



A Corpus-Based Analysis of Word 'Ghost' in the Collection of Kenyah Stories

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Abstract:

To illustrate the concept of ghosts, this research aimed to explain how they were described in Òma Lóngh and Lebu' Kulit language, the collection of Dayak Kenyah short stories. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method based on figurative language personification theory. Data analysis is conducted using corpus analysis with the AntConc application. This research concluded that there are four categories that employ personification in relation to the term 'ghost' namely the ghosts act like human, the ghosts being described as dying like humans, ghosts can transform into other forms and ghosts being described as animals. The use of personification in these stories allows readers to relate to and believe in the ghost, enhancing the drama and suspense of the story. The ghosts in this research were only described using personification. Further research might investigate ghosts through different theories to see how their appearance can contribute to certain meanings in the stories.

Keywords: *corpus linguistics, ghost, personification*

1. INTRODUCTION

If we talk about folklore, Indonesia has a lot varieties of folklore stories. The diversity of Indonesian folklore is due to the extensive range of cultural background and ethnicities spread across Indonesia. Folklore is usually told by word of mouth (orally) and from person to person (Manggala, 2023; Michalopoulos & Meng Xue, 2021). Therefore, folklore undergoes many changes and versions as it spread. Over the times, folklore has transitioned into written form and can now be easily found and read. However, folklore is not just a story; it also contains cultural, moral, and values for the listeners and readers (Endraswara, 2013; Manggala, 2023). Bascom, as cited in Anderson, 2010; Claudia et al., (2021) claimed that folklore can be divided

into three categories: myth, legend, and folktale. The characters in folklore are varied, including humans, animal, deities, and even supernatural figures such as ghosts.

Ghosts are defined in various versions depending on experiences, cultures, and even stories created in society. A ghost is commonly understood as 'lost soul' that still remains in real life (Richardson, 2018) Some figures described ghost as scary entities that have come back from the dead to seek revenge, reveal hidden crimes, continue a love affair, or simply find a way to depart from this world (Blanco & Peeren, 2013; Lagerwey, 2004). In Indonesia, there are various types of ghosts such as *Kuntilanak*, *Pocong*, *Tuyul*, *Banaspati*, *Leak*, etc. Each ghost has different characteristics and appearances (Khairunnisa & Wardhaningsih, 2020). For example, the *Kuntilanak* is female ghost who wears a white dress. She has long hair that extends to her knees and covers her face completely. She is often associated with newborn baby and is frequently seen above large trees. A typical characteristic of the *Kuntilanak's* appearance is the laughter and crying sounds of women. Additionally, as one of the most well-known figures in popular culture, *Kuntilanak* is recognized in a number of Southeast Asian countries. (Duile, 2020).

In the Ôma Lôngh and Lebu' Kulit language, within the collection of *Dayak Kenyah* short stories, one of the supernatural aspect that being told is ghosts. Ghosts stories are featured in three short stories which are 'The Giant Ghost', 'The Headless Ghost', and 'Lengkan and His Friends'. The contributors to these stories were teachers. In each narrative, the ghosts exhibit different characteristics and appearances. The ghost in these stories interact with human, demonstrating various abilities such as communication, disturbance, and even become enemies of humans.

There have been several studies aimed at analyzing the term 'ghost' from different research perspectives. The research conducted by Ghozali & Christomy (2023) explored the presence of the ghost in a novel using excommunication narrative theory. The result indicated that the term 'ghost' represented characters that highlight social problems within the novel. The ghost characters appeared as supporting elements, adding mystery, evoking emotions, and connecting the narrative to a specific historical context, in this case, the Dutch colonial period. On the other hand, (Dwi Kurniasih & Krismonita, 2023) revealed the results of a content analysis of the *Banaspati* ghost, indicating that this mythical character possesses black magic. Black magic was belief in society as the cause of disaster. Duile (2020) explored the comparisons of *Kuntilanak* with other spiritual beliefs among the Dayak people in West Kalimantan. The result showed that the fear associated with the *Kuntilanak* was a consequence of linking the concept of nature with Islamic Malay modernity. Furthermore, the research conducted by Rufaida & Nugraha (2021) explored the ghost sign in Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad newspaper in 1936-1939 using semiotics theory. The result indicated the ghost sign could be perceived using the senses of touch, smell, hearing, and sight.

