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Research Article

Stylistic Analysis of Figurative Language in Nadzira Shafa's 172 Days: A Qualitative Study of Indonesian Contemporary Novel

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ABSTRACT

Language style is one of the essential elements in literature, as it not only enhances the aesthetic quality of a text but also conveys the author's intentions, emotions, and cultural context. This study aimed to analyze the use of language styles in Nadzira Shafa's novel 172 Days to identify the forms and functions of stylistic devices within a contemporary Indonesian popular literary work. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through repeated and comprehensive readings of the text, followed by classification and interpretation of stylistic features, including comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition. The results reveal a wide range of rhetorical devices, such as simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, allegory, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, and tautology, each contributing to the narrative's emotional depth, thematic reinforcement, and cultural resonance. The discussion indicates that these stylistic elements not only shape character development and narrative flow but also highlight the richness of Indonesian literary expression in modern popular novels. The implication of this study is that stylistic analysis provides both theoretical insights into the development of Indonesian literature and practical applications in literary pedagogy, offering a bridge between classical stylistics and contemporary texts that are more relatable to younger readers.

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Introduction

Language style, often referred to as figure of speech or rhetorical device, is a fundamental aspect of literary expression that conveys implicit meaning, aesthetic value, and emotional depth in a text. Through stylistic analysis, readers are able to uncover the author's intent, explore symbolic layers of meaning, and engage with the moral and cultural values embedded in a literary work (Li et al., 2023; Rugaiyah et al., 2024; van Dijk, 1997). The role of language style is not merely ornamental; it functions as a structural and semantic device that enhances narrative coherence, shapes characterization, and intensifies readers' imaginative engagement. Scholars in stylistics have long emphasized that literary tropes such as metaphor, personification, and hyperbole create cognitive and affective resonance, enabling literature to transcend literal meaning and invite multiple interpretations (Habibi, 2024;

Hossain, 2024; Shotillo Safarovich Shorakhmetov, 2024). In this sense, the study of language style provides essential insight into both the artistry of literature and the sociocultural contexts from which it emerges.

In the Indonesian literary tradition, style of language occupies a crucial role in preserving cultural identity, transmitting values, and fostering appreciation of aesthetics. Studies of Indonesian novels reveal the prevalence of figurative language as a means of communicating complex emotions and cultural expressions that are often grounded in local traditions (Cahyono et al., 2024; Danaswari & Sutanto, 2024; Rugaiyah et al., 2024). Recent research has shown that stylistic analysis enriches literary interpretation by revealing the interaction between textual devices and readers' cultural imagination, thereby highlighting the contribution of Indonesian literature to global literary discourse (Nurhayati et al., 2024; Sudartini, 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). Moreover, stylistic research is not only important for literary criticism but also for pedagogical practice, as it offers educators effective strategies for teaching literature in ways that promote critical and aesthetic literacy among students (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016; Calafato, 2024; Calafato & Simmonds, 2022).

Globally, literary scholars have investigated figures of speech across genres and cultural contexts, noting that styles such as comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition are universal rhetorical devices, yet their forms and functions are highly context-dependent (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016; Miralles Alberola & Soler Pou, 2025; Rokhmah et al., 2024). Comparative studies have shown that similes, metaphors, and allegories are widely used to construct symbolic meaning, while hyperboles and paradoxes serve to intensify conflict and evoke emotional tension (Arfani & Laksono, 2024; Crystal, 2008; Pertiwi & Handayani, 2023). Repetition devices such as tautology and parallelism provide rhythm and emphasis, making narratives more memorable and persuasive (AL-Muslimawi, 2024; Hossain, 2024; Jiang & Suboh, 2025). These stylistic patterns not only enhance the aesthetic dimension of literature but also act as cultural markers that reflect social values, ideologies, and historical conditions.

The novel 172 Days by Nadzira Shafa represents a contemporary Indonesian literary work that is rich in language style, offering fertile ground for stylistic analysis. The novel employs diverse rhetorical devices to construct atmosphere, articulate emotional struggles, and convey moral messages that resonate with young readers. Previous studies on Indonesian literature have focused on traditional folklor, poetic collections (An Nabiil, 2024), and canonical novels such as Laskar Pelangi (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2024), identifying a variety of figurative expressions including simile, metaphor, euphemism, and irony. However, limited scholarly attention has been given to contemporary popular novels like 172 Days, which are widely read by younger audiences and therefore have significant cultural and educational influence. Furthermore, while earlier studies have examined specific types of figures of speech in isolation, few have provided a comprehensive categorization and interpretation of multiple stylistic devices within a single contemporary Indonesian novel (Alvina, 2024; Dera, 2024; Pertiwi & Handayani, 2023).

