

CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN “DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP” POEM BY MARY ELIZABETH FRYE


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Abstract

Connotative meaning refers to the additional meanings associated with a word beyond its literal definition, often carrying positive or negative values. This research aims to analyze the connotative, or hidden, meanings in the poem “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep” by Mary Elizabeth Frye. The study employs a qualitative research method to analyze the data. It utilizes Leech's theory to explore the connotative meanings within the poem. Each phrase and couplet in “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep” was categorized based on its connotative meaning, and the specific aspects of each connotative word were identified. Following the analysis, the researchers provided explanations for the data and drew conclusions based on their findings. As a result, 12 distinct connotative meanings were discovered in this poem. In conclusion, connotative meaning differs from literal meaning found in a dictionary, and it can sometimes be more challenging to decipher the hidden significance behind it.

Keywords: poem, connotative, denotative

Abstrak

Makna konotatif merujuk pada makna tambahan yang dikaitkan dengan sebuah kata di luar definisi literalnya, yang sering kali membawa nilai positif atau negatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna konotatif, atau makna tersembunyi, dalam puisi “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep” oleh Mary Elizabeth Frye. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif untuk menganalisis data. Penelitian ini memanfaatkan teori Leech untuk mengeksplorasi makna konotatif dalam puisi tersebut. Setiap frasa dan bait dalam “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep” dikategorikan berdasarkan makna konotatifnya, dan aspek spesifik dari setiap kata konotatif diidentifikasi. Setelah analisis, para peneliti memberikan penjelasan untuk data dan menarik kesimpulan berdasarkan temuan mereka. Hasilnya, 12 makna konotatif yang berbeda ditemukan dalam puisi ini. Sebagai kesimpulan, makna konotatif berbeda dari makna literal yang ditemukan dalam kamus, dan terkadang lebih sulit untuk menguraikan makna tersembunyi di baliknya.

Kata Kunci: puisi, konotatif, denotatif

1. Introduction

Language, is the most comprehensive science of signs, according to Saussure, making it a suitable study topic. Thus, by providing theoretical underpinnings for the field of linguistics, Saussure initiated the study of signs (linguistics) (Kojongian, 2021). The language repertoire itself is a collection of ways in which a person can interact well using literacy, language, and other means of communication (Afriadi, 2021). The use of language is important tool in literature.

Literature is a kind of art that examines human existence and talks about concepts, feelings, and narratives in a variety of formats, including essays, short stories, plays, novels, and poetry. Along with discussing universal themes like conflict, love, and identity, literature also encompasses poetry, drama, nonfiction, and fiction. Literary works have a magnificent creative worth and are compositions that are soul-expressions (Adriyanti et al., 2021). Literary works have artistic worth because they contain elements of beauty and aesthetics, making them more than just ordinary works. Literary works, therefore, have creative elements that express the author's

feelings, thoughts, and emotions while being exquisitely processed to provide readers an aesthetic experience. Works created by individuals who primarily use language to communicate ideas and do so for aesthetic purposes are referred to as literary works (Rahmadini et al., 2018).

Literature is a work written by someone who emphasizes beauty or aesthetics in its delivery and uses language to communicate concepts. Just like in writing poetry, we must also use literary language that contains aesthetic values and feelings so that readers can feel the emotions felt by the writer. Poetry is a kind of writing in which the poet expresses their thoughts and emotions through language that is restricted by meter, rhyme, rhythm, lyric arrangement, and significant stanzas (Sari Rahayu, 2021). Every phrase used by the author is very important to evoke the desired feelings, ideas, or attitudes. In addition, poetry also often uses various literary figures of speech, including personification, metaphor, simile, symbolism, and irony, to describe ideas more subtly than prose. Because the reader must be actively involved in the interpretation process, the meaning will vary based on the reader's background, perspective, and experience.