Based on previous studies above, this research developed different perspective analysis of ghost in certain literary work. To provide a new perspective, this research conducted the discussion on how ghosts are described in Ôma Lôngh and Lebu' Kulit language, the collection of *Dayak Kenyah* short stories. The discussions were based on the figurative language personification theory, and analyzing the use of parts of speech of nouns, verbs, and adjectives as representative of words that described the ghosts. This research also classified the descriptions into several categories which frequently described the character of ghosts. Therefore, this research was conducted to address the research question: how ghosts are described in Ôma Lôngh and

Lebu' Kulit language, the collection of *Dayak Kenyah* short stories, based on figurative language personification theory?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Ghost

A ghost is commonly understood as a 'lost soul' or a 'wandering spirit'. This energy can be detected, particularly in an antiquated dwelling or location where a distressing event occurred. Sometimes, it's not a real ghost, but rather the energy of someone who has died and gone to heaven (Richardson, 2018). Ghosts are frequently portrayed as the antithesis of humanity and as symbols of evil (Rahman & Zainal, 2022). Moreover, (Lagerwey, 2004) mentioned that when people think of ghosts, they think of spirits that causing harm, or, at the very least, fear them. The most common explanation for ghost appearance is revenge: spirits returns to haunt people because they have been wronged or seek justice. Furthermore, (Blanco & Peeren, 2013) cited that ghosts, spirits, and specters have played important roles in both oral and written stories throughout history and across cultures. They can be composed of anything from made-up characters to divine messengers, benevolent or malevolent ancestors, and otherworldly creatures that live in certain places. Ghosts can also be depicted as frightening figures returning from the dead to seek revenge, reveal hidden crimes, continue a love affair, or simply find a way to depart from world.

2.2. Figurative Language

Figurative Language refers to words that utilize figures of speech, indicating that they are spoken with an implied meaning. Kennedy & Gioia (1995) defined figurative language as phrases or groups of words that exaggerate or alter the typical meaning of the component words in figure speeches. Figurative language intentionally profiles secondary or extended meanings, deviating from literal meaning . A figure of speech occurs when a writer or speaker deviates from a word's typical meaning for the purpose of emphasis or novelty (del Pilar Salas-Zárate et al., 2020). Furthermore, (Oliver, 1995) proposed that figurative language comes in a various forms, such as personification, simile, metaphor, and allusion. Figurative language is considered a factor that contributes to a text's unique aesthetic value when it expressing an idea in a particular language (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). Figurative language deviates from its literal meaning and is employed in an imaginative manner, setting it apart from literary language. Words or expressions with meanings distinct from the literal interpretation are employed in figurative language. Figurative language communicates a variety of meanings in a way that shows politeness, envisages an image, strengthens an idea, or expresses what cannot be literally expressed without ambiguity which is done deliberately or consciously (Gibbs & Colston, 2021). Figurative expression creates ambiguity in meaning between literal and figurative interpretations, making it challenging to study. Therefore, to comprehend it, individuals must engage in profound thought. The statement was made when someone pointed out that figurative language often carries ambiguous meanings. Furthermore, figurative speech appeals to the imagination rather than the literal meaning and is not meant to be understood in a literal sense. The speaker-intended meaning in figurative language often goes far beyond that which is semantically encoded by the words and sentences used (Falkum & Köder, 2020) The second challenge in studying figurative language is that many people are unaware of the variety of forms it can take. Nevertheless, studying figurative language is crucial because it explores the unique ways in which individuals consistently express themselves through language (Nainggolan et al.,

2021). Figurative language is unique in that it raises questions about whether a speaker commits to their implicatures, focusing on the locutionary content of their utterance rather than the implicative meaning (Garmendia, 2023).

