DEATH IDEAS IN PLATH'S SELECTED POEMS AND ITS RELATION TO POET'S SUICIDE: FORENSIC LINGUISTICS STUDY

Vicha Faradika¹⁾, Sawirman²⁾, Ike Revita³⁾

¹Postgraduate Study of Linguistics, Andalas University, Indonesia

²Postgraduate Study of Linguistics, Andalas University, Indonesia

³Postgraduate Study of Linguistics, Andalas University, Indonesia

E-mail: ¹vicha.faradika@gmail.com,

²drsawirman@gmail.com, ³ikerevita30@gmail.com

Submit: 07-12-2018 Review: 05-03-2019 Accepted: 25-03-2019

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22202/tus.2019.v5i1.3110>

Abstract

This article describes death ideas which occur in Sylvia Plath's selected poems entitled "Full Fathom Five", "I am Vertical", "Ariel" and "Edge" which focused on their relation to poet's depression evidence before committing suicide. It can be used to investigate poet's suicide case in perspective of forensic linguistics. This is a qualitative research that is conducted by using L.G. Alexander's poetic devices and theory of suicide by Durkheim to analyse Plath's suicidal motives. The result of the analysis shows that Plath's selected poems are really standing out as the evidence of her depression during alive. In forensic linguistics case, the series of depression evidence in the poems can be the proof of suicidal unseen motives which are known through her language used in the poems. Plath's suicidal motives are basically oriented to the stage of self-destruction due to the changing ideas of death from the selected poems from death as unacceptable thing, an unavoidable choice, gate for a rebirth to final solution of all life's problems. It is caused by personal feeling that completely separate from community.

Keywords: *death, forensic linguistics, poem, suicide*

INTRODUCTION

Suicide or called suicidium in Latin means the act of intentionally causing one's own death. It is also defined as a deliberate act of self-death. In general, suicide is the result of despair which often associated with mental disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, alcohol dependence and drug abuse (Hawton, 2009:373). It includes factors causing stress such as financial difficulties and other problems in interpersonal relationships. Then the methods performed in suicide attempts varies between countries, either by hanging one's own self, drinking poison using firearms or other dangerous acts.

A suicide case actually becomes shocking news because it belongs to criminal action. It is even more surprising if the doer of case is one of influential person, including famous public figures, artists, writers and others. The treatment in investigating the case will be different to others who are not famous because people will follow the development of their death cases and guess the motive of a suicide. This is also due to the implication of their suicides which is ironically viewed since they are notably a role model for public yet ends their life tragically. The simillar thing happen to one of American poets named Sylvia Plath who took her own life in 1963 by placing her head in the oven with the gas turned on (Feinmann, 1993). Sylvia Plath was a gifted and trouble poet, known for the confessional style for her such as novel *The Bell Jar* (1963) and poetry collection *The Colossus* (1960) and *Ariel* (1965). She was born on October 27, 1932 in Boston, Massachusetts and committed suicide on February 11, 1963 in London.

In relation to her death, the investigation needs to be applied to reveal the factors behind. Observing and collecting information related to suicide case are necessary to find out death mystery. In Plath's case, she does not write a suicide letters, but her poems do it naturally. These evidences can be the tools to start identification of her suicide motive. Furthermore, the sequence changes of poems' idea from time to time encodes function of their occurrence as the representation of poet's urges before deciding suicide. In other words, the investigation in term of linguistic used in Plath's poems is one of ways to unveil suicide unseen motive.

The case of Plath's suicide can be investigated through linguistics phenomenon and seen through several poems, especially in four of her confessional poems entitled "Full Fathom Five" (1958), "I am Vertical" (1961), "Ariel" (1962) and her last poem before committing suicide "Edge" (1963). These poems are selected due to they seem like having a clear connection one another, including the changing of times and ideas. These poems have several similarities that fulfill criterias such as representing suicide motives and sequence changes of death ideas. Firtsly, "Full Fathom Five" shows death as an unacceptable thing. Then, "I am Vertical" points out death as an avoidable choice, "Ariel" promotes death as a gate for a rebirth and "Edge" delivers final solution to commit suicide.

