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Persuasive Devices Used in Poetry: A Pragma Stylistic Study

Abstract

This study examines the persuasive devices of poetry from a pragma-stylistic perspective, aiming at how poets use language to influence readers' cognitive and emotional responses. Persuasion in literary texts works to make ideas logical, credible, and emotionally plausible. The study seeks to answer two research questions: what are the persuasive devices employed in poems? and which is the most dominant persuasive device in poetry? The present research relies on the framework of persuasive techniques by Leech and Short (2007). A descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. The analysis revealed that seven persuasive techniques were utilized in the poems. The results showed that the most frequently occurring metaphor appeared 13 times, accounting for 23. 63% of the total. Following this, personification was used 11 times, representing 20%. The findings indicated that the most prominent device was a metaphor, which generates mental images by likening two seemingly unrelated subjects. This technique assists the reader in envisioning abstract concepts in a more concrete manner.

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المستخلص

توضح هذه الدراسة الاساليب الإقناعية في الشعر من منظور تداولي اسلوبي، بهدف معرفة كيفية استخدام الشعراء للغة للتأثير على الاستجابات المعرفية والعاطفية للقراء. يعمل الإقناع في النصوص الأدبية على جعل الأفكار منطقية ومعقولة ومقبولة عاطفياً. تسعى الدراسة إلى الإجابة على سؤالين بحثيين: ما هي الاساليب الإقناعية المستخدمة في القصائد؟ وما هي الاداة الإقناعية الأكثر هيمنة في الشعر؟ ويستند التحليل إلى نموذج (Leech and Short's (2007) للاساليب الإقناعية. تم استخدام النهج النوعي الوصفي في هذا البحث. أظهرت نتائج التحليل الذي أجري أن هناك 7 اساليب إقناعية مستخدمة في القصائد. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أثبتت النتائج أن أعلى نوع هو الاستعارة تكررت 13 مرة بنسبة (23.63%)، ثم التشخيص 11 مرة بنسبة 20%. وبحسب النتائج، كان الاسلوب الأكثر سيطرة هو الاستعارة لإنشاء صور ذهنية من خلال مقارنة شيئين لا يبدو أنهما مرتبطان، مما يساعد القارئ على تصور الأفكار المجردة بطريقة ملموسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاساليب الإقناعية، تداولية اسلوبية، الاستعارة، الشعر

1. Introduction

Language is formed as a means to express ideas, feelings, attitudes, and so on. It has been adapted to meet the evolving needs of speakers. Language is, in this sense, a living thing that adapts to the changing cultural milieu in which it exists. Thus, language evolves in reaction to society, and understanding the context in which it occurs is essential to determining its entire meaning (Gee & Hayes, 2011).

Additionally, Hirschberg (1996) highlighted the importance of using various techniques to effectively persuade and influence an audience. Successful persuasion engages the listener's curiosity, encouraging them to explore further without resorting to pressure or aggression. The persuader enchants the audience with compelling language that elicits a response, potentially leading to a change in their behavior. Furthermore, persuasion frequently takes the shape of an argument, which involves providing reasons for or against certain assertions and statements.

Persuasion is a rhetorical phrase for an act of communication in which the listener is persuaded to forsake one opinion in favor of another, despite real or apparent opposition. (Bussmann *et al.*, 2006).

One method that directly affects people's daily lives is persuasion. To persuade another, someone uses a formal, intellectual method. To shift an attitude or thought, and consequently a behavior, an individual can engage the audience through specific words and actions. Persuasion is a technique that seeks voluntary compliance to change or reshape thoughts, opinions, beliefs, or behaviors in pursuit of a specific goal. The term persuasion comes from Latin word persuader, the prefix "per," means "completion," with the root "suadere," means "exhortation" or "advice" (Sandell, 1977).

However, the current study intends to investigate the persuasive strategies utilized in poems.