2.3. Personification

One type of figurative language used by speakers in their first language is personification (Fielden-Burns & Piquer-Piriz, 2022). According to Oliver (1995) personification is the term used when one attributes a physical characteristic or innate quality of animation to something that is inanimate or to an abstraction. (Kennedy & Gioia, 1995) defined personification as a figure of speech in which a thing, an animal, or an abstract term is given human attributes. This is supported by (Abrams, 1999) who stated that personification occurs when an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken as though it were endowed with life or human attributes and feelings. For example, the sentence “the flower danced in the gentle breeze” means that the flower is dancing, which is impossible because a flower is an inanimate object. Additionally, (Hu et al., 2021) mentioned that personification lends a human touch to the narrative idea and use metaphors to connect the experiences of the characters. When something is personified, it might be described as acting in a manner similar to human (Berta & Swarniti, 2020; Melion & Ramakers, 2016). This is supported by Belkhir (2021) who argued that personification is the process of giving human characteristics to non-human components in a text in order to increase reader comprehension.

2.4. Corpus Linguistic

Corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistic research that makes use of examples of everyday or natural language stored in a corpus (Saddhono et al., 2023). Corpus linguistics studies language use, acquisition, and processing using corpora, a prototype category. Examples include the British National Corpus, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, and the Corpus of Historical American English. However, there are also less central examples of corpora (Gries et al., 2024). Wynne and Prytz in Qayyum & Fatima (2023) argued that utilizing corpus-based methodologies in literature analysis opens up exciting new perspectives. This approach enables a more comprehensive, nuanced and in-depth exploration of the fundamental ideas embedded within diverse linguistic forms. Additionally, it facilitates the investigation of stylistic elements present in literary texts, enriching our understanding of these works. Ardhani & Indriani (2021) claimed that corpus linguistics is the study of language based on a large collection of "real-life" language uses preserved in corpora (or corpus) – electronic databases designed for linguistic research. It is sometimes referred to as a corpus-based investigation. Alternatively referred to as corpus-based study. On the other hand, (Perdana Prasetya et al., 2020) stated that corpus linguistics refers to the extensive examination of language data through computer-assisted analysis of an enormous amount of transcribed speech or written text. Thus, corpus linguistics is a discipline of research that use corpus-based approaches in literary analysis to investigate underlying ideas in various language forms. This method allows for a thorough examination of stylistic characteristics in literary texts, which enhances our knowledge of the works. Corpus linguistics is the study of vast amounts of written or transcribed speech using computers. While (Goźdz-Roszkowski, 2021) explained, corpus linguistics involves various approaches related to study of language. Common approaches in corpus linguistics is the collection of large amounts of text in electronic form which are accessible for data handling using computerized corpora. Corpus linguistics has various research techniques including counting relative frequencies,

search term and its context, and annotating categories (word class, grammatical function, or semantic class). Basically, corpus linguistics is the analysis of language structures in massive amounts of text data using compute-based methods. On the other hand, (Mcenery et al., 2019) explained the focus of corpus linguistics is investigating the use of spoken and written language. Corpus linguistics depends on large amounts of ‘observational data’ which are known as corpora. These corpora provide the foundation of empirical research, enabling to examine and make inferences the language used in real-world examples.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilised a descriptive qualitative methods to describe the ghost known as Òma Lóngh and Lebu’ Kulit language, as depicted in the collection of Dayak Kenyah short stories compiled by Antonia Soriente. The description of the ghost aids in the interpretation of its portrayal in the Kenyah story collection. Moreover, this method was utilized to identify appropriate and pertinent descriptions of all actions, processes, and objects (Basuki, 2006). Qualitative research traditionally originates from the fields of anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and assessment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study used data from digital books and incorporated a literature review strategy. Furthermore, in this study it was used to investigate the interpretation of the ghost, focusing on the use of personification as a form of figurative language. The data for this study were derived from a digital book, and thus, the research also employed a literature study approach. Therefore, this study focused on analyzing the meaning of the ghost, contained the figurative language of personification.

