



Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi Sayı: 15/3 2026 s. 769-793, TÜRKİYE

Araştırma Makalesi

A STYLISTIC INVESTIGATION INTO THE POEMS OF THE MENTALLY ILL PATIENTS

Ruhan GÜÇLÜ*

Esra KÜÇÜKSAKARYA**

Geliş Tarihi: 27 Eylül 2025

Kabul Tarihi: 21 Aralık 2025

Abstract

This study aims to examine the use of figurative language in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* (1964), a collection of poems written by patients with mental illness, from a stylistic perspective. Using Leech and Short's (2007) stylistics checklist, the analysis focuses on tropes of comparison (metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe), association (metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory), and contrast (paradox, hyperbole, litotes, irony). The qualitative analysis of 112 poems shows dense, and at times unconventional, figurative patterns: metaphors and similes translate inner unrest into concrete images, personification and apostrophe blur the boundary between self and world, and associative or contrastive tropes reorganize fragmented experiences into symbolic forms. The findings suggest that figurative language shapes how patients express their inner lives, consistent with Pennebaker et al.'s (2003) view that unconscious states surface in language and with Bakare's (2009) observation that poetic expression can disclose aspects of mental life not easily conveyed directly.

Keywords: Stylistics, figures of speech, tropes, poetry, mentally ill patients.

RUHSAL HASTALIĞI OLAN BİREYLERİN ŞİİRLERİNİN BİÇEM BİLİMSEL İNCELEMESİ

Öz

Bu çalışma, ruhsal hastalığı olan bireyler tarafından yazılan şiirlerden oluşan *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* (1964) kitabındaki eğretilmeli dil kullanımını biçem bilimsel bir bakış açısıyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Leech ve Short'un (2007) biçembilimsel kontrol listesinden yararlanılarak yapılan çözümleme, karşılaştırma (eğretilme, benzetme, kişileştirme, hitap), çağrışım (düzdeğişmece, düzdeğiştirmece, simge, kinaye) ve karşıtlık (çelişki, abartma, küçültme, tersinleme) değişmecelerine odaklanmaktadır. Toplam 112 şiirin nitel çözümlemesi, yoğun ve zaman zaman sıra dışı eğretilmeli örüntüler sergilendiğini göstermektedir: Eğretilme ve benzetmeler içsel çalkantıları somut imgeler hâline getirirken, kişileştirme ve hitap benlik ile dış dünya arasındaki çizgiyi

* Doç. Dr.; Gaziantep Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, gucluruhan@gmail.com, ROR ID: [020vvc407](https://orcid.org/020vvc407).

** Dr. Öğr. Üyesi; Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Dil Bilimi Bölümü, esrak.sakarya@gmail.com, ROR ID: [013s3zh21](https://orcid.org/013s3zh21).

bulanıklaştırmakta; çağrışımsal ya da karşıtlık temelli değişmeceler ise parçalı deneyimleri simgesel biçimlere dönüştürmektedir. Bulgular değişmeceli anlatımın ruhsal hastaların iç dünyalarını ifade etme biçimlerini belirlediğini ortaya koymakta; bu durum, bilinç dışı süreçlerin dile yansıdığını savunan Pennebaker ve diğerlerinin (2003) görüşüyle ve şiirsel ifadenin doğrudan dile getirilemeyen ruhsal boyutları açığa çıkarabileceğini belirten Bakare'nin (2009) yorumuyla örtüşmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Biçem bilim, söz sanatları, değişmeceli anlatım, şiir, ruhsal hastalar.

Introduction

Every literary work is an expression of a person's language use, which, in turn, reflects their distinct personality, ideas, and writing style. Stylistics aims to determine and explain how and why a text has deviated and to explore the distinctive language use of speakers. In other words, stylistics is the blend of linguistics and literary studies that mainly focuses on the effects of language use on literary art.

The ornamentation of words, sentences and texts as linguistic devices is vital to the communication which determines the stylistic interpretation. It is crucial to remember that stylistics seeks to connect literary effects to linguistics by demonstrating the functional value of texts' formal aspects for interpretation as much as by describing them. Accordingly, stylistics is the area of linguistics that studies the language of literary writings (Syal & Jindal, 2010). Furthermore, Leech and Short (2007) assert that the study of literary language might deepen our knowledge of the author's style or characteristics. They introduce some categories like lexical features, grammatical features, figures of speech, cohesion and context, which might help the researchers conduct linguistic analysis of the literary text deeply rather than surface-level investigations.

In addition to the principles employed in the texts, stylistics offers a methodical approach to examining how language in literature produces meaning, aesthetic effects, and emotional resonance. Tropes, figures of speech including metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and hyperbole, are frequently used in poetry to influence the reader's perception and emotional response. In *Style in Fiction*, Leech and Short (2007) provide an often-referenced framework for classifying rhetorical devices and tropes, along with resources for recognizing, categorizing, and evaluating their stylistic purposes. This study examines how poets use tropes to accomplish specific thematic and aesthetic effects by applying our framework to a sample of poems. Thus, the current corpus presents the results of a stylistic analysis of poems written by authors diagnosed with schizophrenia. According to Pennebaker and colleagues (2003) "the unconscious asserts itself through language." (p. 548). This connection has aroused our interest in identifying language patterns and their connections to mental processes. Deviant mental style, which stems from his mental illness, is expected to be demonstrated by the language the authors employ, especially the stylistic decisions they make.

1. Aim of the Study

This study aims to examine how mentally ill patients use figures of speech, particularly the tropes of comparison, association, and contrast outlined in Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework, in their poems. Furthermore, the current study also aspires to explore how these tropes shape meaning and aesthetic texture, and to identify the psychological insights that emerge from the figurative patterns reflecting the patients' experiences, emotions, and perceptions of reality. In line with these purposes, the research questions of the study are as follows:

1. How do mentally ill patients employ figures of speech, especially the tropes of comparison, association, and contrast identified in Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic checklist, in their poems?
2. In what ways do the detected tropes shape meaning and contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the poems?
3. How does the use of figurative language in the poems reflect the patients' experiences, emotions, and perceptions of reality, and what psychological insights can be drawn from these stylistic choices?

2. Significance of the Study

Literary works mostly involve short stories, novels, and poetry. There are different studies on English and Arabic poems analyzed with respect to the Leech and Short (2007) Model (see Amare, 2002; Jaafar, 2014; Al-Janabi, 2015; Hussein & Al-Saidi, 2024; Muhammed & Sharhan, 2022; Semino, 2002; Iqbal & Javeed, 2024). Since research in this area has not been adequately conducted, this study might contribute to the fields of linguistics, stylistics, literature, and psychology of language. The meticulous stylistic analysis of *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* presented in this article aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on poetry. In addition, the outcome of the current study might provide insight into how people with mental disorders express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions through the use of specific linguistic devices.

3. Review of Literature

Stylistics, as a rigorous analytical discipline, sits at the intersection of linguistics and literary criticism, moving beyond impressionistic reading to examine systematically how specific linguistic choices generate meaning and aesthetic effect (Short, 1996). The field is built upon influential analytical frameworks that provide structured methods for examining texts at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Among the most enduring of these is the model proposed by Leech and Short (2007), which offers comprehensive categories for analyzing words, sentences, meaning, and context, and which continues to serve as a productive starting point for contemporary researchers. Simpson (2004) similarly provides systematic tools for describing narrative perspective and ideological stance, while Wales (2001) consolidates the discipline's terminological apparatus. Together, these foundational works distinguish stylistic analysis from subjective commentary and establish the evidential standards upon which all stylistic claims must rest.

A central concept in stylistic research is foregrounding, which refers to the way literary language draws attention to itself through deviation from established norms or through internal patterns of repetition and parallelism. Originating in the Prague School tradition through the work of Mukařovský (1964) and later developed within anglophone stylistics by Leech (1969), foregrounding has become one of the most productive frameworks for explaining how literary texts achieve their distinctive effects. From this perspective, linguistic deviation is not treated as error but as a deliberate artistic choice that brings meaning to the surface, creates emphasis, and shapes the reader's aesthetic response. Empirical support for this theoretical claim was provided by Van Peer (1986), whose reader-response experiments demonstrated that foregrounded passages genuinely influence reading pace and emotional engagement, lending psychological validity to what had previously been a primarily theoretical construct. These studies collectively establish that the systematic analysis of deviation and patterning is central to any account of how literary texts produce their effects.