The way to examine suicide case language, including effort to find the suicidal motives is originally related to forensic linguistics. Olsson (2008:128) states that the type such as emergency calls, ransom demands, suicide letters, final death row statement and confessions or denials belong to forensic linguistics. Besides, it is essentially an applied linguistics field involving the relationship between language, law, and crime.

Therefore, forensic linguistics is commonly referred to study of legal texts' languages. As the material object of linguistics, language phenomenon can be empowered into the realm of law, either in analysis and investigation level of crime or in courts process (Sawirman, et al., 2014:2). McMenamin (2001:67) describes forensic linguistics is a scientific study of linguistics that is applied to forensic purposes and contexts. In its study, there are various types and forms the of legal texts' languages such as linguistics documents of legal entities, personal wills and judgments.

Nevertheless, if this research merely follows the basic rule of forensic linguistics, the result will not complete. So that the analysis is supported by poetic devices analysis proposed by L.G. Alexander to show the relation between the selected poems and the case of poet's suicide. There is also suicide theory by Durkheim to strengthen death ideas on the poems which have correlation to Plath's own motive to commit suicide. The theory aims to justify the context of situation and see suicide types. The theory gives contribution to comprehend how Plath expressed death sequentially from unaccept death to commit suicide.

In general, the researcher provides some reviews of related studies in order to respect the prior researchers who also concern about forensic linguistics as the formal object. There are Shapero (2011), Rahmat (2015), Natrio (2013) and Mintowati (2016). Shapero (2011) from The University of Birmingham investigated the language of suicide notes. He reported a corpus study of 286 suicide notes collected from Birmingham Coroner's Office with additional findings of 33 real and 33 fabricated notes from Los Angeles. His writing compared topics that are used in real and fabricated suicide notes. Although there

is considerable overlap between two categories, they can be partially distinguished by some features that are more likely to occur in one category than the other.

Similar study is done by Rahmat (2015) from STKIP PGRI Padang. He focused on threat language in Kaba Sabai Nan Aluih text by using forensic linguistics approach. He conducted the study by employing several theory to figure out the meaning and used the motive form theory by Maslow (1943) in order to complete his writing in explaining the form, meaning and motive of threaten language. The result of analysis shows there are four types of language threat form; (1) direct speech act, (2) indirect speech act, (3) literal speech act, and (4) non literal speech act.

Earlier from Rahmat, Natrio (2013) has done linguistics research by investigating suicide motives through the transitivity in 13 famous public figures' suicide letters. He used theory of systemic functional linguistics particularly transitivity by Halliday (1994) to see form of clauses arrangement. He pointed out result of analysis in certain percentage such as the dominant process occurred was material process (46.4%), mental process (23.71%), relational attributive process (14.43%), existential process (9.3%), behavioural process (4.1%) and relational identifying process (2.3%). However there is no existence of verbal process found. In short, he concludes suicide motives orientate on the self destruction.

Other researcher, Mintowati discusses lingual data of defamation cases based on analysis of lexical semantics, grammatical semantics and pragmatic analysis especially speech acts which are part of forensic linguistics study. From the lingual data on defamation that has been analyzed based on three points of view, the following findings are obtained: (1) word denotation are found; (2) the meaning of phrases, sentences, and discourse in accordance with the intended by the speaker are found; (3) there are speech acts of illocution both from speakers and the hearers. He concluded that a speech is classified as defamation and utilized by the investigator as the basis for investigation event.

In relation to the theory used of this research, the guidance lies on main general concept of forensic linguistics. Then, there are some supporting theories to help in exploring the idea to prove language used in Plath's poems may stand out

as poet's depression evidence before committing suicide namely poetic devices analysis and theory of suicide. Forensic is a broad spectrum of science applications to answer the questions of interest to the legal system. This is in line with Kusharyanti (2005: 25) who states that forensic linguistics is one of applied linguistics branches related to law. Forensic linguistics is the application of linguistic knowledge, methods and insights to the context of legal forensics, language, criminal investigation, trial and judicial procedures.