1.1 Problem statement

This research investigates how these poems convince audiences regarding classic poetry. There are several types of procedures and different ratios, and the difference in ratios is a problem in itself. Poetry is a powerful medium that uses language not only to express emotions but also to persuade and influence the audience. However, a detailed analysis of the specific affective devices that poets use within their works and how these devices function pragmatically and stylistically to create meaning and affect audiences or readers is lacking. Existing research has often overlooked the interaction between pragmatic context and stylistic choices on the affective effect of poetry. This study addresses this gap by applying pragma-stylistic analysis to identify and analyze the persuasive devices used in poetry to provide a deeper understanding of how linguistic strategies motivate, influence, and engage audiences.

1.2 Research questions:

1. What are the persuasive devices employed in poems?
2. Which is the most dominant persuasive device in poetry?

1.3 Research Objectives:

1. To identify the persuasive devices employed in poems.
2. To determine the most dominant persuasive device in poetry.

1.4 The Significance

This study is significant because it sheds light on the specific persuasive resources poets use to influence and connect with their audiences, an area that has received little attention in previous research. By applying pragma-stylistic analysis, the research connects linguistic style with pragmatic function, offering a deeper understanding of how poetry persuades and motivates listeners or readers. The findings can benefit researchers, students, and educators in pragmatics, linguistics, and literature by providing tools to better interpret poetic texts and appreciate the power of language in persuasion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragma Stylistics

According to Allan (2016, p. 267), pragma stylistics utilizes the principles and methods of theoretical pragmatics to explore the idea of style in language. It is appropriate to investigate the systematic differences in language usage, whether spoken or written, including those found in literature among different authors, genres, and times. Pragma-stylistics aims to link the writing and reading of literary and non-literary texts to the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts surrounding these activities. This approach combines elements of both literature and linguistics, emphasizing the importance of context. (Sell, 2014). Persuasion serves as a key role of language, aiming to clarify the thoughts, feelings, or actions of others. In poetry, effective persuasion is accomplished by thoughtfully selecting words that resonate with the intellect and feelings of the audience. These

persuasive methods function not just through words and sentences, but also through how they are used in context and in practice.

Pragma-stylistics provides an insightful framework for analyzing how these persuasive devices function in poetry. As it clarifies, linguistic choices are inseparable from the communicative context: the poet's goals, the audience's knowledge and assumptions, and situational circumstances (Nørgaard et al., 2010). By examining the interaction between language and context, pragma-stylistics reveals how poets strategically use persuasive tools to shape meaning and influence the mindset of the listener or reader.

This approach goes beyond the literal meaning of poetic language. It considers how the poet's intention, implied meanings, and stylistic features combine to produce persuasive effects. For example, a metaphor may not only embellish a poem but also subtly direct the audience toward a particular interpretation or emotional response, depending on the shared knowledge and assumptions of the poet and audience (Hickey, 1993). Similarly, repetition and rhetorical questions engage the audience pragmatically, inviting them to reflect or feel in a certain way, thus enhancing persuasion. Pragma-stylistics, therefore, allows for a deeper understanding of persuasion in poetry by focusing on how linguistic and extralinguistic elements interact within context to motivate, convince, or inspire the audience. It highlights the dynamic nature of poetic language as a tool of persuasion, shaped by both the poet's choices and the audience's interpretive framework (Crystal & Davy, 1969; Niazi & Gautam, 2010).

2.2 Pragmatic Impact on Persuasion Process

A persuasive device in which inanimate objects, plants, animals, or abstract concepts are presented as though they were people and had human characteristics. Paltridge (2012) defines pragmatics as the study of meaning in connection to the context of a writer or speaker. As part of the hearing and comprehension process,

receivers develop assumptions about the speakers' messages. This phenomenon was explained by Harris and Monaeo (1978), who also made a distinction between logical and pragmatic effectiveness. A logical implication occurs when a word unmistakably implies knowledge. Harris (1977) says that in commercial and legal settings, customers cannot discriminate between pragmatically inferred and formally expressed facts.

These outcomes suggest that the audience evaluates persuasive language based on pragmatic considerations. The implications might be certain or ambiguous, but they would be connected to mechanisms that are essential to the audience's acquisition, memory, and recall of persuasive language. The idea of "felicity conditions" is essential to a strong case. In speech act theory, the idea of felicity conditions is crucial. (Carnegie, 2013).