Stylistic methods have been productively applied across a wide range of literary genres, demonstrating the versatility and analytical power of the framework. In the domain of poetry, Alkan (2023) conducts a close stylistic reading of Thomas Campion's Renaissance lyric *There Is a Garden in Her Face*, revealing how phonological patterning, imagery, and syntactic parallelism combine to produce aesthetic effect and construct the poem's central conceit. Güner and Suayin (2024) similarly apply stylistic analysis to a Turkish poem, examining how lexical choices and figurative language construct emotional meaning within the text and situate it within its cultural context. In the domain of short fiction, Civelek (2022) carries out a detailed stylistic analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*, demonstrating how syntactic complexity, modal expressions, and narrative unreliability work together to generate suspense and psychological unease. Similarly, while Düzdemir (2025) examines reader interactions through cognitive stylistic analyses in James Joyce's short story *Eveline*, Düzdemir and Can (2020) question the concept of poetic competence within the framework of cognitive poetics and ground the reader's meaning-making process from the poet's discourse; in this context, both studies converge on a common theoretical ground that addresses reader-oriented cognitive processes at the stylistic level. All in all, these studies collectively affirm that stylistic frameworks are sufficiently flexible to illuminate literary effects across genres, historical periods, and linguistic traditions.

Beyond this cross-generic applicability, stylistics scholarship has also extended its reach more systematically into cross-cultural, semiotic, and translational domains, moving further from its traditional focus on the anglophone literary canon. Turan (2022) exemplifies this development in Turkish stylistics, examining self-referentiality in Ahmet Haşim's poetry through a semio-stylistic framework and demonstrating how the poems construct meaning through signs that simultaneously point to themselves as linguistic artefacts. Güçlü (2025) opens a translational dimension by comparatively analysing stylistic deviations in Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and its Turkish translation, showing that stylistic features may be preserved, transformed, or lost in the process of translation and that achieving stylistic equivalence across structurally and culturally different language systems poses significant challenges. Kılınç and Güçlü (2026) extend this focus to multilingual literary discourse, comparatively analysing how foreign-language elements in Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* are rendered across twenty-three translations, and showing that alphabetic systems and target-language norms shape whether translators preserve or adapt the source text's multilingual

foregrounding. Similarly, Bezar et al. (2023) analyze how humour is constructed in Pakistani English fiction through purposeful violations of linguistic norms, identifying techniques such as neologism, Urdu-English code-mixing, and culturally specific metaphor as mechanisms that simultaneously generate comedy and articulate a resistant postcolonial cultural identity. Overall, these studies demonstrate that stylistic analysis is a genuinely cross-cultural enterprise, capable of illuminating literary effects in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

The studies reviewed here collectively present a picture of a discipline that is simultaneously consolidating its foundational analytical methods and expanding its cultural and translational scope. The work of Alkan (2023), Civelek (2022), Güner and Suayin (2024), Turan (2022), Güçlü (2025), and Bezar et al. (2023) demonstrates that the stylistic frameworks established by Short (1996), Leech and Short (2007), and Simpson (2004) remain productive across a wide variety of literary texts, genres, and cultural traditions. As Enkvist (1973) argues, style emerges from an author's systematic selection and organization of linguistic resources, and the rigorous analysis of those selections remains the discipline's defining contribution to literary understanding. The present study builds upon these established foundations by applying Leech and Short's (2007) model to the analysis of figures of speech in selected pastoral poems, aiming to demonstrate how figurative language contributes to the stylistic construction of nature within the pastoral tradition.

4. Theoretical Framework

Style is a complex concept that can be interpreted in many ways. As well as relating it to how people use language in different circumstances for specific goals, Leech and Short (2007) define it as the linguistic characteristics that describe a given text. In a similar vein, Verdonk (2002) highlights that style results from conscious selection among linguistic possibilities. Lehman (1996) expands on this idea, contending that style encompasses genres, eras, and even entire languages, as well as individual authors. According to this viewpoint, style may describe a text, character, or author, depending on the situation. Enkvist (1973), who supports this idea, views style as an identity identifier that uses distinctive linguistic patterns to distinguish one writer from another.

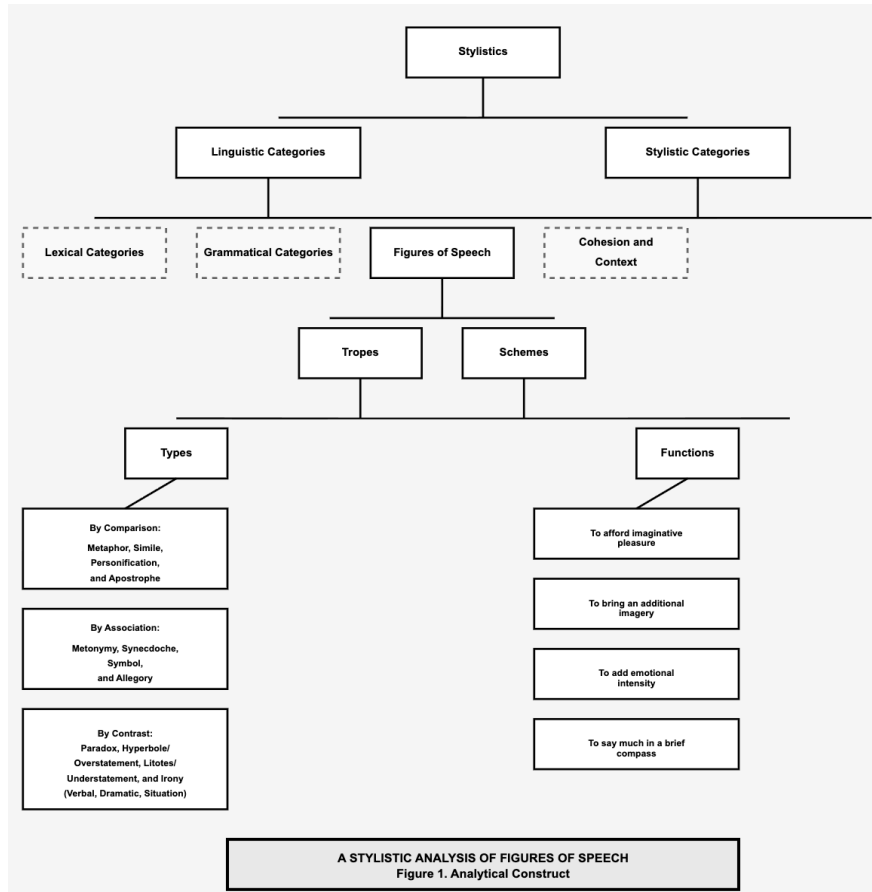
Style seems to be the language users' medium, one that deviates from the rules and norms to represent unique characteristics. Therefore, the relationship between language and style is investigated within the field of stylistics, focusing on prose and poetry. As suggested by Crystal (2008), the distinctive language use creates a bridge between linguistics and literature. Thus, the objective of stylistics is to explain how readers make meaning from texts, how texts project meaning, and why readers react in specific ways. It investigates how people choose language for various reasons and in multiple contexts. It is used to make the wording, clauses, and sentences in the ads, poetry and prose more readable.

According to Leech and Short (2007), stylistics is the (linguistic) investigation of style. It is rarely done for its own purpose, except as a way to describe how language is used in practice (p. 11). Stylistics, in the words of Simpson (2004), is the study of language, especially the creative use of language (p. 3). As we have seen, studying language has a significant impact on our comprehension of (literary) texts, and practicing stylistics enhances our perspectives on language. It is impossible to separate the construction of literary works from the use of

linguistic styles. Scholarly works are difficult to produce without the influence or connection of linguistic style.

Finch (2000) notes that stylistics is the study of a language's concept of style through the use of linguistic techniques. According to him, every time we use language, we inevitably adopt a style of some kind: we choose from a variety of syntactic and lexical options based on the goal of the communication. Additionally, he notes that while literary criticism has historically been the domain of style analysis, a more methodical effort to offer a "linguistic" basis for literary effects has emerged with the development of linguistics. Thus, the study of style has always been limited to literary elements; yet, as time has progressed, it can now be examined from a linguistic standpoint. Leech and Short (2007) argue that the artistic value of a text depends on uncovering stylistic categories that reveal the author's emotions and thoughts. The summary of the stylistic approach by Leech and Short (2007) is as follows:

Figure 1: Leech and Short (2007)'s Stylistic Categories (adapted from Al-Qudsy, 2016, p. 24)



As seen in Figure 1, the theoretical framework of the current study is grounded in Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic checklist of lexical categories and figures of speech, which provides a systematic approach for analyzing literary texts. Their model defines stylistics as the investigation of the relationship between a writer's artistic achievement and the linguistic choices through which meaning is conveyed. To facilitate such analyses, Leech and Short (2007) outline four major categories of stylistic features: lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and cohesion / context. They emphasized that identifying these features intuitively can be challenging; hence, they recommended the use of a checklist of potential style markers.

This checklist enables the analyst to survey the text systematically. However, they also note that stylistic studies are often highly selective, focusing on a limited set of features rather than attempting comprehensive coverage. In line with this principle of selectivity, the present research restricts its scope to figures of speech relevant to the pastoral tradition. The figurative dimension examines stylistic devices such as repetition, parallelism, simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Through this approach, this study aims to demonstrate how figures of speech, tropes, explicitly contribute to the stylistic construction of nature in the selected pastoral poems.

5. Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the use of figures of speech in poems written by mentally ill patients. The framework guiding the analysis is Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic checklist, with a specific focus on tropes within the figures of speech category. These include comparison (metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe), association (metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory), and contrast (paradox, hyperbole, litotes, irony). The data consist of all 112 Turkish poems compiled in the book *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* (1964), which contains works written by patients and collected by their teacher. Each poem was carefully examined to identify occurrences of the selected tropes, which were then classified and interpreted in relation to their stylistic and psychological functions. To ensure how consistently the tropes were classified, an inter-coder reliability procedure was carried out. Instead of coding the entire dataset, two independent judges who had been trained on the coding scheme analyzed a randomly selected sample of 50 stanzas drawn from the 112 poems. The classification system they followed was built around three broad trope categories: comparison (metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe), association (metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory), and contrast (paradox, hyperbole, litotes, irony). Cohen's kappa was used to calculate how much the two judges agreed with each other. The result was a kappa value of 0.86, which suggests a very high level of agreement, well above the threshold for strong reliability. Whenever the two coders disagreed on a particular stanza, they talked through their differing interpretations and worked until they reached a shared decision. Once an acceptable level of reliability was confirmed, the lead researcher coded the rest of the dataset using the finalized category definitions. Thus, a qualitative analysis was conducted through the abovementioned poems.

In line with Leech and Short's (2007) assertion that statistics alone are insufficient for textual analysis, this research emphasizes qualitative interpretation (p. 47). The study not only describes linguistic forms but also explores their stylistic significance and potential psychological implications, reflecting how patients project inner experiences, emotions, and perceptions of reality through poetic language.

6. Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings are presented in detail and discussed with explicit reference to the research questions. Guided by Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic analysis, the figures of speech identified in the corpus have been categorized and supported with textual examples. This analytical framework enables a systematic response to the research questions: RQ1 examines how mentally ill patients employ tropes of comparison, association, and contrast in their poems; RQ2 explores how these tropes construct meaning and contribute to the aesthetic

texture of the poems; and RQ3 considers how figurative language reveals patients' emotions, perceptions, and lived experiences. The results are structured systematically: first through figures based on comparison and similarity, then through devices of association and representation, and finally through elements of contrast and irony. Within each sub-section, representative examples are analyzed to explore both the reflection of individual psychological states in language and the broader cultural or emotional implications. In addition, the meaning-making mechanisms of the mentally ill people might lead to the distinctive linguistic choices because of deficits or disruptions in their semantic network (Langdon et al., 2002; Leader, 2011; Chin et al., 2011; Woods, 2013). Thus, the discussions to be presented below serve the main objectives of the research and provide a multi-layered account of how patients perceive and reconstruct reality through their stylistic choices in poetry.

6.1. By Comparison

The category of comparison reveals how poets with schizophrenic tendencies employ figures of similarity and direct address to externalize their inner turmoil. Devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe are not merely stylistic ornaments but also essential tools for conveying fragmented emotions and unstable perceptions. Their frequent use suggests an urgent need to transform chaotic feelings into recognizable and communicable forms.

6.1.1. Metaphor

Metaphor plays a dominant role in these poems, enabling abstract emotions to be condensed into intense, often disturbing imagery. Through metaphors, the poets articulate experiences that may otherwise resist rational expression.

(1) “Tek arkadaşımdır hicran” (*Eng.* My only friend is heartache) presents grief as a loyal companion, turning an emotion into a human-like partner. (*Nalan 1*, stanza 1, line 4)

(2) “O bembeyaz gülden beyaz göğsüne / Çekiç ile vura vura kaz beni” (*Eng.* From that pure white rose to your white chest / Hammer me, hammer me) expresses the desire to be accepted by drawing parallels between the beloved's heart and a white rose, using objects like a pickaxe and hammer, with intense emotions. (*Beni*, stanza 1, line 2)

(3) “Gülden cemalim soldu” (*Eng.* My rose-like beauty has withered) reflects through metaphor that she is aware of her beauty, likening it to a rose, and that she is also aware of its fading. (*Nalan 1*, stanza 1, line 4)

(4) “Gözlerin cennet” (*Eng.* Your eyes are heaven) portrays the beloved's eyes as paradise, elevating them to a sacred realm. (*Sarı Saçlı Yarime*, stanza 1, line 1)

(5) “Bu deliler âlemi / Büktü benim belimi” (*Eng.* This world of lunatics has broken my back) represents the idea that a mentally ill person has completely lost themselves, drawing a parallel with the expression “to bend over backwards”. (*Tanrım*, stanza 2, line 5-6)

The use of metaphors highlights how schizophrenic poets perceive emotions as overwhelming external forces. By turning grief into a companion or transforming the beloved's body and beauty into fragile, symbolic objects, they objectify internal states and project them outward. This not only reflects a fragmented perception of reality but also reveals the struggle to communicate suffering through exaggerated and symbolic imagery. The metaphors suggest that

patients experience emotions as invasive presences, reinforcing the blurred boundaries between inner and outer worlds. Iakimova et al. (2006) found that metaphor interpretation and new metaphor production occur in people diagnosed with schizophrenia. The mental images are impaired, but delusions seem to enhance the complex metaphor-creation process, as observed in previous studies by Elvevåg et al. (2011) and Despot et al. (2021). As seen in instances from *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti*, themes of life, beauty, bodily vulnerability, and existential despair are conveyed through metaphors, consistent with Titchkosky's (2015) findings. In contrast to the works by Bezar, Iqbal & Hussain (2023), humour is not observed in the metaphors used by individuals with mental disorders.

6.1.2. Simile

Simile provides clarity and immediacy by openly linking emotions with familiar natural or physical images. In these poems, similes often evoke fragility, instability, and the precarious balance between presence and absence.

(6) “Canevimde bir dost gibi karanlık” (*Eng.* Darkness in my soul like a friend) compares darkness settling into his / her soul representing fear, deceitfulness. (*Karanlık Geceler*, stanza 1, line 2)

(7) “Kalbin mahsun, göz yaşlı, tıpkı bir deli gibi” (*Eng.* Your heart is sad, your eyes full of tears, just like someone driven mad) the sadness is likened to madness (*Ne Gezersin A Yolcu*, stanza 1, line 3)

(8) “Seni deli gibi sevdiğimi” (*Eng.* That I love you like a crazy) equates love with being madness (*Aysel’ime*, stanza 2, line 6)

(9) “O peri Bir hayalet gibi” (*Eng.* That Fairy ... Like a ghost) compares the beloved symbolized with a fairy to a ghost, a source of imagined uncertainty. (*Hayal*, stanza 4, line 1-3)

(10) “Akacağım daima kolsuz bir nehir gibi iklimlere” (*Eng.* I will always flow like a sleeveless river through climates) likens the climates to the sleeveless rivers, flowing uncontrollably within the self. (*Kaybolan Sahiller*, stanza 1, line 6)

The similes reveal the poets' tendency to ground chaotic emotions in natural imagery. Comparing oneself to a leaf or a trembling wire reflects vulnerability and loss of control, which are typical in the schizophrenic experience. The overreliance on images of fragility and instability suggests an unstable sense of self. At the same time, comparisons to cosmic or natural forces (the moon, rivers) reveal the need to situate inner pain within universal patterns. This demonstrates how patients seek coherence in their fractured realities through the immediacy of visual comparisons. Despite the close relation between metaphor and simile, the latter differs from the former by the addition of the “like (*Tr.* gibi)” construction. This little semantic deviation is a part of rhetoric through which the comparison between the things or events are overtly expressed (Bethlehem, 1996). In addition, the deviant features involve the substitution of collocates in such a way that the literal or poetic narration becomes salient by the introduction of new words. As exemplified above, the darkness-friend; forlorn heart, tear-filled eyes-crazy; love-crazy; fairy-ghost and river-climates relation is formed by the addition of *like*. The structural difference of simile from metaphor seems to be slight; however, the figurative meaning is clear.

6.1.3. Personification

Personification animates abstract concepts and natural forces, allowing poets to externalize their inner states through dialogue with the world around them. This device is especially striking in schizophrenic texts, where boundaries between self, objects, and nature often blur.

(11) “Keder sarardı beni seni görmediğim gün” (*Eng.* Sorrow paled me on the day I did not see you) losing oneself in sorrow symbolizes the pain of the beloved person. (*Yalnızlık*, stanza 1, line 2)

(12) “Sardıkça gönlü aşk, hayat ve arzu çemberi” (*Eng.* As love, life, and desire encircle the heart more tightly) the heart personifies the abstract concept of love with other abstract concepts such as life and desire, symbolizing it with the human act of embracing. (*Melankoli*, stanza 1, line 1)

(13) “Yokluk kavradı bizi” (*Eng.* Nothingness / absence seized us) symbolizes being trapped in nothingness and the unknown with the human characteristics of grasping and embracing. (*Yokluk*, stanza 3, line 1).