Logita (2017) states that "The process of literary study is very important in linguistic life." It also enables us to decipher literary works' deeper meanings. The statement asserts that the study or analysis of literary works is crucial to the study of language and literature because it enables us to uncover deeper meanings, lessons, and messages that may not be apparent upon first reading, beyond only comprehending the text's surface. The process of conveying a meaning or message from one language to another is considered translation. Furthermore, translation also entails converting an English message's content into another language (Meldia, 2022).

According to Chandler (2007) semiotics includes the study of anything that might symbolize or represent something else, not just what we term "signs" in everyday speech. According to semiotics, these signs might be objects, sounds, images, phrases, or gestures that are utilized to express symbolism or meaning. The study of how humans understand signs is known as semiotics. These indicators can be anything words, pictures, sounds, motions, or objects that can symbolize or represent anything else. To put it another way, semiotics examines how the objects in our environment serve to communicate deeper meanings or messages, not just through language but also through regular activities or visual media.

Poetry differs out from other forms of literature because it is symbolic and complex. Everyone can convey their feelings, such as sadness, disappointment, anger, and so forth, through poetry. Poetry from the past and now, which both continue to grow and progress humanity, demonstrates this. Like every art, poetry requires a profound comprehension to truly appreciate its significance. Using only words, the author tries to express joy, grief, beauty, or anxiety. According to Trinaldi (2024) poetry has frequently been employed throughout literary history to express emotions like love, longing, joy, or societal criticism. As a tool, the words in the poetry must be able to be weighed down by the ideas the poet wants to convey (Fitriyah, 2021).

Poetry is a meaningful structure because it is rich in symbolism. According to Pradopo (1991). Poetry cannot be separated from works that have a dominant aesthetic function because its meaning is integrated. Poetry not only has a direct or denotative meaning, but also has a symbolic meaning that often requires expert interpretation. The poet's choice of words, diction, and imagery and figures of speech are important components in conveying the meaning of poetry. The use of diction, including denotation and connotation, in conveying the author's ideas is discussed in this study.

The main character in “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep”, Mary Elizabeth, is often considered a representation of the social and emotional issues faced by women during her time. She serves to convey a social critique of the position of women and reflects personal and social struggles against moral dilemmas and gender norms. The author depicts conflicts of identity, independence, and social expectations through this character. An analysis of Mary Elizabeth's character provides important insights into the representation of women in literature and its relevance to understanding social change in the past and present.

The poem “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep” was written by Mary Elizabeth Frye in 1932 as a spontaneous response to the grief of a friend who had lost her mother in Germany and was unable to return home for her funeral. Frye, a woman with no formal education in literature, wrote these hopeful words to comfort those in mourning. In her poem, she states that a person's soul does not truly disappear after death, but continues to exist in natural forms such as the stars, wind, and rain. The poem, though simple, has become a common refrain for those trying to find comfort in the face of loss, with the message that death is merely a transition and not an end.

Based on Abrams and Harpham (in Mauliddiyah, 2021) poetry refers to the different ways that people have used rhythm in order to express their most intense and imaginative thoughts about their world, themselves, and how they relate to each other. As it stated by Dedi Efendi (2021) poetry is a form of writing with meaningful and beautiful meanings that is created by poets. is characterized as melodic or at least rhythmic speech, according to Landy (in Mulyati, 2019). Additionally, it typically uses words whose sounds blend or echo with one another to produce a harmonic speech. It could even be sung, chanted, or placed to music instead of just being stated.

The core of the semiotic approach to literary analysis is semiotic theory. All of the meanings hidden within the signs or text of are made visible by the semiotic method. Not only can semiotics study texts in linguistics or language, but it can also relate to other things. For example, words are signs, and everything that can be seen and understood in human life is signed, as are gestures, traffic signals, flags, literary structures, and more.

The selection of words used by the writer to convey the idea is known as diction in. One of the essential components of that plays an important role in expressing its meaning, along with imagery and figure of speech, is diction. The author is able express his ideas and emotions through the phrase. The two types of diction used in this study are denotation and connotation.

