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A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF WELL-DEFINED SPOKEN POETRY OF RENOWNED ARTISTS

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ABSTRACT
This study unveiled the stylistic features of spoken word poetry from prominent artists and how it shaped the generalized meaning of these pieces. It made use of qualitative research design utilizing the methods of stylistic analysis and textual analysis. In this study, the corpora were 51 spoken word poetry selected based on purposive sampling and on the basis of the given inclusion criteria. The study revealed that irony was the most dominant stylistic feature in terms of semantic level, and anaphora was the most dominant stylistic features in terms of phonological level. Moreover, stylistic features were utilized to convey the poets' experience, message, and emotions relating to the of the poems, shaping the generalized meaning of the spoken word. Five generalized meanings emerged in the study specifically, mental health struggles, universality of death, racial violence, women's inferiority under patriarchal system and internalized standard of beauty.
KEYWORDS: *Education, Applied Linguistics, Spoken Word Poetry*

INTRODUCTION
In modern poetry, a new style emerged called spoken word poetry, also known as performance poetry or slam poetry (Walkington, 2021). Ailes (2020) stated that unlike its traditional counterpart, spoken word contains no forms or strict meter. Alternatively, it is written in free verse while continuing to utilize various poetic techniques, most remarkably rhythm and rhyme. Furthermore, he adds that this also utilizes simple language and avoid references that the audience might not understand. Most spoken word poetry is examined through its content and themes; however, Zakaria (2019) stated that the influence of writing on the art of poetic performance is not fully comprehended.

Muhammad (2017) described spoken word poetry as provocative to literary scholars due to its rebellious nature, seen in the use of unconventional verse forms, vernacular language, and supporting elements. They also added that various studies pertaining to spoken poetry were conducted in the West, but has not yet been incorporated into Arabic performance poetry. With this, Muhammad (2017) investigated the Arabic counterparts of spoken poetry and the result showed that dialects were integrated to the performance, stating further that imagery, meter, rhyme, and other stylistic devices do not suffice in performance poetry.

In the Philippines, spoken word poetry is also integrated in the realm of education, most especially in English as Secondary Language. The study of Bautista and Legaspi (2021), however, focused on building nationalism among students. It revealed that there is a significant improvement in learning the concept of nationalism in Southwest Asia through the use of Spoken Poetry in Social Studies among Grade 7 students. The focus group discussion also revealed that students became more engaged, interested, and better understood the topic when taught using Spoken Poetry. Filipino spoken word is also observed to break its serious tone to a more humorous facade. Playing with language, breaking conventional linguistic rules, and blending Filipino and English into a hybrid form were utilized in response to the new Philippine social realities or re-create social hierarchies in the Philippines (Ancheta, 2015). In another study of Torre Jr. (2019), the poetic elements of Miguel Severo's spoken word was examined. It was found that free verse was utilized in the selected poems and the theme revolves around love, using symbolism to conceal intended meaning.

Despite the potential of spoken word poetry as a teaching tool in education, the power it holds to advocate individual and social communication, and its growing popularity among young learners, analyzing the stylistic elements of spoken word poetry seems to present a challenging issue due to the lack of scholarly literature and studies focusing on such matter. Accordingly, considering the aforementioned problematic issues globally, nationally and locally, I am compelled to conduct this study regarding prominent spoken word poetry pieces in terms of its stylistic aspect.

Research Questions
This study's primary purpose is to identify the stylistic features found in prominent spoken word poetry and how these stylistic

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features shaped their generalized meaning Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the stylistic features found in the spoken word of poetry pieces?
2. How do these stylistic features shape the generalized meaning of the spoken words in these poetry pieces?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spoken Word Poetry

In the modern landscape of poetry, a fresh style emerged known as spoken word poetry, often denoted as performance poetry or slam poetry (Campion, 2021). It is also an artistic form of poetry performance that amalgamates traditional written poetry, theatrical elements, hip-hop influences, and social activism (Youth, 2015). The modern spoken word movement's growth begun in the 1950s and became more mainstream in the 1970s.