The crime element analysis study in forensic linguistics is based on language of crime analysis. It sees on element of humiliation, threat, pressure, lies, deceit, attempts to distort victims, unilateral victim control that exists in the meaning of words, phrases, clauses and overall text (Sawirman, et al., 2014:86). In line with that, Olsson in his book *Forensic Linguistics* (2008:128) stated that there are several objects which are investigated by this perspective such as documents related to murder, robbery, burglary, assault, malicious communication, terrorism, mental abuse, witness intimidation, plagiarism, authorship and prison code. In addition, a text is somehow implicated in a legal or criminal context then it is a forensic text (Olsson, 2008:1).

In its implementation, suicide includes in the study of victimology or crime victims. It provides an understanding of crime victims as the result of human actions that cause mental, physical and social suffering. In this study, there is an in-depth analysis of victims based on relationship between language and crime that befell the victim. Furthermore, forensic linguistics study is used in analyzing the language used in Plath's selected poems. Plath's choice of words in the selected poems are reputed as her expression before committing suicide. In other words, language used in the poems is one of evidences which need to be investigated in order to know poet's motive in doing criminal action.

Besides, this research used poetic devices analysis by L.G. Alexander (1963) in order to know poet's expression evidences before committing suicide. Poetic devices analysis is needed to understand the meaning of language used in poems. Alexander stated that it consists of three devices which must be analysed in order to find the representation of poems' main idea. The devices are structural

devices, sense devices and sound devices. Firstly, structural devices in poetry consist of contrast, illustration and repetition. These devices are referred to structural devices as they are woven into the structure of the poem. This poetic device indicates the way a whole poem has been built and become apparent as soon as meaning of poem has been found (Alexander, 1963:15). Alexander defined contrast as the most common of all structural devices. It occurs when two completely opposite pictures side by side are found. Sometimes the contrast is immediately obvious and sometimes implied (Alexander, 1963:15). Then, illustration is defined as an example which takes the form of a vivid picture by which the poet may make an idea clear (Alexander, 1963:15).

Secondly, sense devices consist of personification as the act of giving non-living things human characteristics. Alexander (1963:19) argues that personification occurs when inanimate objects are given a human form. Finally, sound devices are resources used by poets to convey the meaning of poetry through the skilful use of sound. After all, poets are trying to use a concentrated blend of sound and imagery to create an emotional response. The words and their order should evoke images. According to Alexander, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme, assonance and rhythm are poem's sound devices. All of them add considerably to musical quality of a poem (Alexander, 1963:19).

In addition, suicidal type is known from Durkheim's suicide theory used. A key component of Durkheim's analysis of suicide is the acceptance of suicide as a social fact which should be explored objectively. The method in which Durkheim differentiates types of suicide is instead of being morphological from the start to be aetiological (Durkheim, 1952:147). Durkheim concludes that suicide is social disorganization or lack of social integration result. Durkheim developed a theoretical typology of suicide to explain the differing effects of social factors which lead to suicide. It includes four types of suicide such as egoistic suicide, altruistic suicide, anomic suicide and fatalistic suicide (Jones, 1986:82-114).

Referring to all description above, this research aims to find out Plath's representation of sequence changes of death ideas in her selected poems entitled "Full Fathom Five", "I am Vertical", "Ariel" and "Edge". It is including the

relation between the sequence changes of death ideas in the poems and Plath's own suicide. The research is done throughout the analysis of poetic devices which lead specific motivation of Plath to commit suicide.

METHODS

In conducting the research, three steps were followed. The first step is collecting the data. It begins with selecting four of hundreds poems written by Plath. The researcher is interested in analyzing "Full Fathom Five", "I am Vertical", "Ariel" and "Edge" because they have correlation one another. It is including the correlation between the ideas on poems and death of the poet. The researcher uses observational method with non participant observational technique in relation to poetic devices data. According to Sudaryanto (1993), observational method is observing language used in the research. The researcher reads the poems word by word, line by line and all the stanzas. The researcher makes notes on every kind of poetic devices used in the poems to make the analysis easier.

The second step is analysing the data. The researcher uses combination of distributional method and referential identity method. The process of poetic devices is using the concept which is proposed by Alexander. It aims to know the depression of poet before committing suicide. This process concerns to linguistic element which contain inside the data known as distributional method (Sudaryanto, 1993:31). Then, the referential identity method is applied to figure out data referent (Sudaryanto, 1993:13). It comes from outside the data which describes the situational context around suicide case. The researcher finds out situational context around suicidal case and determines suicidal type by using Durkheim's theory to prove the data as poet's depression evidence.

