

A Poem Analysis of E.E. Cummings’ [I carry your heart with me (I carry it in)] Grammatical and Phonological Level

Pramudana Ihsan

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya

pramudanaihsan@fkip.um-surabaya.ac.id

Abstract

Edward Estlin Cummings (1894-1962) was not a person who was trifling in the literary world. His ideas of several new writing styles were publicly known and were able to inspire many poets in this world. The new ideas of writing styles including lowercase writing on a few subjects, lack of commas, full stops, spaces, and also parentheses which are placed on the wrong spots. All of those things are manifested on the one of his great poems, titled [i carry your heart with me (I carry it in)]. Even though several persons called the ideas as “peculiar ideas,” but the poet, made those peculiar ideas and also the deep sentences inside as the media to analyze this poem until it was able to be understood and discussed as literary subject. The phonological level analysis used sound devices understanding and semantics analysis which recommended by Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2011: 148), used figure of speech recognizing; are maximally optimized in this work in order to serve the appropriate result as it is hoped, to be one of learning media in the literary discussion.

Keywords: Edward Estlin Cummings, phonological level analysis, grammatical level

Abstract

Edward Estlin Cummings (1894-1962) merupakan orang yang terkenal dalam dunia sastra. Ide-idenya tentang gaya penulisan baru telah dikenal publik dan mampu menginspirasi banyak penyair di dunia, termasuk penulisan huruf kecil pada beberapa subjek, kurangnya koma, berhenti penuh, spasi, dan juga tanda kurung yang ditempatkan di tempat yang salah. Semua hal itu atertuang dalam puisinya yang berjudul (I carry your heart with me). Meskipun beberapa orang menyebut ide sebagai "ide yang aneh," tetapi dia mampu menuangkan ide tersebut dalam bait- bait puisi yang mendalam dari segi analisis tingkat fonologis berdasarkan suara dan analisis semantik yang direkomendasikan oleh Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2011: 148). Selain itu, pengenalan kata- kata kiasan digunakan secara optimal sebagai salah satu media pembelajaran dalam diskusi sastra.

Kata kunci: Edward Estlin Cummings, analisis tingkat fonologi, level gramatikal

I. INTRODUCTION

The man named Edward Estlin Cummings (1894-1962) was a famous and popular American poet who is really well known with his unusual writing styles. The most popular “deviant” writing style which is popularized by Cummings is lowercase letters using on several spots which actually must be placed by uppercase letters. Besides, Cummings was success to create the greatest love poem of a lifetime, as several experts said; titled [i carry your heart with me (I carry it in)]. E.E. Cummings made a deep, romantic, and profound poem by this. This poem is a suitable choice for the persons who like reading love or marriage poem for many years since it was created.

This poem is able to let our heart and mind fly away analyzing every single sentence which was written by Cummings. He could create several sentences which make the readers curious to read them continuously until one could find the truly meaning of what he wrote. It seemed Cummings devoted his own love feeling to be written on a paper and optimized his feeling which is looked outburst in this poem. Nawaz, Andleeb, Anam, Aslam, and Sarwar in their paper titled Stylistic Analysis of E. E. Cumming’s Poem [I carry your heart with me (I Carry It in)] stated if in this poem the writer could find a spontaneous overflow of emotions, moreover there is an outburst feeling inside.

Therefore, Cummings gives us several interesting things which could be analyzed several interesting things on this poem. One of The elements which could be tried to be analyzed is when Cumming was lack of use of capitalization in this poem. It means that several of words which actually need capital letter on the starting alphabet, wrote in normal alphabet such as on the third line “i go you go” or in the last line “i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart).”

Although “I” is a subject of those two sentences but Cumming clearly avoid the rule and keep writing it on normal alphabet of “i.” As the writer knows, Cummings was a 20th century poet and novelist known for his innovations in style and structure. Therefore, he was not too focused on the writing rules which can be bound in the poet’s creativity in developing his ideas. www.study.com explains that he was a modernist poet, and people know if a modernist poet believed in stripping away all that was unnecessary in a poem in order to showcase its form.

The readers may find the differences when Cumming’s poems are read and other poems from others. In order to understand Cumming’s works, one must first understand who Cumming is, many of Cumming’s perceptions, and also the opinions. Based on

www.study.com, Cumming was something of a square peg like other artists and poets. Hints of non-conformist writing style which was Cumming's works would later echo on all around the world. e.e. cummings wrote almost three thousand (3000) over the course of life. In this article, Cumming's poem titled *i carry your heart with me [i carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)]* is focused to be analyzed because many media write if this poem is one of the best love poems ever written.