In Europe, there is also a flourishing of spoken word, which encompasses participation from young individuals involved in spoken word poetry groups. This is exemplified in the study of Dymoke (2017) utilizing qualitative research design to analyze how social customs within this artistic community shape the attitudes of 11–18-year-old students towards the study, discussion, writing, and performance of poetry. The result revealed that students appeared to gain increased confidence and self-assurance through their engagement in reading, listening, discussions, writing, and performances. It was also found that through their participation, youths started utilizing poetry as a means to express themselves, feeling assured that their voices held value and were sought after, particularly when they employed language creatively. This engagement made the genre personally significant to them.

In a case study conducted by Godwin (2018) delves into the exploration of motivations and underlying purposes for spoken word poetry from the perspective of a Latino spoken word artist, Salvador Rivas. Utilizing arts-based educational research (ABER) methodologies for data presentation and analysis and through a series of extensive interviews, the study uncovered Rivas' views which resonate with a prophetic tone, regarding the spoken word community as a platform for open-minded dialogue and active engagement with the world. Furthermore, Salvador acknowledges the crucial role of the internet in expanding the reach of spoken word poetry. In Burke's study conducted in 2015, spoken word allows poets communicate the societal and cultural relevance of their work, employing rhetorical techniques such as intonation, loudness, mood, articulation, tempo, and breaks to emphasize their message.

Stylistic Features

Stylistics can be described as a facet of literary analysis that focuses on examining different aspects of style and the linguistic tools used to convey expressive meaning. It also involves the harmonious relationship between language in communication and in shaping one's thoughts (Tariq, 2018). According to Khan and Jabeen (2015) and Shawa (2015), the levels of stylistic analysis are categorized as Phonology, Graphology, Lexico-Syntax, and Morphology. Khan, et.al (2015) added that the examination of these linguistics items leads to deeper understanding of the text. According to Imran, et. al (2021), several typical elements of style encompass the utilization of dialogue, diverse accents and idiolects, the employment of specific registers, the consideration of active and passive voice, and the skillful distribution of sentence lengths, among various other aspects.

In literature, every poet or author possesses a unique writing style that sets them apart from their fellow poets. This style revolves around the author's utilization of language, encompassing their vocabulary selection, sentence structure, and even the length of sentences. It encompasses the author's inclination towards a generous or restrained inclusion of sensory descriptions. Additionally, it pertains to the author's employment of figurative language, including metaphors and similes, which collaborate to create the atmosphere, vivid imagery, and significance within the text. Some authors emphasize sound elements like alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhythm (Shawa, 2015). Thus, literary stylistics serves as the foundation for a deeper comprehension, greater appreciation, and more insightful interpretation of explicitly literary works that center on the author's intentions (Siregar, et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was primarily a qualitative research design. This approach allows researchers to gather richer data and gain a more detailed understanding of issues, cases, or events (Creswell, 2002). Specifically, I employed stylistic analysis in order to achieve an in-depth analysis on the selected spoken word poetry pieces. As explained by Tariq (2018), stylistics is the study of the language used in literature in all its forms, focusing on different styles of expression in literary discourse. It involves analyzing various stylistic elements that shape meaning and impact.

Data Sources

The data of this study was extracted from fifty-one renowned spoken word poetry performances. They are chosen based on purposive sampling. In addition, these corpora were in a form of video clip performances made available in YouTube. These includes the live performances recorded and uploaded to YouTube. These videos were performed individually and collaborative spoken word performances.

Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to unravel and analyze selected spoken word poetry pieces though the lens of stylistic analysis. Through stylistics, specifically foregrounding theory by Leech (1969), the different stylistic devices from the corpora were extracted and analyzed in terms of its semantic level and phonological level. More precisely, this deals with the stylistic convergence in which a repertoire of stylistic devices were scrutinized by the integration of semantic and structure and its impactful expressiveness (Muxiddinov, et al., 2022).

