THE SEMANTIC DEVIATIONS OF *THE DYAK CHIEF* POEM BY ERWIN CLARKSON GARRETT

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ABSTRACT

Poetry is a literary genre that evolved throughout times, but features a common identity: deviations from linguistics norm to attain aesthetic value. One of such poems is Erwin Clarkson Garrett's *The Dyak* Chief. This research aims to identify and analyze the semantic deviations featured in the *The Dyak Chief* and how the deviants related to the narrative quality of the poem. The objective of this research is to answer two research questions that the researcher addressed: the types of semantic deviations and how they serve the meaning purpose of the poem. The present research is a qualitative study with stylistics approach. Furthermore, the concept of narrative poetry was also elaborated in order to answer on how the deviants serve the meaning of the poem. Based on the conducted research, the poem contains the three main tropes of semantic deviation: semantic oddity (except for paradox), transference of meaning, and honest deceptions (except for litotes). Moreover, these deviations provided revelation, emotional aspect of the main character, and themes of *The Dyak Chief*. This deviants in turn helped to built the feature of the poem in regards of these three aspects as a narrative poetry.

Keywords*: stylistics, semantic deviations, The Dyak Chief, poetry, narrative*

ABSTRAK

Puisi merupakan genre literatur yang berkembang sepanjang waktu, namun umumnya identik dengan penyimpangan norma bahasa demi nilai estetika puisi. Salah satunya yakni The Dyak Chief yang dikarang Erwin Clarkson Garrett. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisa deviasi semantik yang ada pada The Dyak Chief, serta bagaimana penyimpangan tersebut berkolerasi dengan konsep puisi naratif. Tujuan penelitian ini unutk menjawab dua rumusan masalah yang yang dirumuskan oleh peneliti; jenis deviasi semantik serta maksud dari deviasi yang ditemukan dalam puisi. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kualitatif dengan pendekatan stilistika. Lebih lanjut, konsep puisi naratif juga dikaitkan untuk menjawab bagaimana deviasi yang dimaksud menjadi fitur puisi. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, terdapat kategori deviasi semantic yang ditemukan: semantic oddity (kecuali paradoks), transference of meaning, dan honest deceptions (kecuali litotes). Penyimpangan yang disebutkan ini memberikan aspek mengungkapkan, aspek emosional

tokoh utama, serta tema yang ada dalam The Dyak Chief. Dalam hal ini, ketiga hal tersebut menjadi fitur tersendiri dalam puisi yang masuk kategori puisi naratif tersebut.
Kata kunci: stilistika, penyimpangan semantik, The Dyak Chief, puisi, naratif

A.   INTRODUCTION

The use of language in poetry is associated with its broad aspect of expressions. These defining features were derived from the manipulation of linguistic code, for the sake of aesthetic value. This is considered as style by linguists, which is studied in the discipline of stylistics (Leech and Short 11). Simpson (3) also defined stylistics as a field that focused on textual interpretations, based on linguistic pattern of the mentioned text. However, the usage of style is not limited to poetry only, but also include other form of discourses.

Thus, the poetical aspect of language is the basis of stylistics study. One of the devices of stylistics is foregrounding, with the purpose of attracting readers attention through the use of linguistic deviation or parallelism. While language in poetry is considered as absurd for its deviation from linguistic norm, it is intentional as to achieve deeper level of interpretation by readers (Leech 56). One of the deviations is semantic deviations where meaning is changed through the use of figurative language. This feature could also be found on *The Dyak Chief*, a poem featured in *The Dyak Chief and Other Verses* by Erwin Clarkson Garrett, published in 1914.

Although fictional, the poem narrative is based on the Garrett's experience when he visited Borneo. The story tells about a tribal chief who relayed the story of is younger days to Garrett. Although the story begun as an epic journey through the dangerous jungle on the purpose of headhunting, as a proof of love for the chief's lover, it ended in tragic for the characters involved in the story.

The research material is focused on the poem verses in order to identify the semantic deviations, which concerned with the style of language used by Erwin Clarkson Garrett, and the purpose of these deviations. With this research, it is expected that it could raise awareness of the literary work, along with providing further references for future study on other literary works stylistics feature.