The general definition of denotation is literal meaning or a word with a single, distinct meaning. Denotation can occasionally have no connection to society, culture, ideology, or other elements; in such cases, it even lacks additional meanings or values. Denotation, this point is the core meaning of symbols. And for connotation, it's the additional meaning or emotional value that a word carries, described as meaning something else. In line with Antika et al., (2020) denotative meaning relates to the original meaning that a word or phrase possesses. Connotative meaning, on the other hand is a meaning that is complemented by denotative meaning and related to the value that the word communicates.

The basic element of this meaning is its denotations which are the word's dictionary meaning or meanings. Based on Sinaga et al., (2021), denotative meaning also known as conceptual meaning, is a type of word that is based on a direct observation about anything or something outside of the language. They are usually referred to as "The real meaning" and are related to objective and factual information. Moreover, the denotative meaning in the dictionary is proper

and patent. Additional meanings that include emotional feelings that are conveyed in a term are known as connotative meanings. Understanding and interpreting a speech more comprehensively in order to prevent misunderstandings is the goal of denotative and connotative meanings. However, there are misunderstandings since there's few people are able to understand such characteristics. Denotative and connotative meanings in speech comprehension will help with the realization of communication objectives by both speakers and listeners, allowing for a transparent two-way communication system

According to Faiq (2018) connotative meaning covers all meanings that are not denotative meaning, such as meanings that are not related to the extensional range of a word in a specific sense. Moreover, the connotation are its overtones of meaning, which goes beyond what it says. These meanings result from its past activity, relationships, and context. For example, the word "home" in denotation is just a place where one lives, but in connotation it refers safety, love, comfort, and family. Both childlike and childish mean "characteristic of a child," but childish indicates pettiness, wilfulness, and tantrums, while childlike refers gentleness, innocence, and wide-eyed amazement (Pfeiffer & Perrine, 1978). Moreover, as stated by Wedhowerti (2024) the first order of signification is denotation, while the second order is connotation. Consequently, a denotative sign becomes the signifier of a connotative sign in connotation.

In literature, connotations add layers of meaning. Connotative meaning in literature refers to the emotional, cultural, or associative implications of a word or phrase that go beyond its dictionary definition (denotation). The writers use connotative meanings to add depth, evoke emotions, and create richer layers of meaning in their works. As stated by Leech (1981) connotative meaning is the communication significance that a word possesses beyond its merely conceptual content because of what it references to. If the term "woman" is theoretically defined by three characteristics (+HUMAN, -MALE, +ADULT), these contrastive characteristics become qualities of the referent when they are converted into "real world" terms. It may include characteristics that are simply normal rather than always associated with being a woman (e.g., "capable of speaking," "experienced in cooking," "skirt-or-dress-wearing"). Furthermore, because of the perspective that a person, a group of individuals, or a society as a whole adopts, connotative meaning might incorporate the "putative properties" of the referent. Therefore, women have historically been burdened with traits like "frail," "sensitive," "timid," "emotional," "irrational," and "inconstant".

In conclusion, connotative meaning goes beyond the literal definition of words (denotation) and includes the emotions, associations, or cultural nuances they carry. By understanding connotative meaning in literature, readers and writers alike can explore the emotional and symbolic richness of a text, unlocking deeper insights into its themes and intentions. In this study, the researchers will analyse the connotative meaning in the poem of "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye.

2. Method

The method used in this research is qualitative research. This research focuses on analyzing the denotation and connotation meanings in the stanzas of the poetry "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep by Mary Elizabeth Frye". According to Whitney (in Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021) the qualitative descriptive method is the finding of facts with precise interpretation.

Moreover, Wijaya & Zein (2020) said the descriptive method involves providing detailed descriptions about the data. The step of collecting data is reading the poem, identifying and categorizing the words, analyzing, and the last is drawing conclusion.