The third step is presenting result of analysis. The researcher uses ordinary words or natural language. Some of them used symbol or sign. Then, in the part relates to sequence changes of death ideas lexicon, it is presented by examining line by line of the selected poems.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are sequence changes of death ideas lexical in Plath's selected poems. It begins from death as unacceptable thing, avoidable choice, gate for a rebirth and final solution of all problems in life. In this case, the sequence changes of death ideas which occur in one poem to other poems can be seen as a changing of poet's perspective about death. It can be one of the ways to know the hidden motive of poet's suicide because the poems are written in different time. In short, the ideas which are changing cannot be separated from the poet herself and may stand as the depiction of poet's depression evidence before committing suicide. The series of changes that occurs in the selected poems can be seen below.

1. Death as an Unacceptable Thing in "Full Fathom Five" (1958)

Death of someone as a direct result of a self-destructive lifestyle or even through a decision to end his own life often bring up such sympathy from societies which sometimes cannot be accepted. The idea of unacceptable death is similar to the concept proposed by Damien Hirst, a scholar who was awarded the Turner Prize in 1995. He used a varied practice of installation, sculpture, painting and drawing to explore the complex relationship between art, life and death. Hirst developed his interest in exploring the unacceptable idea of death in teenager's life. The experiences served to establish the difficulties that he perceived in reconciling the idea of death in life. In the death prominence of his work *The Telegraph* (2011), he has explained that people can be frightened with death.

In relation to Plath's poem, the idea of unacceptable death occurs in "Full Fathom Five". The most ideas in the poem show how the speaker falls down in her life. It seems like something is completely sunken into despair. The poems show a distinct tension between the charm of death and human's nature to resist it.

The analysis of death idea in "Full Fathom Five" based on poetic devices analysis is divided into two parts including structural devices and sound devices. In structural devices part, "Full Fathom Five" contains contrast, illustration and repetition. In contrast, the poet used it to contrast the ideas between 'fall down' and 'get up' in order to distinguish the idea of death and life. The speaker describes relationship between the speaker and an old man who is not good

enough for a father-daughter relationship in “Your danger are many. I / cannot look much but from your suffers / some strange injury” (16-18). Besides, almost all stanzas show sadness of her life and her broken heart.

In contrast, poem also shows how the speaker gets up from her sadness in different way which relate to a thought of death as seen in stanza eight in “of your burial move me / to half-believe; your reappearance / proves rumors shallow” (22-24). It shows the only time of an old man or her happiness in speaker’s life related to the time of her upsetting and contemplating suicide. It is actually ironic when people get up from their falling down by the miracle of thought about death and go away from reality.

Then, in part of illustration, “Full Fathom Five” illustrated how a father takes on a new image as daughter’s feeling become more complex in one side. It is as seen in “When seas was cold, foam” (3) and “Your shelled bed I remember / Father, this thick air is murderous / I would breathe water” (43-45). Line 3 shows the old man or father that adopts the image of sea god, while the others are the representation of daughter’s longing for her father and wish to join him in death. In general, the poem illustrates and describes the old man at the beginning, then the relationship between the speaker and the old man as the father. Then, the poem also illustrates how the speaker is thinking of her father when she is thinking about suicide.

Meanwhile, repetition in “Full Fathom Five” consists of two words and one clause. There are “white” (4) to show the colour of hair and beard of speaker’s father which implies he has been old in age, “rumors” (21; 24) to underline the doubtful truths relate to some ideas in speaker’s mind and “you defy” (39; 40) as declaration of the speaker to in point out to her father.

On the other side, there are three kinds of sound devices found in “Full Fathom Five” namely alliteration, rhyme and assonance. Alliteration is seen in several parts such as “Old man, you surface seldom” (1), “Then you come in with the tide’s coming” (2), “Capped: white hair, white beard, far-flung” (4), “of your spread hair, in which wrinkling skeins”(8), “some strange injury” (18), “of the ocean, Such sage humor and” (29) and “father, this thick air is murderous” (44).