B.   RELATED LITERATURE
1.   Literary Language

The use of language contributed to the use of imaginary fictions in literature. Imagery in literature is done by special use of language as means for creativity to imply indirectness. The main point of literary language is to attain distinctiveness through the usage of language expressions. While 'literature' denotes to written body of works like fiction genres, poetry is more distinguished as it descended from oral traditions. However, this notion blurs the line between what language is considered prosaic or poetical, since the distinctions were blurred and both genres share some characteristics (Hogg 491).

2. Poetry

Through the use of high degree of subtlety in language expressions, poetry is considered as a form of communication and art. As a distinct literary genre, poetry is structured into verses that come in patterned rhyme scheme, along with use of style and rhythm (Wainwright 5). It is believed that poetry was conceived from earliest culture that still yet has written language and developed oral tradition as the result. This procession was accompanied by simple beat music and measured step dance (Meyer and Miller 1331).

In this sense, oral traditions were passed down through generations without experiencing significance change throughout the course. This is considered quite remarkable as it allows the art form to survive without relying on writing system (Rubin 194). Besides, poetry is also considered as the most complex and oldest art forms. The style of poetical language could range from following strict rules of language, to loosely structured and expressive. Moreover, this literary form is notable for the use of themes and emotional expressions.

3. The Concept of Narrative Poetry

The Dyak Chief with its structure and narrative elements, fits the category of narrative poetry. The narrative quality gave the poem a prose like manner, while retaining poetry distinctive use of language expressions. Moreover, narrative poetry evolved from oral tradition. One of the examples of narrative poetry is The Homeric Epic (Rubin 195). The purpose of narrative poetry is to told the story in prose-like manner that structured into poetry. In this sense, the *The Dyak Chief* is akin to dramatic poetry, as this genre put emphasis on narrative and narrative and the main characters.

Additionally, narrative elements also contributed to emotional aspect on poetry. Vital to this aspect stem from the emotions of 'affect' and 'narrativity'. As Massumi theorized and further explained in Keen's (153 - 154), affect is the concept that influenced ability to act, either increased or diminished, that stem from affected state of mind and body. However, this term itself is not synonymous with the aspect of emotions. This phenomenon only occurred in narrative, as narrativity when applied into a literary works. This in turn provided readers to experience versions of affect, that also serves as characterization. This narrative effect fictional emotions that stem from the characters circumstances.

Finally, poetry also brings subject and subject aspects. In this respect, a theme is considered a formulaic phrase that explains the poem and contributes to the literary work as a general idea or thought. Depending on the author, the themes may be presented more or less adequately, with distribution along the narrative (Prince 74).

4. Stylistics

A way of doing something is called a style. The use of style in linguistics relates to the creation of texts and the interpretation of aesthetic values in literary genres. Aesthetic values in literary language, on the other hand, have been thoroughly examined, not just

purely structural aspects of language. Moreover, the style was distinguished from other types of literary criticism. Particularly in the use of other disciplines theory to augment its analytical toolkit, e.g. psychology, social theory, and the philosophy of language. (Trask and Stockwell 280).

Another definition is that stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics, with some degree of literary criticism. These two fields also have some overlap with research in psychology. Style is a means of associating different disciplines with particular subjects, rather than distinct disciplines or subjects (Widdowson 16). Furthermore, Leech and Short (12) define that stylistics as the study of stylistics should clarify what aspects and to what extent language is used in literature. Above all, the author's reasons for implementing a particular style in his work as expression and explaining the relationship between language and artistic function. The aim of stylistics, therefore, was to identify aesthetic functions for literary appreciation, which became the basis for searching for linguistic evidence. This linguistic evidence leads to the search for aesthetic functions.

5.   Linguistic Deviation and Foregrounding

Through the poet's manipulation of linguistic features, poetry itself defies the norms of verbal expression that have been presented in language as a formal means of communication.

Differences in linguistic features arose mainly in her two forms: 1) The poet leaves the boundaries where language allows choice. 2) Poets use the same language to limit themselves and deny freedom of speech (Leech 109).