Following the identification and categorization of the many connotative meanings found in the selected poems, the researcher applies Leech's book theory to analyses them. Additionally, explanations or descriptions are provided for words, phrases, or sentences that have that kind of connotative meaning. Data was collected from the poetry "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye. The technique used to obtain data is by using the reading technique. The reading technique is done to collect data by reading the entire meaning in "Do Not Stand at Mt Grave and Weep" carefully and repeatedly and highlighting the part of the text from the research data. The words are classified based on the meaning. Words with connotative meanings evoke specific emotions, allowing writers to influence how readers feel about characters, settings, or events. For example: "home" has a denotative meaning as a place where one lives. Meanwhile, "home" may evoke feelings of warmth, safety, and belonging or, in contrast, nostalgia or loss (connotative meaning). After analyzing the meaning, the conclusion is drawn.

3. Results and Discussion

Mary Elizabeth Frye's poem "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" provides a profound understanding of the unbreakable spiritual connection between life and death and the immortality of the soul. Written in 1932, the poem comforts the bereaved by depicting death as a transition, not an end, using natural symbols such as wind, stars, sun, and rain. A semiotic analysis of the poem will explore the deeper meanings of these symbols, such as rain representing peace in grief and wind as the soul's infinite journey. In this poetry, it shows how these simple components convey powerful messages about life, death, and the transformation of the soul.

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

by: Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there.
I did not die,

Table 1. The Occurrence of Connotative Meaning

No	Stanza & Line	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
1.	Do not stand at my grave and weep (stanza 1 line 1)	Grave is a place a deceased person is buried. Weep is to cry, typically as an expression of sadness	Grave is a symbolic representation of physical death, loss, and grief, the speaker emphasizes the grave does not truly symbolize an end.
2.	I am not there. I do not sleep (stanza 1 line 2)	Sleep is to shut your eyes, rest, and not move your body or thoughts	Sleep in connotative meaning is sleeping forever or it can be said "death".
3.	I'm a thousand winds that blow (stanza 2 line 3)	The wind is the air pushed by natural causes that flows quickly	The wind represents the movement of the soul, freedom, and the breath of life
4.	I am the diamond glints on snow (stanza 2 line 4)	Diamond is a beautiful transparent gem of pure carbon, the most durable material in the world. Snow is frozen water tiny fluffy flakes, white particles that fall from the sky during cold weather	Diamonds represent for durability, purity, and beauty. Diamond is forever, whilst snow is temporary
5.	I am the sunlight on ripened grain (stanza 2 line 5)	Sunlight is the light from the sun, while for grain it means the tiny, tough seeds of food plants such as rice, wheat, and others	Sunlight is a symbol of vitality, warmth, and life. The concept of "ripened grain" implies achievement of a life cycle and maturity.
6.	I am the gentle of autumn rain (stanza 2 line 6)	Autumn is the time of year when leaves change color and the temperature drops between summer and winter, and for rain it means multiple drops of water falling from the sky	Autumn signifies transition, the end of a cycle, and the start of winter. Since the phrase "gentle autumn rain" suggests a calm and comfortable transition, it implies that the speaker's presence offers comforting peace at times of transition
7.	When you awaken in the morning's hush (stanza 3 line 7)	Morning is the early hours of the day, starting from the moment people get up and ending at midday or before lunch. Hush is to quiet someone or something, to stop chatting and to cease crying	the hush denotes a revered silence, a time when one may be closer to the spiritual or ethereal, while the morning symbolizes rebirth or regeneration.
8.	I am the swift uplifting rush, Of quiet birds in circled flight." (stanza 3 line 9)	Bird is an animal that has two wings, two legs, and feathers all over.	Birds as symbols of ascension, freedom, and the soul
9.	I am the soft stars that shine at night. (stanza 3 line 10)	Star is a huge ball of flaming gas in space.	Star as a symbol of guidance, hope, and the divine

Based on the table above, there are 12 words that have connotative meaning in the poetry "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye. Those are grave, weep, sleep, winds, diamond, snow, sunlight, grain, autumn rain, morning's hush, birds, and stars. The examples are as follows.