2.3 Previous Studies

Said (2016) studied Aristotle's three distinct persuasive techniques (ethos, pathos, and logos) to discover if these strategies in business English fulfill most or all of the speech acts. The investigation revealed that forceful and directive speech acts are the most common in business English, and that 'logos' causal reasoning is the most commonly utilized persuasive strategy. This study identified word repetition and extended patterns of syntactic parallelism of phrases as a form of persuasion.

A study by Tahir and Al-Nawas (2021) aimed to examine the persuasive appeals, techniques, and speech acts used by male and female salespeople in television advertisements. The study was based on Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory, Lucas' (2009) framework of persuasive appeals, and the persuasive techniques described by Mick and Macquarrie (1996). The findings showed that logos (appeal to logic) was the most frequently used persuasive strategy by male salespeople in English-language advertisements, accounting for 28.46% of all strategies observed. This was followed by pathos (appeal to emotion) at 12.84%, while ethos (appeal to

credibility) was the least employed, accounting for only 3.52%. Furthermore, a noticeable gender-based difference was observed in the use of commissary speech acts, with male salespeople demonstrating this act once, while female salespeople did not use it at all (0%).

Praptiningsih et al. (2024), this study aimed to investigate how effective communication promotes religious tolerance among minority groups in Indonesia. Using an interpretative and qualitative approach, the research employed interactive models for data analysis. The results revealed that religious tolerance in Kupang is flourishing, with Muslims and non-Muslims coexisting harmoniously. They support each other, collaborate, and show respect for one another's religious ceremonies and significant events. Both communities jointly organize and participate in large religious gatherings. Despite Muslims making up only 5% of Kupang's population, their presence is significant within the majority. Overall, the religious tolerance in Kupang fosters a safe, peaceful, and welcoming environment.

3. Methodology

The analysis used in this study is qualitative descriptive in nature. Individual observations are commonly utilized in a qualitative method to provide a thorough and in-depth description (Knudson, 2007). In order to accomplish the primary purpose of this study, which is to comprehend persuasive strategies, as well as to learn more about the data and the researcher's planned analysis of it, a qualitative strategy is used.

According to Hancock *et al.* (2001), qualitative analysis typically focuses on how different perspectives, particularly those of social or psychological nature, may differ across individuals and groups within an organization. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the persuasive techniques used in selected poems. Furthermore, this method looks at actions within their usual environment or emphasizes outlining and understanding. It might also lead to the development of

artistic ideas or hypotheses, or the analysis of company practices. It connects to images, signs, and representations of objects; it includes meanings, concepts, explanations, and characteristics, claims (Lune & Berg, 2017). According to Creswell and Poth (2016), qualitative research is a type of investigation that employs non-numerical information gathered from sources such as written documents, interviews, case studies, and conversations. Therefore, content analysis is employed in this type of research instead of numerical analysis.