Also called foreground formation, the aesthetic use of language formed the basic principle of linguistic deviation from linguistically accepted norms. The focus is on the principles of poetic linguistic analysis. The poet extends or transcends the normal communication of language normative usage by making choices not permitted by accepted codes. The semantic juxtaposition of literal and figurative meanings is a clear example of emphasis. A literary trope is a semantic oddity that requires giving a linguistic form something other than its usual or literal interpretation. In one of his early works, Leech (57) described the term foreground derived from language as a background of linguistic deviations as foreground figures, in order to make certain aspect more distinctive than others.

6.   Semantic Deviation

The creation of specific context in poetry is through the formulation of words. This concept is linked with semantic deviation, which deals with the notion of meaning intended by the poet. This is implied as an 'absurdity' when compared to literal understanding of language use. As demonstrated in the expression "the sky rejoices in the morning birth" (Leech 153). When taken literally, the sentence did not actually make sense, but that is the defining poetical language characteristic. As we know, sky is an inanimate object. Yet, the word 'rejoice' is the description of human emotional feeling, is attributed to the sky as

personification. This semantic notion is in turn cannot be found in vocabulary, as it is considered as nonsense and veering off from the literal meaning. Furthermore, this kind of literal absurdity that leads to mind comprehension on figurative thoughts is termed as 'transference of meaning' or metaphor.

Metaphor as stylistic device is the most important factor in transcending from normal usage of language as a form of communication. Even some experts considered metaphor as the only aspect that matter in poetry use of language expressions. This transference of meaning could also be done by the use of synecdoche. On the other hand, the semantic oddity of poetical language is also demonstrated through the concept of redundancy (pleonasm, tautology, periphrasis) and absurdity (oxymoron and paradox). Both the aspect of redundancy and absurdity in poetry constituted the irrationality of poetical language. Other kind of deviation in semantic aspect is the use of honest deception through language (irony, litotes, hyperbole) to indicate something far from the truth.

C.   RESEARCH METHOD
1.   Research Design

This thesis utilized qualitative research as its method. In his book, Kothari (5) explained, "Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour". This method requires insights and impressions from the researcher itself. The research results were not subjected to rigorous quantitative data. This research focused on group interviews, projective technique, and depth interviews. Moreover, some views qualitative research as a study that directed to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the research participant's social world by learning the material and social circumstances, experiences, perspectives, and histories, which is identified by the methods of observation, in-depth interviewing, group discussions, narratives, and the analysis of documentary evidence (Ritchie, et al 5).

2.   Data and Data Source

The data source of this research is the poem *The Dyak Chief* by Erwin Clarkson Garrett, included in *The Dyak Chief and Other Verses*. The first print of the book was published back in 1914. The researcher accessed the poem on e-book rendition released by Project Gutenberg in 2016 for the first edition. The primary data of this research is the poem verses, which contained semantic deviation and the narrative structure that were also part of the stylistics study in this research. The secondary data would be journals and books that further explains the theoretical framework of stylistics, particularly linguistics deviation of poetic language.

3. Data Collection

For research purpose, data were collected in its raw form, by reading and highlighting the part deemed important. Then, the data would be displayed in an organized manner to be studied accordingly with the theoretical framework of this thesis. Finally, the research activity would involve the patterns, relationship, and meaning behind data to draw conclusion (Walliman 132). These are the following detailed procedures of collecting the data.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis for this research was conducted in two steps, inductive and deductive process. It was done in order to organizing data into increasingly more abstract of information, by building up criteria for the data. For the inductive process, the researcher established a comprehensive set of themes, from the result of working on between the theme and database, back and forth. Deductively, this established data is analysed in order to determine whether can support the analysis of this research (Creswell 186).

The collected data is analysed based on stylistics approach, to identify the types of semantic deviation. The research questions are thoroughly answered based on the research questions. Primarily what deviants that were represented in the poem, and what purpose these deviants contribute to the poem itself.