Data 1:

*Do not stand at my **grave** and **weep*** (stanza 1 line 1)

In stanza 1 line 1, there are *grave* and *weep* dictions. The denotative meaning of *grave* is a graveyard where a deceased person is buried and denotative meaning of *weep* is to cry, typically as an expression of sadness (Hornby, 2010). It means the speaker wants to tell someone it's not necessary to stand and cry at his/her grave.

While the connotation meaning is implied that the advice to "not weep" rejects traditional ways of expressing grief. Since they haven't actually went away, the speaker implies that their physical passing shouldn't be a reason for grief. Although the "grave" is a symbolic representation of physical death, loss, and grief, the speaker emphasizes the grave does not truly symbolize an end.

Data 2:

*I am not there. I do not **sleep*** (stanza 1 line 2)

In stanza 1 line 2, there is *sleep* diction. In denotative meaning, *sleep* is to shut your eyes, rest, and not move your body or thoughts (Hornby, 2010). The speaker claims that they are not sleeping or physically in the grave.

For connotative meaning, "sleep" is frequently an umbrella term for death in a semiotic context. As stated by (Mawarti, 2017), *sleep* in connotative meaning is sleeping forever or it can be said "death". The speaker refuses the idea that death is a type of endless unconsciousness or *sleep* by rejecting this. It implies that even when the speaker is not physically alive, their essence or consciousness stays alive and present in the world.

Data 3:

*I'm a thousand **winds** that blow* (stanza 2 line 3)

In stanza 2 line 3, there is a *thousand winds* diction. In denotative meaning, the wind is the air pushed by natural causes that flows quickly (Hornby, 2010). For connotative meaning, the wind represents the movement of the soul, freedom, and the breath of life. The omnipresence implied by "A thousand winds" suggests that the speaker's spirit is everywhere and always moving. By implying that their spirit has spread throughout nature, the word "thousand" enhances the sense of being limitless and free.

Data 4:

*I am the **diamond** glints on **snow*** (stanza 2 line 4)

In stanza 2 line 4, there are *diamond* and *snow* diction. The denotative meaning of *diamond* is a beautiful transparent gem of pure carbon, the most durable material in the world and the denotative meaning of *snow* is frozen water tiny fluffy flakes, white particles that fall from the sky during cold weather (Hornby, 2010). The speaker characterizes themselves as shimmering or gleaming on the snow's surface. On the other hand connotative meaning, diamonds represent for durability, purity, and beauty. *Diamond* is forever, whilst *snow* is temporary. Despite life's fleeting nature, the phrase "diamond glints on snow" together suggests something priceless and immortal. It suggests that even though the speaker's presence is transparent and fleeting, it is meaningful and everlasting.

Data 5:

*I am the **sunlight** on ripened **grain*** (stanza 2 line 5)

In stanza 2 line 5, there are sunlight and grain diction. The denotative meaning of sunlight is the light from the sun while for grain it means the tiny, tough seeds of food plants such as rice, wheat, and others. The speaker makes the analogy of herself is sunshine falling on that is ready for harvest.

On the other hand, the connotative meaning for sunlight is a symbol of vitality, warmth, and life. The concept of "ripened grain" implies achievement of a life cycle and maturity. By contributing to growth and sustenance, the speaker is implied to be a part of life's natural process. It makes one feel complete and a part of the cycles of the world.

Data 6:

*I am the gentle of **autumn rain*** (stanza 2 line 6)

In stanza 2 line 6, there is autumn and rain diction. The denotative meaning of autumn is the time of year when leaves change colour and the temperature drops between summer and winter, and for rain it means multiple drops of water falling from the sky (Hornby, 2010).

While the connotative meaning of rain is frequently associated with rebirth, purification, and sustenance, as stated by (Qiwarrunnisa et al., 2019) rain brings happiness, though it doesn't always make people unhappy, rain can also make people sad. In the book *Rain* by Tere Liye, the rain additionally portrays the protagonists' happiness.