(14) “Aşkımın şiddetinden koptu gönlün fireni” (*Eng.* My heart’s brake broke from the intensity of my love) transforms the heart into the brake affected from the high level of love and the phenomenon of fragmentation is likened to the separation of a part of the car. (*Şizofreni*, stanza 1, line 1)

(15) “Mehtap ışığı dokuyor” (*Eng.* The moonlight is weaving) describes moonlight as weaving like a craftsman. (*Mehtap*, stanza 2, line 7)

Personification in these poems reveals a projection of inner turmoil onto the external world. Schizophrenic perception tends to erase the boundary between self and environment, allowing emotions such as sorrow to act upon the body and turning affective pressures like love, life, and desire into encircling forces. Such usage indicates a collapsing distinction between subjective emotions and objective reality, a hallmark of psychotic experience. These figures show how patients interact with their surroundings not as neutral objects but as extensions of their emotional states. The intrapersonal and interpersonal feelings comprising depression and related syndromes are reflected through these symbolic constructions (Parnas & Sass, 2003). The intentions of the hallucinated narrations, including addressing the heart as an autonomous agent or attributing mechanical failure to it as though it were a brake, exemplify derailment, the blending of inner voices with external entities (Bleuler, 1950; Romme & Escher, 1993; Woods, 2013). Abstract and concrete elements such as sorrow, desire, the heart, and even bodily mechanisms are endowed with personality through figurative use of personification in the *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* poems. These voice-hearing figures illustrate the emotional motives and perceptual distortions experienced by mentally ill patients.

6.1.4. Apostrophe

Apostrophe dramatizes emotion by allowing direct address to an absent person, a deceased person or abstract entities. For schizophrenic poets, it functions as a way to engage in dialogue with fragmented aspects of their own psyche.

(16) “Yolcuyum bir meçhul diyara artık” (Eng. I am a traveler to an unknown land now) dramatizes death and the unknown after death through abstraction (*Karanlık Geceler*, stanza 1, line 4)

(17) “Tanrım bana sabır ver” (Eng. God, give me patience) voices a plea to God for endurance. (*Tanrım*, stanza 1, line 1)

(18) “Ey ilham-ı şerif, neredesin?” (Eng. O noble inspiration, where are you?) portrays inspiration as a missing interlocutor. (*İlham*, stanza 1, line 1)

(19) “Ey gönül sanki niçin sevdin onu” (Eng. O heart, why did you ever love him?) addresses the speaker’s own heart, functioning as an internal apostrophe that reflects emotional self-questioning. (*Arzularım*, stanza 1, line 5)

(20) “Ey gönül bunu yapamazsan... senin kafan şizofreni” (Eng. O heart, if you cannot do this... your mind is schizophrenic) begins with an apostrophic self-address and shifts into self-judgement, revealing inner fragmentation. (*Şizofreni*, stanza 3, line 4)

Apostrophes in these poems highlight the fragmented identity of schizophrenic speakers. By addressing loneliness, inspiration, God, or even their own heart, the poets reveal a divided self that communicates with its own inner parts as if they were external beings. This fragmentation, turned into dialogue, illustrates how schizophrenia transforms inner thought into externalized voices. Thus, the apostrophe here does not merely dramatize feelings but mirrors the very structure of schizophrenic experience, where inner states are alienated and objectified. Deleuze & Guattari (1983) suggest that the displacement of thoughts through esoteric words is a part of schizophrenic language. Through the application of apostrophe, poets try to communicate with non-existent people or objects. The idea that lies behind utilizing it is to personify and directly indicate God, death, love, power, and inspiration, which is marked in the examples above. In short, the feelings of the poet, like happiness, sadness, silliness, anger, etc., are reflected in association with identification of things or ideas (Sayakhan, 2016).

6.2. By Association

The category of association shows how poets connect meaning through substitution, representation, and symbolism. Figures such as metonymy, synecdoche, symbols, and allegory demonstrate how individual experiences are linked to wider cultural and collective references. In schizophrenic writing, these associations often appear in exaggerated or fragmented forms, illustrating how patients reconstruct reality through indirect linguistic channels.

6.2.1. Metonymy

Metonymy functions by replacing one entity with something closely related to it. In the poems, metonymic expressions reduce complex realities into concrete, immediate signs.

(21) “Sende her çiçekten bir parça var... Yüzün papatya yanakların gül” (Eng. You have a piece of every flower... Your face is a daisy, your cheeks are roses.) the relationship between parts and the whole is represented by comparing flowers and flower types to the body and its parts. (*Çiçekler ve Sen*, stanza 2, line 1-2).

(22) “Birkaç satır yazmak istiyorum / Bu yazıya (ŞİİR) diyorum” (Eng. I want to write a few lines / I call this writing (POETRY)) equates “lines” with the entirety of poetry. (*İlham*, stanza 2, line 1-2)

(23) “Elimde Hürriyet gazetesi yıldızıma bakıyorum” (Eng. I’m looking at my Hürriyet newspaper star in my hand) presents the newspaper as a substitute for social reality. (*Taburcu*, stanza 2, line 3-4)

(24) “Kırıldı arabam devrildi tekerim” (Eng. My car broke down, my tire went flat) associates the deterioration of one’s health with damage to the car and tires (*Manzum Destan Tiryakilere*, stanza 1, line 13)

Metonymic usage demonstrates how schizophrenic poets compress complex social and psychological realities into concrete, immediately accessible symbols. Objects such as newspapers, flowers, car parts, and even individual words come to stand for broader social structures, personal experiences, or inner psychological states. This tendency reflects a cognitive effort to reduce overwhelming and often fragmented realities into manageable and tangible representations. At the same time, the resulting associations frequently appear unconventional or distorted, mirroring the disrupted patterns of thought characteristic of schizophrenia. For patients, metonymy becomes a survival strategy: compressing chaotic complexity into isolated, tangible symbols. Rhodes & Jakes (2004) argue that delusions reflecting the psychological state of the individuals show unconscious conflicting experiences representing the whole meaning by using specific part. This usage among the individuals with schizophrenia is an instance of figurative thinking indicating chaotic statements specific to a conceptual domain.

6.2.2. Synecdoche

Synecdoche highlights the part-whole relationship. In these poems, parts of objects or symbols stand in for larger collectives such as nation, love, or existence itself. Conceptually mentioning the whole-part relation or the reverse is referred to synecdoche and the embodiment of substances is about the understanding of that whole-part structure (Hua, 2013).

(25) “Bu insanlık davası anahtarı kimdedir? / Neden milyonlar olsun tımarhane delisi” (Eng. Who holds the key to this cause of humanity? Why should millions be insane as asylum patients?) by accepting that the solution to insanity lies in the asylum, he is searching for a way to prevent all of humanity from ending up in the asylum. Here, the asylum functions as a part that stands for a broader collective condition, representing the potential fate of humanity as a whole. (*Tımarhane Delisi*, stanza 11, line 3-4)

(26) “Şifa verir hastayı millete kazandırır” (Eng. It heals the patient and returns them to the community) reflects Bakırköy hospital as a social assistance for the benefit of nation. The individual patient operates as a synecdochic figure for the fractured citizen, while the nation represents the restored social whole. (*Bakırköy*, stanza 4, line 2)

(27) “Renk renk olmuş gözlerin” (Eng. Your eyes have turned all colors) represents the beloved entirely through the eyes. This pars pro toto relation constitutes a clear example of synecdoche, in which a single bodily feature replaces the whole person. (*Çırpınıyor Gönül*, stanza 1, line 16)

(28) “Yaşlı günler bitmeyen mevsimim” (Eng. My endless season of mourning day) where the endless season represent the days with full of grief. (*Mevsimim*, stanza 1, line 8)

Synecdoche in schizophrenic poetry demonstrates how fragmented perception translates into fragmented representation. By allowing a single body part, object, or institutional space to stand in for a larger whole, these poems externalize a disrupted sense of totality. For instance, “eyes” or “hands” no longer serve as parts but become stand-ins for entire beings. This tendency reflects the way schizophrenia disrupts holistic perception, forcing reliance on fragments as proxies for reality. This reliance on fragments reflects the breakdown of holistic perception characteristic of schizophrenia.