The data were also displayed after analysing semantic deviation of the poem. This could be shown in the format of text and diagram as Miles and Huberman (158) stated. On the other hand, displayed data could also be presented through other means like charts or any other format. This data display will ease the researcher attempt on drawing conclusion.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION
1. Semantic Deviations Featured in *The Dyak Chief*
a. Pleonasm

As a rhetorical device, pleonasm is the concept of conveying an idea with words that are more than necessary. Many examples of pleonasm in *The Dyak Chief* describe an idea with different words. However, the meaning is the same and could be presented in a simpler wording by the poet. This is the case of particular style used by the poet to emphasize particular concept.

P1.S1.L5.Pl: *Where the kampong hearth-fires glow*.
P4.S6.L21.Pl: For each hearth-light in the falling night
P5.S28.L114.Pl: *Where the kampong hearth-fires rise*.

These lines were identified as containing pleonasm. As we know, a hearth constituted the floor or part of the fireplace area in a house. Thus, it could be considered as unnecessary to say 'hearth-fires glow', since it is a known fact that fire is a product of material combustion that emits bright light. However, it could be

argued that the poet wanted to set the setting to give an impression that that the story took place in a village deep within the jungle.

b. Tautology

Tautology is a form of semantic deviation, one of stylistic devices, that is intended to form an expression that repeated in different way. In retrospect, this concept is almost similar with pleonasm. Through poetical license of redundancy, it is hoped that the audience will get what the poet tried to convey through his work.

P3.S29.L115.T: And like the dash of the lightning flash

From this line, the Chief describe his movement of rapid swinging the mandauw when he fought another tribe's chief, with the underlined phrase. A dash is a rapid movement that likened to the expression of 'lightning flash. Lightning is a natural phenomenon, often accompanied by a flash in the sky. The interpretation of this emphasis is to point towards the foreshadowing of the poem's narrative. Although the word lightning here is not to be understood literally, lightning or thunder represented bad omen in many traditions. This was in line with the plot of *The Dyak Chief*, where the story ended in a tragic result for all the characters. Even though the Chief has exacted his anger and killing the White Man, he fell into a state of sorrow instead feeling delightful from the act.

c. Periphrasis

Compared to the other two, poetry has a lot of this type of repetition. Although there is a concept of expressing more than necessary, it is often used as a kind of paraphrase, and it is characterized by using unnecessary words to convey ideas that can be expressed in one word. The purpose of this is to attract readers attention with embellishment.

P1.S1.L1.Pe: *Hear ye a tale from the deepest depths of the heart of Borneo*

The Chief told the story from his perspective, as it happened it the jungle of Borneo. However, the phrase 'deepest depths' could be deemed as a form of repetition or even unnecessary. To say 'depths' already indicating something that is deep and nearly out of reach, without having to add the adjective 'deepest'.

d. Oxymoron

This deviation often used in the form of pairing words that each has contradictory meaning. The purpose of oxymoron is to make certain part of a poem stands out from the rest. By joining different words with antithetical concept, this results in contradiction that falls into the category of absurdity in semantic oddity.

P3.S22.L88.O: Sprang straight to the waiting fray.

The part gave description of the Chief first encounter with the rival tribal chieftain, moments before their fight. However, we noticed that the words 'waiting

fray' itself is an oxymoron. By definition, 'fray' could be understood as disorderly or chaotic fights, opposite of 'waiting' as an act of to stay or remain stationary. This absurdity provided the author a mean to describe the state of emotion that the Chief felt, moments before the mandauw clashed.

e. Metaphor

As a method of meaning transference in poetry, metaphor is used to likened something with different word that do not bear any similarities. This is performed by usually combining two words, each serving literal and figurative senses.

P1.S5.L19.M: Where the rippling shadows flee

The Chief made a promise to the woman he loved by a tree on the riverside, described as indicated on the verse. The shadow was likened to a human ability to move in fast manner. Whereas shadow is just a reflection cast upon a surface caused by any object blocking rays of light. The metaphor could also be thought as form of foreshadowing. Even though the Chief has gone through great length to achieve and prove his love for the Kampong Maid, his journey for the love itself is like chasing a fleeing shadow.

f. Synecdoche

Synecdoche can be defined as referring to a whole with parts of it. It is commonly used to describe something. In other words, synecdoche is a method of saying something by using other words that it is associated with. In semantic deviation, it is related to the transference of meaning concept.