While autumn signifies transition, the end of a cycle, and the start of winter. Since the phrase "gentle autumn rain" suggests a calm and comfortable transition, it implies that the speaker's presence offers comforting peace at times of transition. The idea that death is not an abrupt ending but rather a normal part of life's cycle rhythm is strengthened by this visual. The softness of the rain suggests that the speaker's soul provides those who are left with a silent sense of peace.

Data 7:

*When you awaken in the **morning's hush*** (stanza 3 line 7)

In stanza 2 line 5, there is "morning's hush" diction. The denotative meaning of morning is the early hours of the day, starting from the moment people get up and ending at midday or before lunch. For connotative meaning, the "Morning" is that often extend beyond the term's precise meaning of the morning. The denotative meaning of hush is to quiet someone or something, to stop chatting and to cease crying. For connotative meaning, the "Hush" often suggests the stillness of a setting or the quiet of a character, creating an air of closeness, calm, or expectation. (Hornby, 2010).

On the other hand, the phrase of "morning's hush" suggests a state of peace, fresh starts, and a transitional period between day and night. According to semiotics, the hush denotes a revered silence, a time when one may be closer to the spiritual or ethereal, while the morning symbolizes rebirth or regeneration. The speaker suggests they are there during these silent times, providing a subtle yet meaningful connection to those who look for it. It suggests that one can sense the speaker's essence at quiet moments of meditation or at the beginning of anything new.

Data 8:

*I am the swift uplifting rush,
Of quiet **birds** in circled flight.* (stanza 3 line 9)

In stanza 3 line 9, there is *birds'* diction. The denotative meaning of birds in line ninth is something with two wings, two legs, and feathers all over and the connotative meaning of birds is often thought of as symbols of ascension, freedom, and the soul (Hornby, 2010).

While the phrase "swift uplifting rush" conveys feelings of joy and spiritual height, implying that the speaker's soul is alive and rising beyond worldly worries. On the other hand, the phrase "circled flight" refers to the eternal nature of the soul and the circular aspect of life. According to

semiotic theory, flying birds stand for the journey of the soul, the never-ending circle of being alive, and the notion of being unrestricted by physical limitations.

Data 9:

*I am the soft **stars** that shine at night.* (stanza 3 line 10)

In stanza 3 line 10, there is “stars” diction. In denotative meaning of stars is a huge ball of flaming gas in space that appears to us like a nighttime glow. For connotative meaning, the “stars” are traditional symbols of guidance, hope, and the divine (Hornby, 2010).

The expression "soft stars" refers to a comforting and everlasting peacefulness that endures over gloom. This sentence suggests that even in times of despair, the speaker provides a source of comfort and a link to the infinite. The spirit's enduring presence, guiding those left behind, is symbolized by the stars' persistent but distant light. The stars represent the transcendence of the soul and the eternal presence of those who passed away in the fabric of the universe in a semiotic sense.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings above, there are 12 words that have connotative meaning in the poem "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye. Those are grave, weep, sleep, winds, diamond, snow, sunlight, grain, autumn rain, morning's hush, birds, and stars. The poem "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" by Mary Elizabeth Frye reinterprets conventional death symbols, shifting the perspective from death as a destination to life as a cycle. The poet conveys that death does not break one's connection to the world; rather, one's essence becomes a part of nature's continuous flow through connotative meanings and natural elements. This method turns mourning into an appreciation for an ongoing spiritual existence by implying a lasting presence in the never-ending circle of life.

This study reveals the connotative meaning that represent in Mary Elizabeth Frye's poem, by examining the connotative words used in the poem and demonstrating how they enhance the reader's interaction with the content. Moreover, in literature, connotative meaning is also as a function as cognitive frameworks that direct interpretation, enabling readers to relate abstract concepts to more concrete, well-known experiences. Therefore, for further study or other research should take a consideration such as comparing connotative words that used in Mary Elizabeth Frye's poem with other works or analyzing how connotative meaning function in other English poets' writings.

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