Forrest (1965) investigated the similarities between the language used in schizophrenia and poetry, focusing on elements like synecdoche, which is often seen as distortions in schizophrenic speech. He argued that both poetry and schizophrenia are influenced by the intrinsic qualities of language itself and are guided by the “logic of wish fulfillment,” akin to the nature of dreams. As a result, both forms of expression pursue a shared pursuit of a distinctive linguistic structure to validate their expressions, meanings, and shared aspirations. As observed in the *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* poems, recurrent synecdochic patterns such as flag-nation, eyes-colours, blood-homeland, and mourning days-endless seasons, where recurring temporal fragments stand in for an extended existential condition, illustrate how dreams, desires, and fragmented realities of individuals with mental disorders are linguistically condensed into partial representations.

6.2.3. Symbol

Synecdoche highlights the part-whole relationship. In these poems, parts of objects or symbols stand in for larger collectives such as nation, love, or existence itself. Conceptually mentioning the whole-part relation or the reverse is referred to synecdoche and the embodiment of substances is about the understanding of that whole-part structure (Hua, 2013).

(25) “Bu insanlık davası anahtarı kimdedir? / Neden milyonlar olsun tımarhane delisi” (Eng. Who holds the key to this cause of humanity? Why should millions be insane as asylum patients?) by accepting that the solution to insanity lies in the asylum, he is searching for a way to prevent all of humanity from ending up in the asylum. Here, the asylum functions as a part that stands for a broader collective condition, representing the potential fate of humanity as a whole. (*Tımarhane Delisi*, stanza 11, line 3-4)

(26) “Şifa verir hastayı millete kazandırır” (Eng. It heals the patient and returns them to the community) reflects Bakırköy hospital as a social assistance for the benefit of nation. The individual patient operates as a synecdochic figure for the fractured citizen, while the nation represents the restored social whole. (*Bakırköy*, stanza 4, line 2)

(27) “Renk renk olmuş gözlerin” (Eng. Your eyes have turned all colors) represents the beloved entirely through the eyes. This pars pro toto relation constitutes a clear example of synecdoche, in which a single bodily feature replaces the whole person. (*Çırpınıyor Gönül*, stanza 1, line 16)

(28) “Yaşlı günler bitmeyen mevsimim” (Eng. My endless season of mourning day) where the endless season represent the days with full of grief. (*Mevsimim*, stanza 1, line 8)

Synecdoche in schizophrenic poetry demonstrates how fragmented perception translates into fragmented representation. By allowing a single body part, object, or institutional space to stand in for a larger whole, these poems externalize a disrupted sense of totality. For instance, “eyes” or “hands” no longer serve as parts but become stand-ins for entire beings. This tendency reflects the way schizophrenia disrupts holistic perception, forcing reliance on fragments as proxies for reality. This reliance on fragments reflects the breakdown of holistic perception characteristic of schizophrenia.

Forrest (1965) investigated the similarities between the language used in schizophrenia and poetry, focusing on elements like synecdoche, which is often seen as distortions in schizophrenic speech. He argued that both poetry and schizophrenia are influenced by the intrinsic qualities of language itself and are guided by the “logic of wish fulfillment,” akin to the nature of dreams. As a result, both forms of expression pursue a shared pursuit of a distinctive linguistic structure to validate their expressions, meanings, and shared aspirations. As observed in the *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* poems, recurrent synecdochic patterns such as flag-nation, eyes-colours, blood-homeland, and mourning days-endless seasons, where recurring temporal fragments stand in for an extended existential condition, illustrate how dreams, desires, and fragmented realities of individuals with mental disorders are linguistically condensed into partial representations.

6.2.4. Allegory

Allegory extends symbolism into structured narratives, turning personal experience into collective meaning. In these poems, allegory connects individual suffering with larger existential or national struggles.

(34) “Kefenim olsun eski bir bayrak” (Eng. Let my shroud be an old flag) allegorizes personal death as part of national survival. (*Bayrak*, stanza 1, line 1)

(35) “«Dursun» demişler durmuş / Dururken muhtar olmuş / Okuyup yazması yok amma / Mühürü kuvvetli” (Eng. “They called him ‘Dursun’ (a Turkish personal name that also carries the imperative meaning ‘let him stop’) so he stopped / While standing still, he became the village headman / He can neither read nor write, but / His seal is powerful) allegorically criticizes the strong elevation of authority in someone without education and depicts the reality in society. (*Muhtar Dursun*, stanza 1, line 1-4)

(36) “Ben de düştüm feleğin garip fendine / Polis jiple getirdi timarhane bendine” (Eng. I too fell into fate’s strange trap / The police brought me in their jeep to the asylum) extends this pattern by allegorizing personal breakdown as the outcome of impersonal social control, where fate and institutional power converge to define the subject’s destiny. (*Timarhane Delisi*, stanza 1, lines 1-2)

Allegorical expressions reveal how schizophrenic poets translate personal suffering into narratives of fate, history, or nation. As seen in examples (34) and (35), intensely private experiences such as death or social marginalization are reframed through collective symbols like the flag or institutional authority, suggesting an attempt to impose order on fragmented inner experiences by framing them within broader, meaningful sequences. For patients, allegory serves as a compensatory mechanism. While their subjective reality feels chaotic and disjointed, allegorical structures provide a way to narrativize suffering, linking it to collective struggles or cosmic order. In this respect, allegory operates not at the level of isolated imagery but through implied narrative causality, where personal fate is absorbed into social, political, or moral systems. In this sense, allegory allows intense personal experiences to be externalized and reorganized through culturally recognizable narrative frames. The psychological condition reflecting inner and outer reality is heavily represented in the symbolic and figurative language use by schizophrenic people as a source for expressing the self-chaotic experiences. As suggested by Parnas and Sass (2003), the common allegorical figures that mirror their phenomenological disturbances show temporariness, abstraction of the events and a transformation process. Leader (2011) also claims that the people diagnosed with schizophrenia utilize metaphor and allegory to reflect their inner problems symbolically. Furthermore, Woods (2011, 2013) argues that allegory seems to link the identity and perception anomalies with the personal experiences by symbolizing phenomenological narration. Consistent with these accounts, allegory in the present corpus functions not merely as a stylistic choice but as a cognitive strategy for stabilizing disrupted self-experience. Consistent with these accounts, allegory in the present corpus functions not merely as a stylistic choice but as a cognitive strategy through which disrupted self-experience is rendered intelligible and socially legible. In accordance with the relevant literature, we have also observed that the poems, including allegories, comprise symbols such as death, journey, mental hospital, hearthbreak, fate, and fortune, all of which situate individual suffering within systems of authority, destiny, or social regulation rather than private pathology alone.

6.3. By Contrast

The category of contrast reveals how poets exploit contradictions, exaggerations, understatements, and irony to reflect fragmented perceptions of reality. For schizophrenic poets, these figures of speech are not only rhetorical choices but expressions of internal dissonance, instability, and distorted self-world relations.

6.3.1. Paradox

Paradox captures the coexistence of opposites and reflects the irrational dimension of life. In these poems, paradox becomes a way to dramatize tensions between joy and suffering, silence and voice, life and death.

(37) “Memleket uzaklaştıkça daha yakınımda” (*Eng.* The farther away my homeland is, the closer it feels to me) conveys closeness through distance. (*Gurbet*, stanza 2, line 7)

(38) “Susarak haykırıyorum” (*Eng.* I scream in silence) dramatizes silence as the loudest scream. (*İnilti*, stanza 2, line 8)

(39) “Kiminin yüzü güler kiminde vardır neş’e... Halbuki kalblerinde gizli bir yara yaşar.” (*Eng.* Some smile and appear joyful... yet a hidden wound lives in their hearts) presents outward happiness and inner suffering as coexisting states, dramatizing emotional contradiction through paradox. (*Hayata Nazar*, stanza 1, lines 3-4)

Paradox in schizophrenic poetry mirrors the fractured nature of thought. Patients articulate experiences that defy logic, as illustrated by expressions in which silence becomes a scream or emotional closeness emerges from physical distance, such as in examples (37) and (38). These contradictions reflect an unstable grasp of reality, where binaries collapse and coexist rather than remain distinct. Paradox thus becomes a linguistic marker of cognitive dissonance, exposing the simultaneous presence of conflicting emotions that are experienced as equally real. The contradictions including happiness-pain, far-close, and scream-silence pairs constitute recurrent instances of paradox utilized in the poems of mentally ill patients, as also observed in the coexistence of outward joy and inner suffering in example (39).

The presence of creativity, supernatural associations, and delusional reasoning appears as a subconscious mirror of the patients’ mental states, surfacing linguistically through paradoxical constructions rather than linear narration. The reverse or inverted imagery relates to distorted reality and the paradoxical state of being, while the act of writing itself functions as a form of catharsis, reflecting a shared experiential pattern among individuals with schizophrenia (Hankir et al., 2012; Ross, 2025).