There are some elements and level of a poem. Some elements and levels are helped people doing a stylistic analysis of this poem. In graphology level, one examines how the text looks like and also examines the stanza¹ structure. It means how stanza develops in that poem by counting how many lines it consists of and how do lines of each stanza start and end. The writer also studies Punctuation marks here. The writer finds where the comma, semicolon and full stops etc. are used and what the purpose of their usage is and what effect they create.

Phonological level works with the sound patterns of the poem. It includes the forms, rhyming words, alliteration, assonance, consonance etc. Ihsan on the unpublished coursework presentation titled *Elements of Poetry: Sound Device* (2016:2) explains if Alliteration means the repetition of initial consonant sounds, in two or more neighboring words or syllables. Assonance A repetition of vowel sounds within words or syllables. Repetition is Words or phrases repeated in writings to give emphasis, rhythm, and/or a sense of urgency. Rhyme means the repetition of end sounds in words. It also creates music. Rhyme is mainly about music. Rhythm is the sound pattern created by stressed and unstressed syllables. Meter is the regular patterns of stresses found in many poems and songs. Onomatopoeia is words that sound like their meaning --- the "sound" they describe.

In phonology devices, it is contractedly found forms and finds out that what effects they create. Using of contractions result in the change of pronunciations, the change of spellings, the change of sound, also rhyming words. Contractions are not allowed in standard writing. Consonance is about sound in which the breath is complete partially obstructed. Neologism is the formation of a new word, which has permanently become part of the vocabulary. Nonce-formation is form of a new word, which is never used again. It is only used by a writer for a certain purpose. In Malapropism there is the formation of a word by combination of two different languages. It is also called compound words. In grammatical level, grammatical rules are the focus. Sentence markers, punctuation marks,

¹ Group of lines in a poem (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2008)

contractions and the pattern of a sentence etc. will be checked. Syntactical level deals with the sentence structure. Following levels are observed in this poem analysis. They are grammatical level, phonological level, syntactical level, graph logical level, lexical level, and also semantics analysis which recommended by Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2011: 148).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

Generally, the writer applies descriptive research to describe the result that is optimizing some poetry elements inside such as figurative language (figure of speech, sound device, denotation, connotation, rhyme). It means besides phonological levels using sound devices, it also analyzes some poetry elements usage inside by focusing each line and also each word descriptively.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cummings does not use capital letters in his writings especially for the subject of sentence. I, is a personal pronoun for first subject, according to the norms of grammar must be written in capital letter, is violated here. How does that lowercase type affect your reading? For those of us who live in the digital world, the writer might be a bit desensitized and unimpressed. But for those living in the 1950s, this was groundbreaking stuff. Even still, the writer is a bit shocked by that first lowercase "i."

The writer understands indeed that in this poem, there is unusual capitalization, unusual spacing and unusual pattern of lines in the stanzas. Absence of capitalization is deviation of formed rule of grammar. The readers can see if this poem was born without space between the end of sentence and several parentheses of each sentence. We find here lack of full stops. Line pattern and line spacing is not according to the set norms of grammar. As a kind of punctuation, a parenthesis is supposed to add something to the text already provided without interrupting the flow of thought entirely. www.oxforddictionaries.com explains if parenthesis is a word or phrase inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it, in writing usually marked off by brackets, dashes, commas. It's important, but it doesn't need its own sentence.

Here, the parenthesis function with a similar purpose but they have got the added bonus of visually connecting the speaker and his lover. The readers also could see clearly

in line five (5) if the phrase of no fate is placed in the right side. It seems, Cummings really wanted to be a modern artist at that time who avoids using formed rules in literary and writing.

2. Figurative Language Level

a. Phonological Level (Sound Devices)

As stated before, Phonological level works with the sound patterns of the poem. It includes the forms, rhyming words, alliteration, assonance, consonance etc. Therefore, the writer would start the discussion the rhyme scheme of this poem. Ihsan (2016) states that the rhyme scheme is the pattern of end rhymes that designated with assigning a different letter of the alphabet to each new rhyme. Thus, could be analyzed if Cummings uses 14 lines love lyrics with A-B-A-B-C-D-C-D-E-F-E-F-G-G, by avoiding the phrase of “i fear” included in the first stanza.

If the phrase of “i fear” was included on the first stanza, it would be a b a c b because the word of “fear” has the same voice with “anywhere.” The internal rhyme on this poem can be found on the line 2 -4 of “anywhere I go you go; my dear.” The readers could see if the word of “anywhere” has final rhyme of R and it is followed by the word of “dear” which is finalized by R also. That means if there is a set of internal rhyme on the sentence. Other internal rhymes could be found on “whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling.” The word of doing is ended by NG, and the word of darling is ended by NG also.

Next sound device which can be analyzed from this poem is repetition. Noted on the line three (3) there is a clause of “I go you go.” That clause repeats the word of “GO” for twice, it means there is a repetition on that clause. On line six (6) & seven (7), Cummings repeats the word of “NO” on each of first word of the line. Please do not forget if Cummings also repeats the word of “FATE” for twice on line six (6). As the readers can find it on:

no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true).