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Procedure

Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness is considered as an essential mechanism of evaluating the worth of the study. For this reason, the study relied on the criteria of trustworthiness set by Lincoln and Guba (1985) specifically credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings according to the study's research questions.

This portion is comprised of two tables, Tables 1 and 2, showing the stylistic features utilized in the various stylistic features and their generalized meanings.

Table 1

Most Frequently Used Stylistic Features in the Spoken Word Poetry

Stylistic Level	Stylistic Feature	Frequency
Semantic Level	Metaphor	80
	Irony	131
	Paradox	23
	Metonymy	41
	Hyperbole	18
	Synecdoche	60
	Personification	55
Phonological Level	Aphesis	1
	Anaphora	21
	Epistrophe	5
	Anadiplosis	8

This study is fundamentally rooted in stylistics, also called as literary linguistics. In particular, this deals with the formal stylistics covering the phonological and semantic levels of the corpora of this study. This study utilized the fifty-one transcribed spoken word performances from prominent artists. These corpora are made available on YouTube from channels with with 1 million or more subscribers, with minimum views of 100, 000 views, and two minutes or more in length. The thorough review and analysis of the corpora showed that prominent spoken word artists primarily employed various stylistic features at the semantic level, with only limited usage on the phonological level. Moreover, among all the stylistic features at the semantic level, irony emerges as the most prominent, while anaphora is the dominant stylistic feature at the phonological level.

Table 2

Generalized Meaning of Spoken Word Poetry

Generalized Meaning	Textual Evidence
Mental health struggles	Depression is a good lover. So attentive; (SWPBP-14)
Universality of death	the funny part about death is that it does in fact come with a warning sign (SWPSP-04)
Racial violence	we were always fighting them, all those people out there fighting us doing everything to remind us of our place (SWPBP-08)
Women's inferiority under patriarchal system	She does not speak up to defend herself. Even now, years after their divorce (SWPBP-17)
Internalized standard of beauty	replacing meals with other practical hobbies like making flower crowns or fainting (SWPBP-20)

The utilization of different stylistic features evokes impactful impression on the overall content of the pieces and enables the performers to transmit the necessary themes, ideas, and emotions even behind the screens as these spoken word performances are made available in social media sites specifically in YouTube. My analysis of the data generated me five generalized meaning. Particularly, this includes mental health struggles, universality of death, racial violence, women's inferiority under patriarchal system and internalized standard of beauty.

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DISCUSSION

This study is fundamentally rooted in stylistics, also called as literary linguistics. In particular, this deals with the formal stylistics covering the phonological and semantic levels of the corpora of this study. This study utilized the fifty-one transcribed spoken word performances from prominent artists. These corpora are made available on YouTube from channels with with 1 million or more subscribers, with minimum views of 100, 000 views, and two minutes or more in length. The thorough review and analysis of the corpora showed that prominent spoken word artists primarily employed various stylistic features at the semantic level, with only limited usage on the phonological level. Moreover, among all the stylistic features at the semantic level, irony emerges as the most prominent, while anaphora is the dominant stylistic feature at the phonological level.

Implications for Educational Practice

Undertaking research ought to produce an implication that is purposeful and impactful. This personal and academic journey in pursuit of deepening the knowledge and understanding to both language and literature is gratifying as I aspire to be a better educator. Thus, these are the essential implications of my study.

It is my earnest aspiration that spoken word poetry, a 21st century genre in literature that has been gaining popularity amongst the students in the country, be examined through the lens of stylistics. Guided by this yearning, I highlighted the different stylistic features as featured in semantic and phonological deviation, verbal parallelism, and its unique characteristic that separates it from the traditional poetry. It is my hope that the Filipino learners may explore more on this genre and inspire them to unleash the innate creativity that dwells inside them.

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