6.3.2. Hyperbole

Hyperbole amplifies emotions to an unrealistic scale. In these poems, exaggeration underscores longing, despair, and resistance. It is a figure of speech, which is related to the non-literal deliberate and exaggerated language use (Carston & Wearing, 2015).

(41) “Kalbim dolu (MECNUN) ile (CİNNET) havasından” (*Eng.* My heart is full of MADNESS and INSANITY) amplifies despair by presenting the inner emotional state as overwhelmingly saturated with madness, dramatizing psychological intensity through exaggerated fullness. (*Kar Musikisi*, stanza 1, line 3)

(42) “Üzerimden geçsin top, tank, piyade” (*Eng.* Let the ball, tank, and infantry pass over me) exaggerates resistance by invoking physically impossible endurance, turning defiance into an extreme and symbolic act of self-sacrifice. (*Bayrak*, stanza 3, line 2)

(43) “Ruhundaki ihtiras benliğimi kanattı” (*Eng.* The passion in your soul wounded my very being) exaggerates emotional harm by transforming inner desire into a force capable of inflicting physical injury, intensifying the impact of affective suffering. (*Aşkım*, stanza 1, line 1)

(44) “Özlemesem bülbülü / Düşmezdim binbir derde” (Eng. Had I not longed for the nightingale, I would not have fallen into a thousand troubles) exaggerates despair through the formulaic expression “a thousand troubles,” magnifying the consequences of longing beyond realistic limits. (*Dertlerim*, stanza 3, lines 3-4)

Hyperbole illustrates the schizophrenic tendency toward emotional intensification. For patients, feelings often lack moderation and are experienced at the extremes rather than along a proportional scale. As observed in the poems, inner emotional states are represented as being overwhelmed by madness and insanity, longing is framed as the source of “binbir dert” (a thousand troubles) and emotional or ideological resistance is magnified into physically unendurable acts such as enduring tanks and infantry. Through such exaggeration, hyperbole reveals a disrupted sense of proportionality, where ordinary experiences are perceived as overwhelming and uncontrollable. This rhetorical strategy reflects the excessive weight of inner experience and the difficulty of regulating affect within conventional limits of expression. The dissociative stance toward lived reality is thus articulated through exaggerated language that transforms inner states into extreme bodily or existential consequences. In this sense, hyperbolic expression in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* aligns with Carston and Wearing’s (2015) view that qualitatively or quantitatively overstated meanings are contextually encoded rather than literally intended, allowing speakers to convey emotional intensity beyond literal plausibility.

6.3.3. Litotes

Litotes minimizes or understates reality, creating irony or hidden intensity. It’s rare but striking use in these poems emphasizes suppressed pain.

(45) “Fazla coşarsan eminim buraya geleceksin” (Eng. If you get too excited, I’m sure you’ll come here) understates severe psychological breakdown through a casual warning, indirectly implying confinement in a mental hospital and masking distress through restrained language. (*Görüşler*, stanza 2, line 3)

(46) “Az zaman sonra tekrar burada olacağım” (Eng. I will be here again after a short while) minimizes the permanence of institutionalization by presenting repeated confinement as a temporary return, thereby concealing despair through deliberate understatement. (*Tımarhane ve Ben*, stanza 2, line 4)

Litotes demonstrates how schizophrenic poets may veil intense suffering through deliberate understatement. Rather than naming breakdown or confinement directly, distress is expressed through restrained and seemingly casual formulations. This contrast between minimized wording and overwhelming reality reflects a disjunction between inner experience and outward expression. In the examined poems, litotes functions as a coping strategy whereby unbearable emotional states are linguistically softened, allowing speakers to allude to psychological collapse without confronting it explicitly. For patients, such rhetorical minimization may signal both partial denial and an indirect appeal for recognition. As illustrated in examples (45) and (46), institutionalization and recurring confinement are framed as ordinary outcomes or temporary returns, reducing their severity through understatement. In this sense, litotes in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* operates not as irony for aesthetic effect but as a linguistic means of managing and containing distress within socially acceptable boundaries.

6.3.4. Irony

Irony highlights contradictions between appearance and reality, promise and betrayal. It is one of the most telling devices in these poems, unveiling disappointment and mistrust. Besides, irony, entails repeating a notion that is akin in substance to the one explicitly stated while expressing a detached stance toward that thought (Sperber & Wilson, 2012).

(47) “Bir destan söylesem acep / Bütün sigara tiryakileri darılır mı” (*Eng.* If I were to recite an epic, would all cigarette addicts get offended?) ironically adopts a playful tone to expose addiction, pretending concern for the smokers’ feelings while implicitly criticizing their dependency. (Manzum Destan Tiryakilere, stanza 1, lines 1-2)

(48) “Hakikattir çalışan / Daima kazanır” (*Eng.* It is true that the one who works always wins) ironically repeats a common social maxim, which is undermined by its placement within a psychiatric hospital context, exposing the emptiness of such slogans. (Hastanemizin Meşhurlarını Tanıyabilecek misiniz?, stanza 2, lines 17-18)

(49) “Erkekler bu manzaraya yutkunup imrenecek” (*Eng.* Men will swallow hard and envy this scene) employs irony by voicing male admiration while simultaneously revealing the objectifying gaze embedded in the praise of women footballers. (Mizahi Şiir - Methiye, stanza 1, line 9)

(50) “İstersen ol yüzbaşı, hâkim veya avukat / Elbet şimdi olursun tımarhane delisi” (*Eng.* You may be a captain, a judge, or a lawyer / Yet you will still become a lunatic) ironically collapses respected social identities into a single stigmatized label, exposing the fragility of social status. (Tımarhane Delisi, stanza 2, lines 1-2)

Irony in the examined poems reflects a recurring sense of mistrust and disillusionment that shapes the speakers’ engagement with the social world. Rather than relying on overt sarcasm, irony emerges through the quiet tension between what is said and what the surrounding context renders questionable. As illustrated in examples (47) and (48), familiar social discourses -such as playful concern for smokers or the belief that hard work inevitably leads to success- are reproduced only to lose their authority when placed within settings marked by addiction or psychiatric confinement. In a similar vein, examples (49) and (50) reveal how surface-level admiration or respected social roles are destabilized, giving way to implicit critique and disenchantment. Irony thus operates not merely as humor but as a means of distancing, allowing speakers to register disagreement with dominant values without stating it directly. This use of irony aligns with Carston and Wearing’s (2015) view that ironic meaning conveys a critical stance toward an explicitly expressed proposition. From a pragmatic perspective, such ironic expressions gain their force through contextual inference and metarepresentational reasoning (Colston & Gibbs, 2002), enabling the articulation of social critique and alienation in an indirect yet meaningful way.

7. Overall Discussion

The stylistic analysis of *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* has revealed that the poems written by mentally ill patients are characterized by an intense and unconventional use of figures of speech. The findings indicate that metaphors, similes, personifications, apostrophes, and other tropes serve not merely as decorative linguistic devices but as essential means of expressing fragmented thoughts, emotional turmoil, and unstable perceptions of reality. The recurrent reliance on natural and cosmic imagery (such as roses, rivers, the moon, and stars) demonstrates the patients' tendency to anchor their internal experiences in external, universal references. Importantly, the findings section has also shown that these figures pattern systematically across Leech and Short's (2007) tripartite grouping of comparison, association, and contrast, suggesting an organized stylistic tendency rather than isolated poetic flair.

This suggests an effort to make sense of chaotic emotions through tangible and culturally familiar images. The idea that symbolic language serves as a keyway, rather than just an added feature, to show minds that are falling apart fits with Pennebaker and his team's main idea (2003), which holds that events happening without us knowing show up in how we use language. In line with the meaning-making accounts discussed earlier, the distinctive stylistic choices observed in the corpus can also be related to disruptions in semantic organization and associative processing (Langdon et al., 2002; Leader, 2011; Chin et al., 2011; Woods, 2013), which may encourage heightened reliance on figurative and symbolic formulation.

This study compellingly supports the assertion, demonstrating that metaphors and similes form the foundation for a distorted understanding of reality. In addition, the emphasis on poetry as a form of expression for individuals with mental health issues directly relates to Bakare's (2009) investigation of "morbid and insightful poetry" which perceives poetic creation as a "portal" into mental conditions such as schizophrenia. Comparable insights are offered by recent research on figurative language use in individuals with mental disorder, which indicates that difficulties in understanding metaphors, humour, and irony are linked primarily to underlying cognitive constraints rather than to the intensity of clinical symptoms (Adamczyk et al., 2023). This line of evidence suggests that the figurative language use provides a particularly sensitive lens through which disruptions in cognitive processing can be observed; however, this study focuses on patients' language use in the production phase and differs in this respect from studies in the relevant literature that have predominantly focused on comprehension and processing, which supports the unique and specific aspect of the study. Our examination enriches this idea by illustrating how the portal is constructed through specific stylistic choices, including the use of the apostrophe to blur the boundaries between subject and object and hyperbole to express intense emotional experiences. More specifically, metaphor and simile in the corpus repeatedly condense affect into concrete entities and direct comparisons, while personification and apostrophe frequently externalize inner states as if they were autonomous agents or interlocutors, an interactional pattern that makes inner experience "speaking" within the poem.

