowman' into another word 'way'.

## 3. Metonymy (2 data)

Metonymy is a change of name of an object which is associated with it, such as follows:

a. Molest her ancient solitary reign (stanza 3, line 4)

(her ancient solitary reign represents bird's nest)

b. And leaves the world to darkness and to me (stanza 1, line 4)

(darkness represents night)

## 4. Onomatopoeia (1 datum)

The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed (stanza 5, line 2)

Onomatopoeia uses words that imitate a sound. The word 'twittering' is the imitation of swallow's sound.

## 5. Inversion (7 data)

In the following examples, it can be found the reversing of subject and predicate.

a. How jocund did they drive their team afield! (stanza 7, line 3-4)

(How jocund they drove their team afield!)

How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

(How the woods bowed beneath their sturdy stroke!)

b. Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest (stanza 15, line 3)

(Some mute inglorious Milton may rest here)

c. Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth (stanza 30, line 1)

(His head rests here upon the lap of Earth)

d. Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere (stanza 31, line 1)

(His bounty was large)

e. Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight (stanza 2, line 1)

(The glimm'ring landscape on the sight fades now)

f. Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield (stanza 7, line 1)

(The harvest did oft to their sickle yield)

- g. Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn (stanza 25, line 2)

(We have seen him oft at the peep of dawn)

#### 6. Interrogation (2 data)

In the following examples, the questions do not need answers. They are only used for rhetorical effect.

- a. Can storied urn or animated bust (stanza 11, line 1-2)

Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

- b. Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust, (stanza 11, line 3-4)

Or flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

#### 7. Hyperbole (2 data)

In hyperbole, a statement is made emphatic by overstatement. The following example shows overstatement.

- a. He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear (stanza 31, line 3)
- b. Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire (stanza 12, line 2)

#### 8. Euphemism (4 data)

Euphemism is a figure of speech that uses polite expressions with the aim of not offending people. In the poem, euphemism can be found as follows:

- a. Each in his narrow cell for ever laid (stanza 4, line 3)

(narrow cell means grave)

- b. No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed (stanza 5, line 4)

(lowly bed means graveyard)

- c. Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid (stanza 12, line 1)

(neglected spot means graveyard)

- d. Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth (stanza 30, line 1)

(lap of Earth means graveyard)

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard written by Thomas Gray consists of 32 stanzas (including The Epitaph). Elegy is one of types of poems that describes sadness. In this poem, Gray thinks about the dead villager buried in the graveyard. Gray contemplates the life of dead villagers when they were alive. Gray also reminds us, as the readers, that we will die one day. The death must come to all people in the world. In this poem, Gray describes the life condition of the villagers before their death. Their life was full of sadness. They lived in a poor condition. They did not have much wealth. They were hard workers when they were alive. They had to struggle every day in order to support their families. Because of their poverty, they were always ignored

by many people. Their services and efforts were never appreciated although they had contributed a lot to others. They were honest people and had a simple life. They had misfortune to be without money and social prestige or social status. The description is suitable with the critical analysis stated by Madhan, (2018) about Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. He says that Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* talks about the late forefathers of the hamlet in sympathetic tone. Gray starts his poem by highlighting the evening atmosphere of the village. Their lives are the reflection of their simplicity and humbleness. They are honest. However, they are often ignored because they have no social status although they have contributed to others. Hidayati et al., (2018) also say that portraits of life and the condition of the poor are very clearly illustrated in this poem. Poor people will never be considered in the society although they have talents or have contributed to others. The society assesses someone from his/her wealth or social status. Poor people always get unfair treatment in society.

Based on the findings above, Gray used many personifications in his poem. Gray used personification to give an effect to the readers. Personification is a figure of speech that uses inanimate objects or abstract concepts as having life and intelligence, for example the use of word 'Ambition'. In this poem, Gray wants to show the readers that the abstract concepts or inanimate objects can describe a situation that provides a deep sadness. Furthermore, the use of abstract concepts is more real to describe the actual situation in the world. Therefore, there were many personifications in this poem.

## CONCLUSION

Figurative language is one of intrinsic elements of a poem. Figurative language can be defined as a form of expression (as simile and metaphor) used to convey meaning or heightened effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener. In the poem '*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*' written by Thomas Gray, some figurative language can be found, namely personification (17 data), transferred epithet (1 datum), metonymy (2 data), onomatopoeia (1 datum), inversion (7 data), interrogation (2 data), hyperbole (2 data), and euphemism (4 data). From the data, personification was the figurative language that mostly found in the poem '*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*' Written by Thomas Gray. Gray used personification to give an effect to the readers. Personification is a figure of speech that uses inanimate objects or abstract concepts as having life and intelligence. The abstract concepts or inanimate objects can describe a situation that provides a deep sadness. Furthermore, the use of abstract concepts is more real to describe the actual situation in the world. Therefore, there were many personifications in this poem.

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