Secondly, rhyme refers to a close similarity of sound as well as an exact correspondence. It uses to create special musical effect to the poems. It usually occurs at line endings and consist of words which have the same sound. Rhyme in “Full Fathom Five” is found once in “a dragnet, *rising, falling*, as waves” (5).

Meanwhile, assonance is the repetition of the sound of a vowel or diphthong in nonrhyming stressed syllables near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible (Oxford, 2008). It has similar sounds in similar words that have a power of beautiful sound of the poem as the function. Assonance occurs when a poet introduces imperfect rhymes in poem. In “Full Fathom Five”, two assonances are found, including seas and wash in line 3, and streered and clear in line 13.

Overall, “Full Fathom Five” discusses the speaker’s relationship with an old man who is known as her father and how his death has affected her life. The speaker speaks of his death and burial, mourning that she is forever exiled. She speaks very negative connotation and mentions the word related to death several times. Besides that, the speaker’s suicidal tendencies is also found in the poem from the tone that is one of solitudes and deaths.

Related to Sylvia Plath as the poet of the poem, this masterpiece cannot be separated to her own experiences. The poem “Full Fathom Five” is a depiction of her own relationship with her father, Otto Emil Plath who was a German American author when he was alive. He died on November 5, 1940 on aged 55 when Sylvia Plath was eight years old. The death of her father is being an emotionally traumatic event for her, leading to at least some of her later emotional problems which would affect her for the rest of her life (Kirk, 2004).

Plath was left with a feeling of sadness, guilt and anger that haunted her for life and led her to create several poems related to her losing feeling. “Full Fathom Five” was written when Sylvia Plath had been on 26 years old. It is her first poem about her father in his mythic role as ‘father-sea god-muse’. She composed the poem throughout time when she found writing was difficult. She resorted to set themes in her effort to find release (Plath, 1981:287).

Related to the time distance of writing the poem about her father and the exact time of her father own death, it actually had a rebate up to 18 years. It

proves that it is a deep loss that she could not forget, but it made a lasting impression. It seems like a flashback story to time when she was eight and several years after her father death, moreover until the poem was written, the death of her father is a kind of a thing that is rejected or as unacceptable thing at all.

2. Death as an Avoidable Choice in “I am Vertical” (1961)

Death means that people exist finitely and they can see their existence as a totality on death, including both facticity and freedom. On the other hand, freedom signifies that people may choose to let death become powerful in themselves. Only by choosing to make such a choice, they are free at all. People released to exercise the power of their finite freedom by opening themselves to the power of death. People gain a superior power in the freedom of death which lets them take over the powerlessness of their abandonment. In addition to the idea of freedom in choosing death, a freelance writer and Emmy Award-winning television producer, Monney gives idea in her article entitled “Choosing Death, Choosing Life” (2014). On the writing, it shows death as a must when people are choosing to suffer less. It puts themselves through less physical and emotional pain.

Plath in her poem “I am Vertical” seems to express that death can be an avoidable choice for individual to the individual. It alienates people from their own life to be still alive. The analysis of death idea in “I am Vertical” based on poetic devices is divided into three parts including structural devices, sense devices and sound devices. In structural devices part, “I am Vertical” contains contrast and illustration. Plath uses contrast to describe life and death by using contrasting point between ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’. Actually, it is a clear contrasting point which is stated in the title of poem and the first line. The title of the poem stated ‘vertical’ in “I am Vertical” (title), in contrast with the first line which states ‘horizontal’ in “But I would rather be horizontal” (1).

The contrasting point describes a dissatisfaction of life and a happiness comes by the death’s coming. Actually, the vertical side which express life of the one are stated in “I am not a tree with my root in the soil” (2) and “Nor am I the beauty of a garden bed” (5). The speaker yearns to be as long lived as a tree or starkly beautiful flower, but it is not the fact of her life. It is just an adding insult

to injury the trees and flowers which are completely indifferent to the speaker as she stands, breaths and alive.

In contrast, horizontal relates to lying down in earth or death as similar as stated in “ It is more natural to me, lying down / Then the sky and I are in open conversation / And I shall be useful when I lie down finally” (17-19). The lines show that the speaker is horizontal, not vertical at time of lying down and yet she is able to offer anything.