P5.S27.L105.Sy: Palate and roof and tongue and gums,

Besides as a form of circumlocution, this verse is also determined as synecdoche. The words use in this referred to the mouth anatomy. Even though it can be simply written as 'mouth', the poet wanted to emphasis this part through foregrounding. Moreover, the description is also to transmit the feelings of the Chief after witnessed the White Man death to torture.

g. Metonymy

The concept of metonymy is almost similar with synecdoche. Whereas synecdoche use parts of something to describe the whole, metonymy is referring to something with words that are associated with it.

P2.S3.L12.Me: Where peeped the purple skies.

The concept here refers to the period of sunset where the sun slowly disappears beyond the horizon. This caused the phenomenon of twilight, a period between sunset and dusk. During this time, the skies colour would turn into purplish hue. Hence, the poet used the underlined phrase to indicate that the Chief journey

took almost a day. Yet he decided to keep pressing against the odds even though the period of evening is looming in the next few hours.

h. Hyperbole

The stylistic device of hyperbole is used to state a truth, albeit in exaggerated manner. The intended overstatement is directed to use language expression that is connected with sentiments or personal values, which in turn is based on subjective claims.

P2.S8.L31.H: And they swelled to seven times their size

The Chief's feet were injured and blistering from days of walking through the jungle. To emphasis this, the following expression was used in this verse. Even though it may be true that the Chief's feet were swelling because walked too much for days, saying that 'they swelled seven times' is considered as an exaggeration. This however was intentional on the part of the author to show the Chief's journey as a form of narrative in a poetry and to depict his struggle for headhunting.

i. Irony

Irony involve the use of contrast between appearance and actual reality, in order to emphasis what is anticipated by readers and what is actually meant by the author in his literary work. The intention of this deviation is to build an honest deception and achieve certain response from the readers.

P5.S15.L57.I: In noiseless scorn and wonder

After the White Man was captured and tortured by the Chief kinsmen, they proceed to watch the injured man. The tribesmen seen the White Man with sense of revolt in silence. Yet at the same time, they were also amazed at the sight of foreigner who was in their kampong. To wonder at something or someone however, is in contrast to the concept of scorning at things or person.

2. The Purpose of Semantic Deviations

The result of findings is elaborated with the stylistics theory brought upon by Geoffrey Leech. During the course of data collection, the researcher found at least eight pleonasms, three tautologies, four periphrasis, two oxymorons, eight metaphors, one synecdoche, one metonymy, two hyperboles, and one irony. Based on the finding, there are 30 deviants that were identified as form of semantic deviations.

Metaphor as trope in transference of meaning, is the most commonly used deviation in *The Dyak Chief*. The use of metaphor to compare a thing to another is perhaps the prominent feature of this poem. This metaphoric expression is done through attributing qualities to human or objects that actually do not have any relations by standard language norm. This deviation is used as a form of emphasis by the poet.

The next one is semantic oddity in form pleonasm as redundancy. This concept is used throughout the verses to emphasis the emotional feeling and perception towards the readers. As mentioned by Christiana Gregoriou in Burke's (87), this is considered as foregrounding of a literary text in order to achieve aesthetical purpose. This is done by including deviations in the use of language, to draw attention against the backdrop of others.

These deviants in turn contribute to the narrative aspect of the poetry, along with highlighting the emotional and thematic aspect. Emotions are private occurrences in mind, in which only the subject of emotions could access and define the nature of the surfacing emotions. This aspect related to literature, as shown in *The Dyak Chief* poem through semantical deviations. One of the examples from the poem that emphasizing this aspect is the line "Hate as the white-hot flame jet—" (P4.S11.L41.M), as a mean to show the reader of what the character felt from the events. Thus, the aesthetic value of literature is partly derived from its relationship with human feelings. Particularly, this form was observed in poetry and considered as a medium to channel spontaneous, yet powerful feelings derived from said emotions through the use of language (Olsen 31 – 32).