3.1 Model Adopted

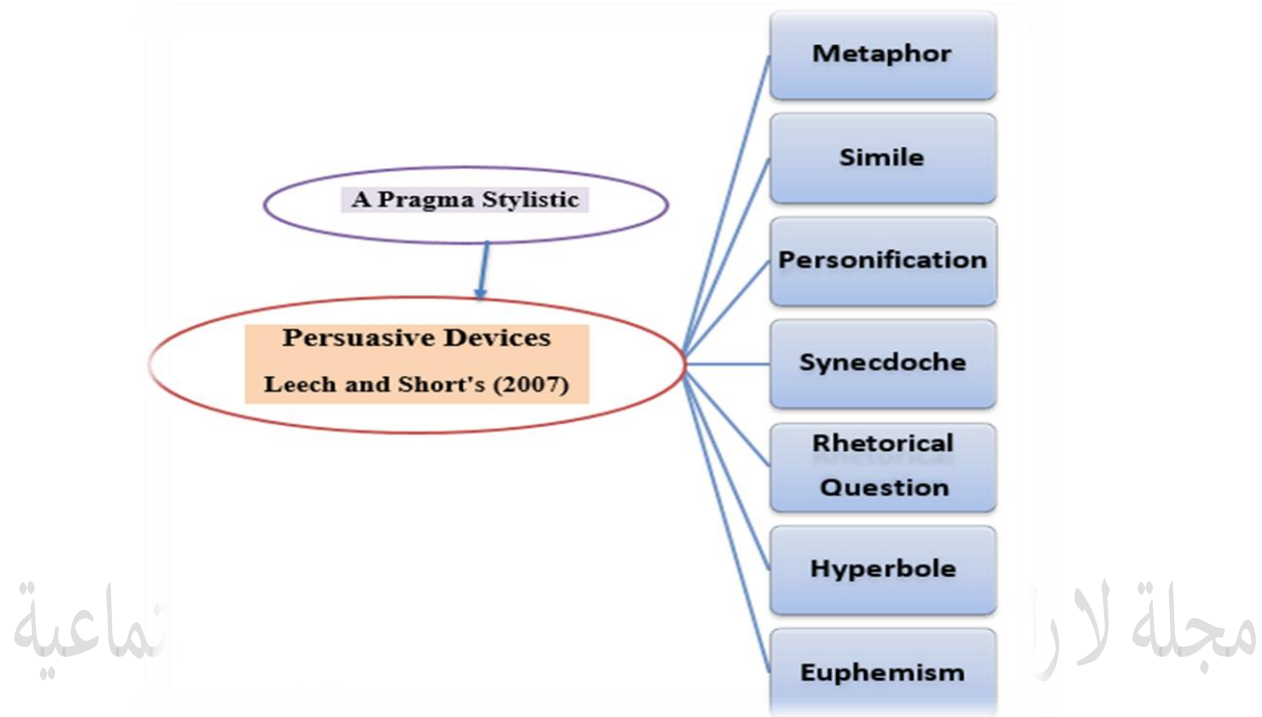
This study examines persuasion techniques from a stylistic perspective, according to Leach and Short's (2007) model. Although their framework was developed to analyze literary data, it offers valuable insights into how linguistic features such as metaphor, simile, and rhetorical questions function persuasively in discourse.

1. **Metaphor** Zhukovska (2010), metaphor refers to the renaming of objects based on the affinity or similarity (whether real or imaginary) of some shared features between different objects. Simpson (2004) states it as the process of mapping between two different conceptual domains: the target domain represents the concept in need of description, and the source domain represents the concept used to create a metaphorical construction. Stockwell and Whitely (2014) state that metaphor is utilized to spice up the speech. Zhukovska (2010) mentions that the main function of metaphor is aesthetic, it appeals to the reader's imagination. Ortony (1993) shows that speaking about metaphor involves discussing the relationships between the meanings of individual words and phrases and the meanings of what the speaker actually says. Sentence meaning can be classified as either literal or metaphorical. Additionally, metaphor is defined as an understanding or experience of an object or idea in terms of another to suggest similarity (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

2. **Simile** The word *simile* comes from Latin and means resemblance and likenesses. In technical terms, it is a stylistic device that compares two objects that have certain similarities. To achieve such comparison, the markers 'as' and 'like' are used. It can have both an affirmative and a negative form, the affirmative form emphasizes similarities between the things being compared, while the negative form does the opposite. A simile is an explicit comparison between two unlike things made with the use of terms like, as, resemble, etc. In a simile, two items are compared using the words like or as in order to emphasize a specific characteristic they have in common (Kandanan, 2017).
3. **Personification** is a persuasive device in which human characteristics are applied to an object, an idea, or an animal (Web source 3).
4. **Synecdoche** is a persuasive device that relies on transference by contiguity, where a part is utilized for the whole, one individual for a group, a material for an object, or the opposite of any of these (Znamenskaya, 2004). Richard et al. (1985) notes that synecdoche is a stylistic device used to mean the whole, the whole to mean a part, the species to mean genus, the genus to mean the species or the name of the material to mean the things made.
5. **Rhetorical Questions** are those that are created to persuade rather than gather knowledge. The speaker may ask a rhetorical question to imply that the answer is so obvious that the question does not require response. Hence, it denotes something that is known by the audience and cannot be denied (Wales, 2014). Moreover, Quirk and Crystal (2010) state that rhetorical question does not anticipate a response. A positive rhetorical question actually expresses a powerful negative statement, while a negative question serves as a strong positive statement.
6. **Hyperbole** According to Abrams and Harpham (2009), hyperbole, which refers to "overshooting" from Greek, is an extravagant or exaggerated statement intended to

evoke strong emotions or make a powerful impression rather than to be taken literally.