This research involves several stages. First, the researchers identified the object or corpus of this research, namely Mencaleny and Usung Bayung Marang: a collection Kenyah stories in the Oma Longh and Lebu’ Kulit languages collected by Antonia Soriente. Second, the researchers conducted a critical reading (close reading) of the stories to obtain interpretation. Third, the researchers identified the main research topic after critically exploring the object of research. Fourth, the researchers analyzed the pattern of ghosts to describe how they exist in the story. Fifth, the data is analyzed through the corpus tool, AntConc. Lastly, the researchers identified words based on the figurative language of personification, following the theory proposed by (Oliver, 1995), supported by (Abrams, 1999; Kennedy & Gioia, 1995).

Before analyzing the data, there are several steps in collecting the data. Firstly, the researchers downloaded the data from online source formatted in electronic (PDF). Next, the data was displayed, and the English translation was organized. The English translation was then transferred into the Word application and converted into a PDF. After that, the researchers used the frequency menu to identify the occurrences of the word “ghost”. Moreover, the data was inspected using the KWIC feature of AntConc to observe how many words described the term “ghost”. Lastly, the collections of words containing the word “ghost” were coded on spreadsheet to check and validate the data.

Table 1: Frequency of the word ‘ghost’

Type	Rank	Freq	Range
ghost	59	59	1

Table 2: Some examples of 'ghost' word result in KWIC of AntCont

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
wood and threw it outside the house, for the giant	ghost.	The ghost then kicked the fire away.S. But before
by a ghost which was called fate gholep, the headless	ghost.	The ghost then went there first and waited at
container. It was the louse who then answered the giant	ghost.	The giant ghost then screamed again, "Maaaam, may I
ghost. After that, they all used it to spear the	ghost.11.	The giant ghost then died, collapsed, and changed into
They were then aware, "I wonder if this is the	ghost.	the chief of Lebo meant, it turned out not
out of the end of the neck of that headless	ghost.	The fruit rolled down following th slope of the
the last tile, as he threw the tile toward the	ghost.	the sound of a cock crowing was heard, and then died, collapsed, and changed into a large red
they all used it to spear the ghost. 11. The giant	ghost.	then kicked the fire away.5. but before long, the
threw it outside the house, for the giant ghost. The	ghost.	then opened the front wall of the house, which
t hear the knocking because he was sleeping soundly. 13.The	ghost.	then screamed again, "Maaaam, may I have some fire?"
the louse who then answered the giant ghost. The giant	ghost.	Then the two of them ate, but the father
afraid of the light because he actually was a headless	ghost.4.	then went there first and waited at Lage. As
ghost which was called fate gholep, the headless ghost. The	ghost.	then we've already killed it. Then what do
ghost, " they said.19. "if this is what they called the	ghost.	was chasing the fruit, the man got down quickly

4. RESULTS

There are four categories related to the ghost description which are 1) the ghost act like human, 2) the ghosts are described as dying like humans, 3) ghosts can transform into other forms and 4) ghosts are described as animals.

4.1. The Ghost Act Like Human

The ghosts are described to act like a human, as indicated by action verbs such as kick, dive, scream, kill, chase, and swat, as well as adjective of feeling such as angry. This is supported by the following sentences:

The ghost then kicked the fire away. (GG/15/V)

When the ghost got into the water to dive down, (HG/7/V)

The giant ghost then screamed again, 'Maaaaam, may I have some fire?' The woman immediately threw out the last piece of fire wood. (GG/19/V)

In that case, we've already killed the ghost, so there's nothing else, maybe we were really meant to kill that ghost because that's what we intended. (LHF/81/V)

And just like that the ghost chased the kepayang fruit as he was swatting it. (HG/10/V)

The ghost became increasingly angry, and no one could defeat him. 'What do we do now?' 'This bamboo shoot will make an excellent spear,' said one of them, not knowing exactly how to defeat him. (GG/9/ADJ)

In the three short stories where the ghosts appeared, they were described based on people's experiences in the stories. The ghost can kick the fire, dive into water, scream, be killed, and also display anger, showing the humanization of the ghosts, as their appearance and behavior are not that different from humans.