Then, in part of illustration, depiction of death is shown by the picture of being vertical and horizontal. There are several lines which use it such as line 2, 5, 1, 17 and 19. Line 2 and 5 show the fact of life that the speaker undergoes. It is in being vertical which means there is a life although full of dissatisfaction. But in line 1, the poem illustrates that although there is a life, the speaker chooses and hopes a death. It is supported by line 17 and 19 where she assumes that death is better than alive. On the other words, it seems like the happiness just come by the appearance of her own death. In general, the poem shows self-conflict of speaker in letting the life go by the destiny or choosing death as a better thing.

Besides that, sense devices in “I am Vertical” namely personification is found in three parts including “*The trees and flowers have been strewing their cool odors*” (12), “*Then the sky and I are in open conversation*” (18) and “*Then the trees may touch me for once, and the flowers have time for me*”(20). All of them consider the subjects which are a plant and universe as a human. They show silent situation which causes the speaker’s loneliness.

In part of sound devices, “I am Vertical” has alliteration and assonance. Alliteration is used in order to beautify the sound of an interval in the poem, such as “Sometimes I think that when I am sleeping” (14) and “I must most perfectly resemble them” (15). Meanwhile, assonance that has a power of beautiful sound in the poem “I am Vertical” is found once in each and March in line 4.

In general, “I am Vertical” consists of two stanzas that compliment yet contrast each other. The contrast between vibrant nature full of life and death is opposite from the traditional view of dying as morbid. In the first stanza, the speaker compares herself to nature, the tress and flowers. She says that the tree

has a long life and the flower is full of beauty. In the second stanza, she shows how society rejects her individuality which almost seems like she comes to the realization that she is going to die. Actually, the poem is written by such relation to the experience of death in comparison with nature. The use of nature as a setting helps to support the idea of serenity in death and the use of first point of view in the poem allows its meaning to be more personal and in-depth experience.

Futhermore, “I am Vertical” was written on March 28, 1961 or almost two years before Plath’s suicide. If in the previous selected poems “Full Fathom Five” (1958) and “The Colossus” (1959) Plath sees death as unacceptable thing, the idea of death has started to change in “I am Vertical”. In this poem, Plath states death as an avoidable choice. Actually this expression in becomes a terrifying statement about an actual self with previous knowledge of the process that would end itself.

The changing idea of death in “I am Vertical” is certainly reasonable, one of them must relate to time and situation when poem was written. Actually a month before the poem was written especially in February 1961, Plath experienced her second pregnancy ended in miscarriage (Kirk, 2004:85). Besides, in a letter to her therapist, Plath wrote that her husband, Ted Hughes beat her two days before the miscarriage and Hughes told Plath he wished that she was dead (Kean, 2017). This fact shows that there is always certain reason in changing one’s perspective including Plath that experiences painful condition physically and mentally because of the losing her fetus and being hurt by her husband.

3. Death as a Gate for a Rebirth in “Ariel” (1962)

The cycle of death and rebirth is one of natural phenomenon in life. It relates to certain process which is known through the senses rather than intuitions or reasoning. The concept of death as rebirth has become a long association with concept created by Buddhism. Steven Collin who talk about rebirth and Buddhism in his book entitled *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism* (1990) shows that rebirth is condition by karmas of previous lives; good karmas will yield a happier rebirth while the bad will produce one which is more unhappy. It shows everything that happens after rebirth is natural phenomenon.

In “Ariel”, Plath expresses death as a gate for a rebirth. The image of death here encodes a deep hidden wish of the poet for rebirth which means the birth of the true self. The analysis of death idea in “Ariel” based on poetic devices analysis is divided into two part including structural and sound devices. In structural devices part, “Ariel” contains contrast, illustration and repetition. Plath differentiates static and movement by using contrast in order to distinguish the idea of death and life. Static relates to dark and death, in contrast to movement as a light and life. There are such kinds of doubtless of life in the poem due to from one stanza to another, the point changes from static to movement at the beginning and movement to static in the next part. Static as the darkness and death points are shown in “Static in darkness” (1), “of the neck I cannot catch” (9), “shadows” (14) and “Godive, I unpeel” (20). The similar ideas about darkness and death points are shown in the first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth stanzas.