7. **Euphemism** is a substitute term used to describe something that makes it sound



more acceptable than it actually is. According to Abrams and Harpham (2009), euphemism is a type of figure of speech or trope in which an agreeable term or expression is substituted for one that is crude, insensitive, disagreeable, or otherwise prohibited. Euphemism is the use of a substitute word to try to hide or replace the word's negative meaning for a particular thing or activity.

Figure 3.1 Model of Analysis

3.2 Data Selection

The data utilized in the current research phrases, clauses, and sentences on persuasive techniques drawn from Julio Noboa Polanco poem *Identity* wrote while he was reading in Lane Technical High School, Chicago, somewhere around 1963 downloaded

https://koppsclass.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/0/6/28069287/identity_poem.pdf. Then, the two poems *such as, Butterflies and Gods Of The East* selected from Joseph Rudyard Kipling was an English poet wrote in 1886 downloaded https://www.poemhunter.com/rudyard-kipling/ebooks/?ebook=0&filename=rudyard_kipling_2004_9.pdf

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher examines the study's data, which includes three poems. A table is provided to facilitate the analysis.

Table 4.1: Persuasive devices used in whole data

No. Persuasive Devices	Frequency	Percentage
1. Metaphor	13	23.63
2. Rhetorical Question	4	7.27
3. Personification	11	20
4. Synecdoche	7	12.72
5. Euphemism	7	12.72
6. Simile	5	9.09
7. Hyperbole	8	14.54
Total	55	100%

Table (4.1) indicates the frequencies and the percentages that show the persuasive kinds utilized in poems. Metaphor 13 times with 23.63%. Personification appeared 11 times with 20%. The lowest one was rhetorical question 4 times with (7.27 %).

Poem *Identity* by Julio Noboa Polanco

Excerpt 1

*Let them be as flowers,
always watered, fed, guarded, admired,
I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,
clinging on cliffs, like an eagle*

Metaphor

The metaphor's vehicles, *flowers* and *weeds*, represent the various kinds of lifestyles that people can lead. The flowers stand for a pampered, cozy existence where

individuals follow social rules and lead uniform lives. The entire poem is an extended metaphor, comparing **flowers** to those who conform to societal expectations and **weeds** to those who choose a path of individuality, even if it is less admired or more difficult. By presenting the weed as "tall, ugly," yet strong and free, the poem persuades the reader to value independence over conventional beauty or acceptance. It occurred 7 times in the poem.

Simile

A simile can be recognized by the words *like* and *as*. In the poem, the word "like" is used in the second stanza - "clinging on cliffs, **like** an eagle. Also the word *as* used in the first stanza *Let them be **as** flowers*. He uses the simile **twice** to liken them to flowers which, in spite of their ordinarily positive connotations, the poet uses as an example of their conformity and mocks them for it. The speaker compares themselves to **an eagle**, a powerful and free creature that soars above obstacles. This simile highlights strength, independence, and resilience. These similes contribute to the poem's central message: the difference between living a safe, admired life (like flowers) or living freely but struggling (like an eagle or a weed).

Euphemism

It used 4 times **"Ugly, but free"** The word "ugly" could be a euphemism for nonconformity or uniqueness, implying that freedom may not always be beautiful in a conventional sense.

"Let them be as flowers" Instead of saying followers or conformists, the poet uses "flowers," which softens the critique of people who seek approval.

Synecdoche

Synecdoche used 4 times in identity. It is a literary device where a part represents the whole or vice versa appears in a few key ways.

"Broken by the stone" Stone could represent obstacles, hardships, or societal oppression, using a physical object to stand for a broader concept.