4.2. The Ghosts Are Described as Dying Like Humans

The ghosts are described as being able to die, as indicated by the verbs die and collapse as in the following sentences:

The giant ghost then died, collapsed, and changed into a large red rock at the mouth of the Jagha River. (GG/34/V)

Then the headless ghost collapsed, changed and became a stick of tèghèny wood, which was still wet. (HG/16/V)

Just like the ghosts can act like human, they can also die and collapse when attacked by humans using weapons and gears. This portrayal of ghosts is different from what (Richardson, 2018) believe that ghosts are the energy of someone who has died. In the three short stories, the ghosts died after being attacked as it was a living thing.

4.3. Ghosts Can Transform Into Other Forms

Ghosts are described as having the ability to transform into inanimate objects, as indicated by the verb change in the following sentences:

The giant ghost then died, collapsed, and changed into a large red rock at the mouth of the Jagha River. (GG/34/V)

Then the headless ghost collapsed, changed and became a stick of tèghèny wood, which was still wet (HG/16/V)

After being attacked by humans, the ghost died and then transformed into other objects specifically a rock and wood. Despite being a living entity, it transforms into inanimate objects.

4.4. Ghosts Are Described As Animals.

Ghosts are described in animal form, particularly indicated by the word crocodile as in the following sentences:

They went back and forth around the body of the crocodile and each one of them pulled out a tooth, they discussed and presumed that this crocodile was what was thought a ghost in this area. (LHF/18/N)

In one of the sub-stories, entitled "Lengkan and His Friends", the ghost is described in animal form as a crocodile. Lengkan and his friends wonder why a crocodile can live in the middle of the forest in the mountains, which is uncommon for crocodiles as they typically inhabit rivers. They assumed that it was the ghost in the form of a crocodile, making people feared to come into the forest.

5. DISCUSSION

The researchers conducted a corpus analysis of a collection of *Dayak Kenyah* short stories to identify the personification meanings of the word 'ghost'. The analysis was performed based on theory from (Oliver, 1995). From the results of the research, researchers found several personifications related to the ghost description in the story. These categories are: 1) the ghost act like human, 2) the ghosts are described as dying like humans, 3) ghosts can transform into other forms, and 4) ghosts are described as animals.

Figurative language, in which non-human things or thoughts are given human traits, is called personification. As stated by (Hutauruk, 2019) personification is a form of figurative language that involves attributing human characteristics to animals, objects, or concepts. In the data found from the first category, in which ghosts act like humans, the ghost, portrayed as an inanimate object, is described as 'kicking the fire away'. These actions and experiences, similar to those of humans, blur the lines between the supernatural and ordinary life, making the ghost more real and emotional. This is an example of personification since the ghost is made to do something human that it can't actually do. This is in line with (Juliarta & Wirawan, 2021) who stated that personification can provide deeper meanings to literary texts. Writers can employ personification as a literary device to animate inanimate objects. This suggests that the ghost is not just an object, but a being capable of acting and feeling like a human.

In the second category, where ghosts are described as dying like humans, the researchers found lines that include the personifications and has analyzed them. While ghosts are frequently depicted as ethereal beings flitting between worlds, three short stories reveal an unexpected twist: their mortality. These ghosts not only die, but they die in the very human act of "collapsing" and becoming actual objects. This idea challenges the conventional notion of ghosts as pure energy as proposed by (Richardson, 2018). From the analysis it can be drawn that the personification is used effectively in this category to make the supernatural being a believable and interesting character. In this category, the ghost is described as dying and collapsing like a human further reinforcing the idea that it is being personified.