The other one is called movement, as a way to go away from the darkness of life but it sounds to be failed. The movement is shown in other stanzas including second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth.

Besides, in illustration part, it related to death including the darkness and static are shown in the poem “Ariel”. The illustrations are seen in “Static in darkness” (1), “How one we grow / Pivot of heels and knees! – The furrow” (5-6). The first line of the poem can be interpreted as a bad life or just a choice. It is actually stated as a darkness and can be related to death. Then as seen in line 5-6, there is a doubtless between staying in darkness or move to a bright life. But in the poem, the speaker seems to choose staying in the darkness which means death. Moreover, she just rather assumes that a movement will give nothing.

Then, repetition in “Ariel” contains one repetition word. It is the word ‘dead’ which is found in the seven stanza. It repeats two times in line 21. The word ‘dead’ lexically means no longer alive (Oxford, 2008). Relating to the whole context of the poem, the repetition shows that the speaker as human is not eternal and her life in this world is just for a moment.

In sound devices analysis, there are alliteration and rhyme. Alliterations are found twice including “Of the neck I cannot catch” (9) and “The child’s cry”

(24). Then, in rhyme part, there are two items found such as “*Pour of tor and distances*” (3) and “*Pivot of heels and kness! – The furrow*” (6).

Overall, the poem “Ariel” shows the death of body, but rebirth of the soul. It is about the transformation of the fearful woman into a powerful woman. The death idea in the poem is the death of the speaker’s former, fearful self. The poem begins in darkness, but then hauls along by the inspiration of poetic language. The poem begins in passivity, but moves into control and power. Actually, “Ariel” depict a woman that is riding her horse in the countryside. It details ecstasy and personal transformation that occurs through the experience.

Related to the poet’s life, “Ariel” is the name of Plath favorite horse which she rode weekly at a riding school on Dartmoor, in Devonshire, England (Plath, 1981:294). Her ex husband, Hughes commented Plath’s horse bolted, the stirrups fell off, and she came all way home to the stables about two miles at full gallop and hanging around the horse’s neck (Davis, 2010). As one of her favorites, it is not astonishing that the name of her horse becomes one of the title of her poems.

Besides, “Ariel” was written one year and a half after “I am Vertical” and published posthumously in the collection Ariel in 1965. It was written on October 27, 1962 at the same time Plath’s 30th birthday. It has been speculated that being written on her birthday as well as using the general theme of rebirth, “Ariel” may act as a sort of psychic rebirth for the poet (Davis, 2010).

In addition, the writing time of the poem was also on the same month of her divorce time with her husband, Hughes (Plath, 1981:292). Thereafter Plath was dependent on home help (Plath, 1981:292) before she moved to London in December. From the situation known above, actually it can be assumed that Plath was experiencing a really hard life at that time including being a single mother for two children namely Frieda Hughes and Nicholas Hughes. Frieda was two years old and Nicholas was nine months on that time.

As an ordinary human being, the hard situation certainly makes a person to feel hurted and surely there will be several changes in mindset, as similar as the things happen to Plath. In relation to her, her own view and minset of death experiences such changing. It is form something in the form of darkness,

unacceptable, then considering it as a choice that must be chosen. At that time, in 1962, she has changed her idea of death by assuming that there is a certain relation between death and rebirth. And it is proved in “Ariel” which depicts death as an important way for a rebirth.

4. Death as Final Solution of Life in “Edge”

In general, there is always a solution in order to excel in life. Many think consider death is end of all the worries and pains. It happens because to find a solutions, people have to feel difficult emotion, frustration, anger, confusion, foolishness, doubt, anxiety, sadness and so on. This condition sometimes push somebody to think and feel that suicide is an only permanent solution to a permanent problem, whether somebody knows it is criminal or not.