Personification

Wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks"

Personification appeared 5 times in this poem. The **wind** is personified as something that can waver, almost as if it has emotions or intentions.

Excerpt 2

*to live, to feel exposed to the madness
of the vast, eternal sky.*

Hyperbolic

It identified 4 times in identity. The concept of the "eternal sky" emphasizes the absurdity of being restricted by the expectations of others when there are countless ways to live one's life. It also suggests that leading a more independent life is considered more spiritual, as the endless sky holds significant religious meanings. This understanding is reinforced by the mention of the soul, which serves as a reminder that the poet is not simply discussing superficial alterations to their life; rather, the poem addresses identity at every aspect of the self.

Excerpt 3

I'd rather smell of musty, green stench

Metaphor

"If I could stand alone, strong and free"

This reinforces the metaphor of the weed, showing independence as a source of strength rather than isolation. The entire poem is an extended metaphor comparing two ways of living: being a delicate, admired flower that conforms, or a strong, free weed that thrives despite challenges.

Rhetorical Question

Would you rather be a beautiful, admired flower that conforms, or a wild, free weed that thrives independently?

This question is embedded in the structure of the poem, as the speaker clearly chooses the **weed** (symbolizing freedom) over the **flower** (symbolizing conformity). Even though no direct rhetorical question appears in the text, the poem encourages readers to reflect on their own values and choices.

Hyperbole

"I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed"

It occurred 4 times in whole poem The idea of being "**tall**" and "**ugly**" is exaggerated to emphasize the speaker's preference for independence, even at the cost of being undesirable.

Repetition

The phrase "I'd rather" is repeated multiple times, 4 times emphasizing the speaker's preference for freedom over conformity. This repetition reinforces the poem's persuasive message, making it clear that the speaker values personal freedom and authenticity above societal approval. In Julio Polanco's poem, "Identity," the repetition emphasizes the main idea of freedom through being unique. For instance, on many occasions the poet describes himself as a "tall, ugly weed" that can remain strong and unrestrained.

Poem by Rudyard Kipling *Butterflies*

Excerpt 1

The **children follow the butterflies**,

Synecdoche

It represented a figure of speech where a part represents the whole or vice versa, can be found in Kipling's poem *Butterflies*. "**Wings**" Kipling refers to butterflies simply as wings this would be an example of synecdoche, where a part (wings) represents the whole creature (butterfly). This usage emphasizes the delicate, fleeting nature of butterflies by focusing on their most visually striking and symbolic feature. It used once.

Metaphor

Metaphor for Fragile and Transient Life Butterflies, with their short lifespan, represent the fleeting nature of existence, joy, or success.

Excerpt 2

Glorious butterflies raised from the dead." . . .

They dance forever in the sun

Metaphor

The butterflies are a metaphor for elusive dreams or desires that people, especially children, chase without understanding the difficulties they may face. The poem contrasts the fleeting beauty of butterflies with the reality of the eggs, worms, and the transformation into something glorious, which can be seen as a metaphor for life's challenges leading to eventual rewards. It used 3 times.

Hyperbolic

Hyperbole, or deliberate exaggeration for emphasis can be found in *Butterflies* once to highlight the fleeting and carefree nature of butterflies. They dance forever in the sun.

This is an exaggeration because butterflies do not literally dance *forever*, but the phrase emphasizes their constant movement and the illusion of their endless joy and freedom.

Rhetorical question

And what remains when summer ends?

Rhetorical questions are used to provoke thought and emphasize the contrast between fleeting beauty and lasting strength or substance. This question does not expect an answer but rather highlights the transient nature of butterflies (and by extension, beauty, pleasure, or superficial things). It suggests that once the fleeting moment is gone, little of true value remains. It occurred once.

Personification

"They flit through the field in a dance"

It used 3 times to give human-like qualities to butterflies, enhancing their symbolic meaning. The butterflies are described as dancing, which is a human action, emphasizing their lightness and carefree nature.

Excerpt 3

Like drifting petals in the air.