This research addresses that gap by systematically analyzing the forms and meanings of language styles in *172 Days*, focusing on four major categories: comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition. By identifying the presence of simile, personification, association, symbolism, metaphor, allegory, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, and tautology, this study

seeks to uncover how stylistic choices contribute to narrative effect, thematic development, and reader engagement. The objective of this study is twofold: first, to provide a detailed description of the stylistic features employed by Nadzira Shafa in *172 Days*; and second, to interpret how these stylistic devices enrich the novel's aesthetic value and cultural significance. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader field of stylistics by situating contemporary Indonesian popular literature within international discussions of figurative language, while offering pedagogical insights for literature teaching and cultural appreciation.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach designed to explore and interpret the use of language styles in the novel 172 Days by Nadzira Shafa. A qualitative method was considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of linguistic phenomena in their natural context, enabling the researcher to capture subtle meanings and stylistic nuances embedded in the text (Bengtsson, 2016; Croker, 2009; Xu et al., 2025). The data source consisted of the novel itself, which was carefully read multiple times to ensure comprehensive familiarity and accurate identification of stylistic elements. Data were collected through three techniques: whole reading, continuous reading, and repeated reading, allowing for triangulation in the process of data gathering. Triangulation was further enhanced by comparing results across different reading sessions and consulting existing scholarly discussions on rhetorical devices in literature to validate interpretations. The analysis followed the standard procedures of qualitative research, beginning with data reduction to identify relevant expressions, followed by data display to classify them according to the four major categories of stylistic figures: comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition. Each category was further analyzed to determine the presence of specific figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, and tautology. The final step involved drawing conclusions and verifying interpretations against theoretical frameworks in stylistics and literary criticis (Abdul Jalil Jassim Hejal, 2023; Lu'luil Maknun et al., 2023; Tribunal-Nemenzo, 2023). To ensure credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, the study applied methodological rigor through repeated coding cycles and peer debriefing. Ethical considerations were observed by acknowledging the intellectual property of the novel's author and ensuring that interpretations remained faithful to the original text without distortion. This methodological design not only guarantees the trustworthiness of the findings but also provides a systematic framework for understanding how language style operates in contemporary Indonesian literature, thereby contributing to broader discussions in stylistics and literary studies.

Results and Discussion

Comparative Language Style

The analysis identified six figures of speech in the comparative language style: simile, personification, association, symbolic, metaphor, and allegory. These stylistic devices function to enrich the narrative by drawing parallels between abstract emotions and tangible imagery. For example, similes such as "make up tipis menawan bak seorang ratu dari Timur Tengah" illustrate how beauty is accentuated through cultural and symbolic comparisons. Similarly,

personification appears in expressions like "jantung ini berdebar hati yang tak karuan", attributing human emotions to body organs, thus intensifying the affective experience.

Table 1. Comparative Language Styles in 172 Days

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Type	Example (Novel Excerpt)	Interpretation
Simile	"Bak seorang ratu dari Timur Tengah"	Enhances beauty through cultural imagery
Personification	"Jantung ini berdebar hati yang tak karuan"	Project human emotion onti physical organs
Symbolic	"Doa yang sangat khidmat tangan gagah menyentuuh kepala"	Sybolizes blessing, care, and protection
Metaphor	"Hari dimana aku melepas kesendirianku"	Depicts transition from solitude t companionship

The findings confirm (Tribunal-Nemenzo, 2023) view that comparative figures of speech heighten aesthetic value and deepen character portrayal. Similar patterns are observed in Indonesian and global literary studies where similes and metaphors are employed to evoke vivid imagery and cultural resonance (Haris et al., 2024; Lafreniere et al., 2013).

Contradictory Language Style

Two major figures of speech emerged in this category: hyperbole and paradox. Hyperbolic expressions such as "ijab kabul yang dinantikan oleh semua orang" exaggerate significance to emphasize emotional intensity, while paradoxical expressions like "siang hari yang panas seolah berubah menjadi sangat sejuk" juxtapose contradictory conditions to dramatize perception.

Table 2. Contradictory Language Styles in 172 Days

Туре	Example (Novel Excerpt)	Interpretation
Hyperbole	"Ijab Kabul yang dinantikan oleh semua orang"	Overstate significance to highlight importance
Paradox	"Siang yang panas seolah berubah menjadi sejuk"	Contrasts expectation with reality to dramatize mood

This reflects Faricha's analysis (Popa-Wyatt, 2020) that contradiction enriches narrative impact. Comparable findings in (Athanasiadou, 2024) and (Carston & Wearing, 2015) also highlight hyperbole and paradox as common stylistic features in Indonesian fiction.

Linkage Language Style

The linkage style was represented by parallelism, exemplified in "aroma tubuh... selalu membuatku candu". Such repetition of structural patterns creates rhythm, cohesion, and emotional resonance, reinforcing the narrator's attachment.