The other repetition which has same form with the previous one, can be found on the line eight (8) & nine (9). In these two lines, Cummings repeats the word (conjunction) of “and” on each first word of two clauses; which the readers could read them on:

and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

In the writer's perception, Cummings may apply repetition on the first stanza for each first word on each clause. Those sentences could be read on:

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in
my heart) I am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

The writer suggests if the repetition is consisted here on the word of "I." this subject is repeated three times on each clause; even though inside of the parenthesis, which are "I carry your heart with me", " (I carry it in my heart)", " I am never without it", "

On line ten (10), the readers could read several words which are repeated for twice each, such as word of "the root" on "here is the root of the root", the word of "the bud" on the "bud of the bud", and the word of "sky" on "the sky of the sky." Those sentences could be analyzed as sort of superlative meaning. If the readers read the root of the root, it means the basic root of all. If Cummings writes the bud of the bud means it is the best bud of all. If the sentence states the sky of the sky means it is the highest, widest, and the most beautiful sky in the atmosphere.

Assonance is a type of sound device which can be found in this poem. The definition of it is a repetition of vowel sounds within words or syllables. The readers are able to look at the clause of "i go you go." On that clause, vowel of "əʊ" is repeated twice in the word of "GO." On the line four (4), the readers could read assonance sound device on the sentence of "by only me id your doing, my darling." The words of "by", "only", "me" are ended by sound of "I". It means assonance is occurred in here, not in the same letter but the different letter (y & e) with same sound.

On the line ten (10), the readers could the assonance which is occurred on a sentence of "here is the deepest secret nobody knows." The readers are allowed to feel first assonance in the words of is, deepest, and secret. Those three words have the same sound of "I" on the first (please look at the I-, dee-, and se-). The 2nd (second) assonance on one (1) line is occurred on part of "nobody knows." The sound of NO is repeated by KNOWS which is heard the same in the same character of "əʊ".

The next assonance is occurred on the sentence of "higher than the soul can hope or mind can hide." The sound of "SOUL" and "HOPE" have the same characteristic of vowel

“ʊə” (just try to pronounce SOU- and HO-), and it is also can be seen on the words of “MINE” and “HIDE” on same sentence. The words of “mine” and “hide” are two words that have same vowel sound of “aɪ,” just try to pronounce MI- and HI-.

The last sentence which is consisted of assonance inside is could be read on the sentence of “this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart.” Two words of “this” and “is” have the same vowel sound of “I,” the readers could try to prove it by pronouncing THI- and I-. The readers could also find the assonance on the two words of “STARS” and “APART”, which could be pronounced in the same vowel sound of “ɑː” in STAR- and APAR-.

In the poem sound device discussion, the readers should notice of a kind of sound device which also important to be learned. That is called Alliteration. Ihsan, on his unpublished course material, states if alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds, in two or more neighboring words or syllables. Alliteration could be found on this poem easily, without too deeply thinking about it. On the line 4, the words of “DOING” and “DARLING” have “D” consonant before each word and also “NG” consonant on the end of each word. On the line six (6), the readers could also find alliteration on “FATE” and “SWEET”. Even the word of “FATE” is ended by E, but it should be pronounced as T, so it has same final letter with “SWEET”. It means alliteration is occurred in here.

The next alliterations are occurred on line eight (8), which is stated as “and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant” and also on the line nine (9), “and whatever a sun will always sing is you.” On the line (8), the words of “MOON” and “MEANT” have the same first letter on each word, which is “M.” On the line (9) the words of SUN and SING are also having the same first letter on each word. It means, on those two lines, alliterations are occurred.

b. Figures of Speech

This poem also consisted of several figures of speech inside it. When the writer analyzes this poem per each line, three categories could be found, which frequently occurred on this poem, which are hyperbole, personification, and also metaphor. If the readers are curious of the sentences which consisting hyperbole in this poem, those sentences could be found on line 1, “I carry your heart with me (I carry it in,” because the human heart (which is referred on human’s brain) cannot be carried as easy as Cummings thinks. That is repeated again by writing “I carry it in,” the word of “IT” in here is referred

to “HEART,” and we cannot bring it of course. Line two (2), “my heart) I am never without it (anywhere.” On that sentence, “it” refers to “HEART,” which writer stated before, it cannot be carried as easy as Cummings think about because human brain is inside of human body, and of course people must kill someone first if the brain really wanted.

Line five (5),” i fear no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want.” Hyperbole is analyzed on the clause of “for you are my fate.” How could someone in this world predict and determine his own fate? Only Allah who have power and could do it, control our life in this universe. On the line 6, the readers also could find hyperbole which is on “no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true).” Ordinary girl or woman cannot be world, and the world is too wide to be placed on a woman.