Simile

This simile *like drifting* compares butterflies to petals floating in the wind, emphasizing their delicate, light, and fleeting nature. It reinforces the theme of impermanence and beauty. Simile used once in this poem

Poem by Rudyard Kipling Gods Of The East

Excerpt 1

Because I sought it far from men,

I found it burning overhead,

And the grey snake coiled on the altar stone-

The old gods dwell in the East

Metaphor

Metaphor happened 3 times to convey deep and symbolic meanings, often contrasting the East and West, as well as the ancient and the modern. The old gods dwell in the East suggests that ancient traditions, beliefs, and deities still have power in the East, contrasting with the changing, modernized West. It implies that history and mysticism are alive in the East.

Repetition

The repetition of phrases like *Because I sought* emphasizes the speaker's relentless pursuit of something elusive and powerful. This repetition creates a rhythm that mirrors the intensity of the search and the ultimate realization.

Excerpt 2

We be the Gods of the East-

Older than all-

How shall we fall?

And the Gods of the East made *mouths* at me.

As endless as the desert sands

Personification

The Gods of the East are personified, being described as "Masters of Mourning and Feast" and making "mouths" at the speaker. This gives them a living, almost malevolent presence, heightening the sense of dread and power. These personification occurred 3 times to create a mystical and reverent tone, emphasizing the lingering presence of the ancient gods.

Simile

A phrase **As endless** like this could compare the gods' memory or influence to the vastness of the desert, reinforcing the idea of eternity. Similes in the poem occurred twice to highlight the contrast between ancient traditions and the ever-changing present.

Hyperbole

It used 3 times to stress the enduring presence of ancient gods and traditions. **The East remembers forever**, this exaggerates the idea that the East has an eternal memory, emphasizing the lasting influence of old traditions and gods.

Rhetorical Question

The line "How shall we fall?" serves as a rhetorical question, emphasizing the invincibility and timelessness of the Gods of the East. It also engages the reader, prompting them to consider the answer. It occurred twice in this poem.

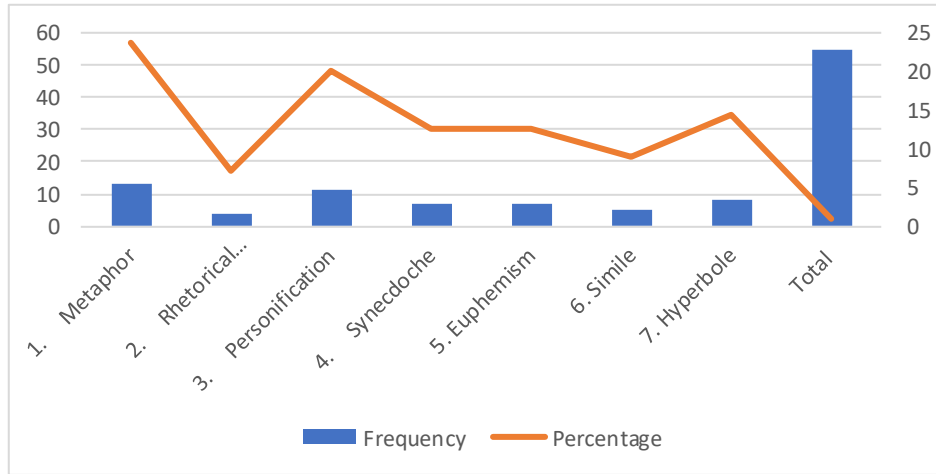


Figure 4.1 The highest persuasive devices in poems

Conclusions

A. Concerning research question one.

1. All poems used persuasive strategies, although at varying rates, to persuade and encourage the listener to do or not do anything.
2. The researcher found new device called repetition with the highest percentage.
3. Seven persuasive devices utilized in selected poems.

B. Concerning research question two

1. Persuasive strategies ranged from direct to indirect or implicit techniques. The direct approach emphasized reinforcing religious values and beliefs that require immediate commitment.
2. The most dominant persuasive technique was metaphor that means when the poets used emotions to be deep and difficult to explain in plain words, but by using metaphors, authors may make striking connections. Comparing one object to another seemingly unlike object established a connection between the two.

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