The distribution of tropes also illustrates how schizophrenic discourse deviates from conventional literary norms. Metaphors often transform intangible feelings into overwhelming external entities, while similes provide immediacy and clarity, grounding instability in recognizable comparisons. Similarly, personification and apostrophe reveal the blurred boundary between inner and outer worlds, as emotions and abstract states are projected onto the

environment or addressed directly as interlocutors. This blurring of boundaries is also described by Sass and Parnas (2003), who highlight the permeability between self and world as a common feature of schizophrenic experience. These stylistic devices mirror the very nature of schizophrenic experience, where reality and imagination often intermingle. In the present corpus, this permeability is especially visible in the repeated treatment of absence, sorrow, love, and inspiration as active forces that “seize,” “encircle,” or respond to direct address, which aligns the poetic voice with an experiential sense of porous self–world boundaries.

Associative figures such as metonymy, synecdoche, symbolism, and allegory highlight how fragmented self-perceptions are restructured into cultural or collective narratives. Patients condense vast realities into singular objects (e.g., tanks representing war or roses symbolizing love), thereby simplifying complex experiences while simultaneously amplifying them with heightened intensity. From a cognitive poetic perspective, such symbolic condensation can be seen as part of the broader process through which literary language reorganizes emotional and experiential material into more coherent mental representations (Görmez & Tunç, 2021). Contrastive figures such as paradox, hyperbole, litotes, and irony further expose the internal contradictions of schizophrenic thought: silence becomes a scream, absence becomes eternity and promises become betrayals. Yet the corpus suggests that association does more than “condense”: metonymy and synecdoche repeatedly turn single objects, institutions, or body parts into stand-ins for entire social realities, while allegory extends this logic into implicit narrative sequences in which personal suffering is absorbed into fate, authority, or national struggle.

Contrastive figures such as paradox, hyperbole, litotes, and irony further expose the internal contradictions of schizophrenic thought: silence becomes a scream, absence becomes eternity and promises become betrayals. Paradox in particular captures the simultaneous truth of opposing states (e.g., far-close, scream-silence, outward joy-inner wound), while hyperbole intensifies affect by scaling experience beyond proportional limits (e.g., impossible endurance, “binbir dert” (*Eng.* a thousand troubles) emotional injury rendered as bodily wounding). Litotes, by contrast, works through suppression rather than escalation, softening breakdown and confinement through understated, casual formulations. Collectively, these findings reinforce the idea that the patients’ linguistic choices are not random but represent deep psychological and cultural processes. The methodological approach employed in the current study, which systematically categorizes and interprets tropes, associative figures and contrastive figures is firmly grounded in the stylistic tradition established by Enkvist (1973) and Leech and Short (2007). Irony, finally, appears as a selective but revealing strategy: instead of private lyric confession, it often takes the form of social critique, where familiar discourses (maxims, praise, social roles) are repeated only to be contextually undermined, enabling an indirect stance of disagreement and distancing (Sperber & Wilson, 2012; Colston & Gibbs, 2002; Carston & Wearing, 2015).

These observations resonate with Pennebaker et al.’s (2003) claim that the unconscious asserts itself through language. The stylistic deviations in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* illustrate how poetic expression allows patients to externalize inner conflicts, providing both a coping mechanism and an alternative mode of communication. Holmes (2008) notes that metaphors often carry emotional material that cannot be stated plainly and thus help individuals express states that feel too complex or overwhelming to articulate directly. In this sense, the

poems function as therapeutic outlets, enabling patients to transform fragmented experiences into artistic forms that convey both personal suffering and shared human concerns. Overall, the corpus suggests that figurative language in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* is not merely expressive but functional: it organizes distress (allegory), stabilizes contradiction (paradox), scales emotion up or down (hyperbole and litotes), and positions the speaker toward the social world (irony), thereby offering a multi-layered linguistic route for perceiving and reconstructing reality through poetry.

8. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the poems of mentally ill patients compiled in *Akıl Hastalarının Yazdıkları Şiirler: İnilti* exhibit a distinct stylistic profile shaped by figures of speech and rhetorical devices. Drawing on Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic categories, the analysis has shown that the use of comparison, association, and contrast-based tropes not only contributes to the aesthetic texture of the poems but also reflects the patients' psychological states and worldviews. Importantly, these tropes recur in patterned and systematic ways across the corpus, indicating stable stylistic tendencies rather than incidental or sporadic usage. The findings suggest that stylistic deviations, rather than being literary ornaments, function as essential means of articulating fragmented perceptions, emotional instability, and existential struggles.

The frequent recourse to metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe reveals the poets' need to project internal chaos outward and to establish dialogues with abstract or absent entities. Such dialogic and externalizing tendencies point to a porous boundary between inner experience and the external world; a feature repeatedly associated with schizophrenic subjectivity. Similarly, metonymy, synecdoche, and symbolism illustrate how patients restructure personal suffering through culturally resonant images. Through these associative mechanisms, individual experience is repeatedly linked to broader social, moral, or cultural frameworks. Paradox, hyperbole, litotes, and irony further expose the contradictions and extremities of schizophrenic experience. All in all, these contrastive figures allow opposing states, excessive intensification, suppression, and critical distancing to coexist within the same poetic system. In addition, such stylistic devices create a unique poetic language that simultaneously discloses personal anguish and engages with broader cultural and national narratives.

The study contributes to stylistics, linguistics, and psychology of literature by emphasizing the interrelation between language and mental state. By focusing on language production rather than interpretation, it complements existing research that has predominantly examined figurative comprehension in clinical populations. It shows that stylistic analysis can uncover the unconscious dimensions of expression, providing valuable insights for literary scholars, linguists, and clinicians alike. Beyond its academic significance, the analysis highlights the therapeutic potential of poetry, illustrating how artistic language enables patients to transform trauma and disorientation into meaningful creative expression. Future research may expand the scope by comparing similar corpora across different languages and cultures to explore whether such stylistic tendencies are universal in the poetry of the mentally ill or shaped by specific socio-cultural contexts. Future research may also extend this approach to comparative, cross-cultural or multilingual corpora to assess the extent to which such stylistic tendencies are shaped by universal cognitive patterns or specific socio-cultural contexts.

Declarations

Copyright Statement: Published under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

Funding / Supporting Institutions: No external funding was received for this study.

Ethical Approval and Participant Consent: Ethical approval and participant consent were not required, as the study is based on publicly available sources.

Plagiarism Statement: This article has been scanned with plagiarism detection software. A 4% rate of plagiarism was detected.

Data and Materials Availability: The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its references.

Use of AI Tools: No AI tools were used in the production of the academic content of this article.

References

- Adamczyk, P., Biczak, J., Kotlarska, K., Daren, A., & Cichocki, Ł. (2023). On the specificity of figurative language comprehension impairment in schizophrenia and its relation to cognitive skills but not psychopathological symptoms: Study on metaphor, humor and irony. *Schizophrenia Research: Cognition*, 34, 100294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scog.2023.100294>
- Al-Janabi, M. K. H. (2015). A stylistic analysis of two selected, English and Arabic, war poems. *Journal of the College of Languages (JCL)*, 31, 202-225. <https://jcl.uomustansiriyah.edu.iq/index.php/JCLUM/article/view/143>
- Alkan, H. (2023). A stylistic approach to Thomas Campion's *There Is a Garden in Her Face*. *Folklor/Edebiyat*, 29(115), 901-912. <https://doi.org/10.22559/folklor.2402>
- Al-Qudsy, W. B. (2016). *A stylistic analysis of figures of speech in The Jakarta Post headlines under the issue of KPK vs. POLRI* (Published MA Thesis). Yogyakarta State University. <http://eprints.uny.ac.id/37913/>
- Amare, A. (2002). *Some selected poems in English by Ethiopian poets: A stylistic analysis* (Master's thesis). Addis Ababa University. <http://etd.aau.edu.et/handle/123456789/2220>
- Bakare, M. O. (2009). Morbid and insight poetry: A glimpse at schizophrenia through the window of poetry. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 4(3), 217-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15401380903192671>
- Bethlehem, L. S. (1996). Simile and figurative language. *Poetics Today*, 17(2), 203-240. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1773211>
- Bezar, L., Iqbal, M., & Hussain, S. (2023). Stylistic analysis of humour in Pakistani English fiction: Linguistic deviation as a comic strategy. *Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 14(2), 45-63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jlls.2023.002>
- Bezar, S. A., Sadiq, M., Zehra, S., Azhar, M. A., & Mohsin, L. A. (2023). Negotiating cultural hybridity and liminality in Kashua's Second Person Singular: A Bhabhaian analysis. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 20(2), 295-306. <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/11697>
- Bezar, S. A., Yıldız, T., & Khan, M. (2023). Linguistic deviation and humour in contemporary Pakistani fiction: A stylistic analysis. *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52(1), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jls-2022-2063>