Additionally, semantic deviations featured in the poem also touched the aspect of emotional aspect. Most commonly, the use of metaphor or other types of figurative language that stem from relationship of embodiment and mind is used by poet. In this manner, the author posits the mind and actions through the characters in their literary works, where the narratives are interpreted by readers. This engagement resulted in emotional background of the character that the readers could draw the narrative pleasure from (Richter 414).

Although this main purpose is to engage the readers and making it interesting, with the notion of pleasure or even displeasure through semantic deviation, emotion in literature also contribute to better understanding the works itself. This leads to discoveries and interpretation of character and plot subtleties presented through foregrounding, which otherwise would not catch readers attention who were emotionally detached from the narratives. This however does not mean that readers were mesmerized all the time emotionally, but only involved the part where semantic deviations came into play as intended by the poet (Robinson 107 – 108).

As such, the purpose of semantic deviations in *The Dyak Chief* were intended by the poet to bring together the three mentioned aspects, as a mean to embody figurative language that relies on the use of language free expression qualities. This however, also brings to engage the readers on what is implied through the use of deviations, in the form of narrative poetry.

This research proved that *The Dyak Chief* heavily used the transference of meaning, especially the trope of metaphor. For example in P2.S3.L12.M: Where peeped the purple skies. The sentence of this verse gives an impression for the readers on how long the Chief journeyed through the jungle, from morning until the sunset in afternoon. The sun setting was described as making the skies look purple. On the other hand, the purple skies 'peeped' to emphasise that the whole nature is also watching the Chief's journey. In this manner, skies as inanimate object was given the personification with the act of seeing.

This result is in line with Prafitri and Suhatmady's study on William Blake's poems. Particularly on how the deviants were constructed and what is the intention by the poet. While their research highlighting that Blake's poems transmit ideas of relationship, religious value, social condition and love, Garrett's *The Dyak Chief* is more towards the characters' emotions and their conflicts, along with the prominent showcase of nature as poetic device in constructed in narrative.

On the other hand, the research conducted on E.E. Cummings *She Being Brand* Maratabali focused on the surface level of deviation, primarily syntax, graphology, morphology and grammatical. Thus, Maratabali's research is more concerned on the language realization and form, with prominent features of writing rules disregard that deviates from the norm. This graphological deviation also present in *The Dyak Chief*, although not to the extent of *She Being Brand* where it catches the readers attention on such particular of poem structure written by the poet.

Additionally, this research also attempted to emulate the understanding of narrative poetry concept as Max's conducted on Taylor Swift's selected lyrics. While the research on *The Dyak Chief* identify the presence of semantic deviations and its three tropes that further divided into several categories and interpret the deviants purpose, Max's research lean towards how the lyrics built the perspective of interpersonal experience was built through types of transitivity process in the selected lyrics.

3.   Conclusion

Based on the present research's finding, there are several points to sum up based on the research questions. The linguistic deviation, particularly on the aspect of semantic is featured heavily in the poem and involved the three main tropes of semantic deviations: semantic oddity (except for paradox), transference of meaning, and honest deceptions (except for litotes).

The most prominent semantic deviations in *The Dyak Chief* is the use of metaphor as a form of transference of meaning, followed by the redundancy of semantic oddity in the form pleonasm. The mentioned deviants built the features of the poem and serve as a form of language expression, that was veering off from the linguistic norm and to achieve emphasis. Moreover, these deviations were also attributed to achieve aesthetic value with the poet utilizing literary language.

Finally, the poem derived its narrative through the use of such semantic deviations. The purpose of this is to reveal the poem's narrative, emphasizing the main character emotional aspect, and highlighting several themes that were brought upon by Erwin Clarkson Garrett in this poem. These three main points in turn were the explanation on why the semantic deviations were used in the poem.

Relating to this research, the researcher suggested that the semantic deviations is the main key of literary language, especially in the genre of poetry. However, the object of this research, *The Dyak Chief* is not limited to semantic deviations alone. Since *The Dyak Chief*

is presented in the form of narrative poetry, future research can also be conducted to analyse the aspect of narratology, or discuss the work more in depth with other forms of literary criticism.

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