Table 3. Linkage Language Style in 172 Days

Туре	Example (Novel Excerpt)	Interpretation
Parallelism	"Aroma tubuh Membuatku candu"	Repetition builds rhythm emphasize intimacy

As (Rühlemann, 2022) explains, parallelism enhances textual flow, and this aligns with (Sholahudin & Sopian, 2025), who found that stylistic repetition is central to narrative memorability.

Repetition Language Style

Repetition was found in tautological expressions, such as "gumamku dalam hati", which redundantly reinforces the act of speaking inwardly. Although considered excessive, such repetition intensifies emotional expression and dramatizes inner thought.

Table 4. Repetition Language Style in *172 Days*

Туре	Example (Novel Excerpt)	Interpretation
Tautology	"Gumamku dalam hati"	Redudant phrase stressing emotional reflection

This finding corroborates (Baumeister et al., 2007) that tautology, though redundant, can serve to underscore emotional gravity.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Nadzira Shafa's 172 Days employs a variety of stylistic devices across four main categories comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition which together enrich the narrative structure and emotional depth of the novel. The identification of simile, personification, metaphor, allegory, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, and tautology highlights the author's deliberate use of rhetorical strategies to intensify aesthetic appeal and convey nuanced meanings. These results align with previous research showing that figures of speech serve as essential tools in literary works to enhance imagination and reader engagement. For instance, (Critchley & Harrison, 2013) demonstrated the prevalence of similar stylistic patterns in Kerinci folklore, showing how comparative and contradictory styles convey cultural values. (Huang, 2024), studies by (Lapasau et al., 2020) emphasize that metaphors and personifications remain central to contemporary Indonesian literature as they foster deeper emotional resonance, while (Windle et al., 2020) noted the role of paradox and hyperbole in generating dramatic tension and reader engagement. More broadly, international scholarship also underlines that stylistic analysis is pivotal in understanding

how language shapes cultural narratives and reader perception, echoing (Ahmad & Ghafar, 2025), who argue that language style is not merely ornamental but a core component of meaning-making in texts.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on a contemporary popular Indonesian novel that has garnered wide readership, situating stylistic analysis not within classical or canonical works but within modern narrative that resonates with younger audiences. While prior research has largely centered on folklore, poetry, or established literary texts, this study provides new insight into how a bestselling popular novel deploys stylistic strategies to blend aesthetic expression with cultural identity and contemporary themes of love, loss, and resilience. This emphasis on popular literature expands the scope of stylistic inquiry by demonstrating that rhetorical richness is not confined to high literature but equally vital in texts consumed by mass readership.

The implications of the findings are twofold. Theoretically, the study strengthens the understanding of stylistics as a lens for uncovering cultural meaning and narrative strategies in modern Indonesian literature, showing that contemporary popular novels deserve scholarly attention alongside traditional literary works. Practically, the analysis provides pedagogical value by offering teachers and students examples of rhetorical devices contextualized in accessible and relatable texts, which can enhance literary appreciation, critical reading, and writing skills in educational settings. Additionally, the integration of cultural and emotional expressions within stylistic choices can inform broader discussions on identity formation and social commentary in Indonesian literature.

Nonetheless, this study has limitations. The analysis was confined to a single novel, which narrows the generalizability of the findings, and the focus on selected stylistic categories may have excluded other figures of speech with potential significance. The qualitative descriptive approach, while rich in interpretation, may also be constrained by subjectivity in categorization and analysis. Future research should therefore broaden the corpus to include multiple contemporary novels, employ computational or corpus-based stylistics to ensure systematic coverage, and incorporate reader-response studies to understand how stylistic devices influence reception and interpretation across diverse audiences.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Nadzira Shafa's novel *172 Days* employs a diverse range of language styles including comparison, contradiction, linkage, and repetition—that significantly contribute to the narrative's expressive power, emotional depth, and aesthetic value. The analysis revealed the presence of simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, allegory, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, and tautology, each functioning to enrich character development, intensify emotional resonance, and strengthen the thematic structure of the novel. These findings align with previous stylistic studies while offering novelty by situating a contemporary Indonesian popular novel within the broader discourse of literary stylistics, which has traditionally focused on canonical or classical works. The research implies that stylistic analysis not only advances theoretical understanding of Indonesian literature but also provides pedagogical value by demonstrating how rhetorical devices can be taught

effectively through modern texts that resonate with today's readers. Nonetheless, the study acknowledges its limitations, particularly the focus on a single novel and selective categories of stylistic analysis, suggesting that future research should incorporate a wider corpus, apply computational stylistics, and include reader-response perspectives to deepen insight into the relationship between style, meaning, and audience engagement.

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