The third category analyzed by the researchers is that ghosts can transform into other forms. The researcher identified lines that contain personifications and conducted analysis for them. In these short stories, ghosts' capacity to transform into inanimate objects adds another degree of obscurity to their already cryptic existence. This transformation, denoted by the verb "change," goes beyond the traditional notion of ethereal apparitions and raises intriguing concerns about their nature and relationship with the actual world. The ghost's ability to change into wood shows how vulnerable it is to harm, which adds to its link to the real world and the experiences of living things. In general, the personification of the ghosts heightens the reader's interest in the narrative and makes them feel sympathy for this unusual supernatural being. This idea is contradict with (Saputri, 2021) who found that ghosts are portrayed as intelligent beings with the capacity for reasoning and feeling, as well as the ability to feel and experience emotions and act morally, as seen by the way they communicate.

The last category is ghosts described as animals. The researchers identified one line that that contain personification in this category. Based on the analysis, it can be inferred that the tale describes a spirit that has the characteristics of an animal, most specifically a crocodile. It's not likely that a crocodile chosen randomly. Crocodiles are connected with danger, power, and

even spiritual importance in many civilizations. The crocodile ghost could represent a powerful threat in this environment, guarding the forest and chasing out outsiders. It could also signify a connection to ancestral spirits or nature's guardian spirits. This goes against the common belief that ghosts are vague beings by giving it animalistic features like teeth. It's even more unexpected that the ghost can be murdered, given its supposedly immaturity. This personification makes the ghost vulnerable and animal-like, challenging people's belief of supernatural beings.

One way to understand the use of personification in this story is to enable the reader to relate to and believe in the ghost. By giving the ghost human characteristics, the author makes it more like a real person. This could strengthen the reader's empathy for the ghost and help them have a stronger emotional connection to it. Personification can also be seen as a way to heighten the tension and drama in the narrative. This is consistent with Juliarta & Wirawan's (2021) argument that personification expressions can draw in the intended reader and enhance the language's aesthetic appeal. By giving the ghost a more human appearance, the author emphasizes the terrifying and unpredictable aspects of it. The reader might be kept wondering what will happen next if this is done.

This study is similar with (Duile, 2020) who discovered that although these ghosts are invisible to humans, they may communicate with them through dreams and rituals. Moreover, (Rahman & Zainal, 2022) found out that a description of the ghosts suggests that they have the appearance of animals, and they are said to possess soft human emotions and attributes such as protection, support, and friendliness. In contrary, this findings is contradict with study from Ghozali & Christomy, (2023), who discovered that the ghost character in the story does other things, like making the story more interesting, making the reader feel something, and linking the story to real events that happened during the Dutch colonial time. People think the ghost is an odd choice for a character, but their appearance in the story of excommunication creates a parallel relationship that suggests social criticism for a society that is obsessed with mysticism and shuts down voices of truth.

6. CONCLUSION

The researchers analyzed the data using corpus analysis with the AntCont application and concluded that there are four categories that employing personification in relation to the term 'ghost': the ghost act like human, the ghosts are described as dying like humans, transform into other forms and described as animals. The use of personification in these stories enables the reader to relate to and believe in the ghost, enhancing the story's drama and suspense. The ghost's frightening and unpredictable qualities are heightened by the author's use of human-like appearance, keeping the reader interested and wondering about what will happen next.

Every ghost in this research has a different background of places, stories and conflicts. The ghost character in this research are only described from a collection of Dayak Kenyah short stories using personification theory. Further research can investigate ghosts from other stories to explore how ghost appearances from different cultures can give rise to certain meanings in the stories. It is also worthwhile to use other linguistic theories to uncover the implicit messages that these stories may contain.

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