- Bleuler, E. (1950). *Dementia praecox or the group of schizophrenias* (J. Zinkin, Trans.). International Universities. (Original work published 1911).
- Carston, R., & Wearing, C. (2015). Hyperbolic language and its relation to metaphor and irony. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 79, 79-92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.01.011>
- Chin, J. M., Benjamin, C., & Levitt, J. (2011). Semantic network dysfunction in schizophrenia: A cognitive-linguistic review. *Schizophrenia Research*, 131(1-3), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2011.05.019>
- Civelek, D. (2022). The detailed analysis of 'The Black Cat' by Edgar Allan Poe in stylistic perspective. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 39(1), 99-112. <https://doi.org/10.32600/huefd.698487>
- Colston, H. L., & Gibbs Jr., R. W. (2002). Are irony and metaphor understood differently? *Metaphor and Symbol*, 17(1), 57-80. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327868MS1701_5
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (6th ed.). Blackwell.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (R. Hurley, M. Seem, & H. R. Lane, Trans.). University of Minnesota. (Original work published 1972).
- Despot, K. Š., Sekulić Sović, M., Vilibić, M., & Mimica, N. (2021). Metaphor production by patients with schizophrenia-A case analysis. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 36(3), 119-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2021.1893606>
- Düzdemir, Ş. (2025). James Joyce'un *Eveline* adlı öyküsünde bilişsel biçembilimsel çözümlemeler ve okur etkileşimleri. *Dilbilimi Alanında Uluslararası Araştırmalar-II*, içinde (s. 39-48). Eğitim.
- Düzdemir, Ş., & Can, Ö. (2020). Şair burada ne demek istiyor? Bilişsel Şiirbilim çerçevesinde şiirsel yeterlilik. *International Journal of Language Academy*, 8(5), 251-272. <https://doi.org/10.29228/ijla.46569>
- Elvevåg, B., Helsen, K., De Hert, M., Sweers, K., & Storms, G. (2011). Metaphor interpretation and use: A window into semantics in schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Research*, 133(1-3), 205-211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2011.07.009>
- Enkvist, N. E. (1973). *Linguistic stylistics*. Mouton.
- Finch, G. (2000). *Linguistic terms and concepts*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Forrest, D. V. (1965). Poiesis and the language of schizophrenia. *Psychiatry*, 28(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1965.11023413>
- Görmez, A., & Tunç, R. A. (2021). Literary theory, stylistics and cognitive poetics. *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 15(1), 175-183. <https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss.874598>
- Güçlü, R. (2025). Stylistic deviations in 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' and its Turkish translation. In A. Kırkan & Y. Cengiz (Eds.), *Dilbilim ve karşılaştırmalı edebiyat: Dilbilim*. Mardin Artuklu University.
- Güner, B., & Suayin, R. (2024). A stylistic analysis of the poem 'Ne Çıkar Bahtımızda, Ayrılık Varsa Yarın' by Gündoğdu Duran. *Uluslararası Beşeri Bilimler ve Eğitim Dergisi*, 10(23), 145-158. <https://doi.org/10.65092/ijhe.2024.23.145>
- Hankir, A. K., Holloway, D., Agius, M., & Zaman, R. (2012). 'The verses of madness': Schizophrenia and poetry. *BMJ Case Reports*, 2012, bcr2012007499. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bcr-2012-007499>

- Holmes, J. A. (2008). Mentalisation and metaphor in poetry and psychotherapy. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 14(3), 167-171. <https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.107.003723>
- Hua, Y. S. (2013). *Ti-Yong and the art of embodiment: Of schizophrenia and the synecdoche* (Master's thesis). National University of Singapore. <https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/handle/10635/43991>
- Hussein, A. M., & Al-Saidi, A. (2024). A stylistic analysis of nature in two selected, English and Arabic, pastoral poems. *Al-Adab Journal*, 149, 19-32. <https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v1i149.4530>
- Iakimova, G., Passerieux, C., Laurent, J. P., & Hardy-Baylé, M. C. (2006). Impact of metaphor production and comprehension on verbal communication in schizophrenia. *Psychopathology*, 39(5), 245-251. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000093779>
- Iqbal, R., Ashraf, H., & Javeed, M. F. (2024). Examining language features in Plath's poetry: A feminist stylistic analysis. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 8(2), 465-472. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2024\(8-II\)41](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2024(8-II)41)
- Jaafar, E. A. (2014). A stylistic analysis of two selected poems. *Journal of the College of Education for Women*, 25(1), 238-248. <https://jcoeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/journal/article/view/538>
- Kılınç, M. C., & Güçlü, R. (2026). Translating multilingual foregrounding in A Study in Scarlet: A comparative analysis based on Leech's theory of stylistic deviation. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Dergisi / Istanbul University Journal of Translation Studies*, (24), 142-168. <https://doi.org/10.26650/iujts.2026.1774367>
- Langdon, R., Coltheart, M., Ward, P. B., & Catts, S. (2002). Disturbed communication in schizophrenia: The role of poor pragmatics and poor mind-reading. *Psychological Medicine*, 32(7), 1273-1284. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291702006396>
- Leader, D. (2011). *What is madness?* Penguin.
- Leech, G. N. (1969). *A linguistic guide to English poetry*. Longman.
- Leech, G., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose* (2nd ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Lehman, P. W. (1996). *Descriptive linguistics: An introduction*. Random House.
- Malabou, C. (2020). Masks and symbols: In between paranoia and schizophrenia. *Portable Gray*, 3(2), 217-223. <https://portablegray.hcommons.org/malabou-masks-and-symbols/>
- Muhammed, Q. T., & Sharhan, K. S. (2022). A gender-based stylistic analysis of selected English love poems. *Al-Adab Journal*, 141, 73-82. <https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v1i141.3369>
- Mukařovský, J. (1964). Standard language and poetic language. In P. L. Garvin (Eds.), *A Prague school reader on esthetics, literary structure and style* (pp. 17-30). Georgetown University.
- Parnas, J., & Sass, L. A. (2003). Self, consciousness, and schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 29(3), 427-444. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.schbul.a007017>
- Pennebaker, J. W., Francis, M. E., & Booth, R. J. (2003). *Linguistic inquiry and word count: LIWC 2001*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rhodes, J. E., & Jakes, S. (2004). The contribution of metaphor and metonymy to delusions. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 77(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1348/147608304322874227>

- Romme, M., & Escher, S. (1993). *Accepting voices*. MIND.
- Ross, T. A. (2025). Schizophrenia, the creative process, & the loss of self. *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 38(1), 44-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08893675.2024.2435001>
- Sass, L. A., & Parnas, J. (2003). Schizophrenia, consciousness, and the self. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 29(3), 427-444. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.schbul.a007017>
- Sayakhan, N. I. (2016). The use of personification and apostrophe as facilitators in teaching poetry. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, 4(1), 7-11. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijla.20160401.12>
- Semino, E. (2002). Stylistics and linguistic variation in poetry. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 30(1), 28-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/007242030001004>
- Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the language of poems, plays and prose*. Longman.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (2012). A deflationary account of metaphors. In D. Wilson & D. Sperber (Eds.), *Meaning and relevance* (pp. 97-122). Cambridge University. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139028370.007>
- Syal, P., & Jindal, D. V. (2010). *An introduction to linguistics: Language, grammar and semantics*. Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd.
- Titchkosky, T. (2015). Life with dead metaphors: Impairment rhetoric in social justice praxis. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, 9(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2015.1>
- Tuncer, B. (1964). *Akıl hastalarının yazdıkları şiirler: İnilti*. Matbaa Teknisyenleri.
- Turan, T. (2022). Bu 'yollar' 'o belde'ye çıkar mı?: Gösterge-biçembilim düzleminde Ahmet Haşim şiirlerinde özgöndergesellik. *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 62(2), 1445-1464. <https://doi.org/10.33171/dtcfjournal.2022.62.2.27>
- Van Peer, W. (1986). *Stylistics and psychology: Investigations of foregrounding*. Croom Helm.
- Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics*. Oxford University.
- Wales, K. (2001). *A dictionary of stylistics (2nd ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- Woods, A. (2011). Beyond the wounded storyteller: Rethinking narratives of illness and disability. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, 5(2), 99-114. <https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2011.7>
- Woods, A. (2013). The limits of narrative: Provocations for the medical humanities. *Medical Humanities*, 37(2), 73-78. <https://doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2011-010045>