Hyperboles also found on line thirteen (13) and fourteen (14). On the line thirteen (13), the readers could analyze if the sentence of “and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart” is referred to the “deepest secret” which is written on line nine (9). Therefore, it stated as hyperbole, because “the deepest secret” is not able to keep the stars apart. The last hyperbole on this poem is available on the last line, “I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart),” actually this line has the same sentence with the first and second line, so the readers could read the writer’s explanation is related with the figure of speech inside.

Another figure of speech, named metaphor, is also found on several lines including on line nine (9)-eleven (11). On those lines, the readers can read:

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows

The sentence of “here of the root of the root and the bud of the bud and the sky of the sky” referred to one thing which has been stated before on the line nine (9), “the deepest secret.” Ihsan on his one of the unpublished presentation titled Elements of Poetry, stated if metaphor is a figure of speech which compares seemingly unlike things, but does not use like or as. By this explanation reader could see if in several of those lines (9-11), the deepest secret is compared as the root of the root, the bud of the bud, and the sky of the sky. That comparison means that in line nine (9) - ten (10), metaphor is occurred. The next metaphor could be found on the clause of “a tree called life.” the writer percepts that metaphor is occurred in here, because “a tree” is clearly compared with “life.”

The last figure of speech which is found on this poem is personification. www.simple.m.wikipedia.org, writes if personification is a figure of speech where human

qualities are given to animals, objects, or ideas. The reader could find this figure of speech on line seven (7) which is written, “and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant.” Moon is orbital satellite of planet earth which cannot give some meanings, feelings, or maybe mysteries which can be meant or analyzed.

In analyzing the elements of poem, people should notice of two things called denotation and connotation. Ihsan on his unpublished presentation material in his coursework, titled “The Elements of Poetry,” writes if denotation is the strict dictionary meaning of a word. The readers could find a lot of denotation here, on this poem such as moon, sun, secret, etc. But, for connotation which is meant of the emotional and imaginative association surrounding a word (Ihsan, 2016), the readers could find it on several lines such as on the line 1, “I carry your heart with me...” the word of “HEART” in here is not the real human heart of liver. It is such a feeling which is controlled by brain. The next connotation can be found on the line 5, “I fear no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want.”

The word of “SWEET” on that sentence is referred to a woman that the poet loves, and based on Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary (2008: 449), the word of “SWEET” means tasting like sugar or smelling pleasant. Therefore, woman could be tasted like sugar. The last connotation is found on the line six (6), “no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true).” The readers could analyze if the phrase of “MY TRUE” actually origins from “MY TRUTH” because the possessive adjective word of “MY” is actually should be followed by noun. Based on Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary (2008: 477), the word of “TRUTH” means true fact about something or rather than things that have been invented or guessed. Therefore, it is quiet strange if one says a woman who is loved by him is a truth, because truth is not a living thing, is not a human, and not a woman that can be loved.

III. CONCLUSION

This poem is not a kind of long poem, but it indeed haves a deep meaning that can scratch our mind rest of a whole lifetime. The readers are taught by Cummings how to adore someone who loved and someone who deserves to be adored. This poem also gives several things which can be analyzed by the literary theories including grammatical field, phonological field, and also based on other elements of poem. As a modern poet, Cummings writes this poem with several “oddities” inside, if it looked from grammatical perception and formed writing technique.

Lack of commas, full stops, spaces, wrong in placing of adjective and noun, are some grammatical mistakes which are frequently occurred inside of this poem. Those kind of grammatical mistakes are the main reasons how the poets could develop and creating such fabulous masterpieces based on phonological level of analysis, the writer finds assonance, alliteration, repetition, and several unique rhyme patterns inside. From other elements of poem analysis, the writer could find if there are some figures of speech such as metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. The analysis is completed by denotation and connotation words which are found on this poem.

REFERENCES

- Fromkin, Victoria., Rodman, Robert. and Nina Hyams. 2011. *An Introduction to Language 9th Edition*. Los Angeles: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Ihsan, Pramudana. 2016. *Elements of Poetry*. Surabaya: Unpublished Course Material.
- Ihsan, Pramudana. 2016. *Elements of Poetry: Sound Devices*. Surabaya: Unpublished Course Material.
- Oxford. 2016. Accessed on 20 June 2016. *Parenthesis*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/parenthesis.html>
- Wikipedia. 2016. *Personification*. Retrieved from [https:// www.simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/personification.html](https://www.simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/personification.html). Accessed on 20 June 2016.
- Wikipedia. 2004. Accessed on 20 June 2016. *Poetry Analysis*. https://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/poetry_analysis.html.