Related to “Edge”, the analysis of poetic devices analysis is divided into two part including structural devices and sound devices. There are two kinds of structural devices found in “Edge” namely contrast and illustration. In contrast, there is a contrasting between expectation and reality in order to distinguish the idea of death and life. Expectation in the poem relates to the way how the speaker tries to cover up her giving up and she needs to follow life as reality. Meanwhile reality, there is still a need to stay alive. Firstly, the fatigue in accepting life makes the speaker reaches such kind of expectation in “Feet seem to be saying / we have come so far, it is over” (7-8) where there is a wish of death. In contrast, reality shows the need to stay alive is still there as seen in “she is used to this sort of thing / Her blanks crackle and drag” (19-20). Then, in part of illustration, the poet illustrates death by two ways including directly and indirectly. At the very beginning of the poem and at stanza eight, it has been illustrated death directly, while other parts illustrate death indirectly.

In sound devices part, there are alliteration and assonance. Actually there are two alliteration found in “Edge” as seen in “Each dead child coiled, a white serpent” (9) and “Staring from her hood of bone” (18). The head rhyme of consonant ‘c’ is found in child and coiled in line 9, then head rhyme with sound ‘h’ is found in her and hood in line 18. Besides, there is one assonance found in rose and close in line 14.

Overall, “Edge” is a short, bleak and brutal piece that reflects the depth of speaker’s depression and despair emotion. In the poem, death is an act of self-destruction that draws focus to persona’s pain and suffering. It also focus on death as a perfect thing which means there is no option except death to get a perfect ending. It seems to be about a woman who has recently committed or commit suicide soon. It actually suggests a border between life and death.

Related to the poet’s own life, “Edge” is written by Plath as her final poem before committing suicide. It was written on February 5, 1963 or six days before her death. The feeling of death on the poem is subtly reinforced by the short lines such as ‘Her dead’ or ‘Her bare’. In general, from the very beginning of the poem, the existence of the poem’s subject makes a feel as though it is meant to be Plath’s final poem. Hence it forms an edge to the poems as a whole.

Besides, it seems that “Edge” was written intentionally as her final emotional impingement before died by describing how does her death looks like few days later. She has expressed in “Edge” that the dead will be perfected and it is proved that she has really prepared it. She is found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning with her head in the oven, having sealed the rooms between her and her sleeping children with tape, towels and cloths (Stevenson, 1990:296). Moreover, the language that she used also creates the resigned note including ‘perfected’, ‘accomplishment’, ‘necessity’ or the casual internal half-rhymes such as ‘nothing’ and ‘thing’. In short, there is no other way than death and he choosed it.

As seen in the analysis above related to depiction of poet’s depression evidence before committing suicide, it can be concluded that different poems which are written actually shows the sequence changes of time. And related to idea of death in Plath’s poem, it also seems like there is a correlation between the changes of time and Plath’s perspective of death which occurs because of the poet’s own situations and problems in her life.

At the beginning in “Full Fathom Five”, Plath assumes death as an unacceptable thing. Then in “I am Vertical”, she points out death as an avoidable choice and in “Ariel” she promotes death as a gate for a rebirth. Last, she thinks death as a final solution of life in “Edge”. Based on those ideas, there are sequence

changes idea of all the selected poems from unaccept death to put death as a final solution of everything in life. In other word, the last idea of death may lead Plath as the poet in this case to commit her own suicide.

Besides, by using the perspective of Emile Durkheim's in suicide theory, he differentiates types of suicide or that is "instead of being morphological, our classification, will, from the start be aetiological" (Durkheim, 1952:147). In general, Durkheim concludes that suicide is the result of social diorganization or lack of social integration or social solidarity. In conducting research, Durkheim developed a theoretical typology of suicide to explain the differing effects of social factors and how they might lead to suicide.

Based on the definition for each suicidal type, Plath's choice of word and its changes in selected poems may categorized it into certain category of suicide. Plath's choice in committing suicide in relating to her writings can be included on the type of egoistic suicide. Durkheim explained that this type of suicide happens when people feel totally detached from society. Ordinarily, people are integrated into society by work roles, ties to family and community, and other social bonds. Elderly people who lose these ties are the most susceptible to egoistic suicide. These things are similar to Plath's condition, because her writings show her own problems in life starting from the death of her father in "Full Fathom Five", then related to her surrounding which does not notice her in "I Am Vertical", the representation of her disintegration in "Ariel" and related to a deep reflection of Plath's depression in "Edge".

CONCLUSION

To sum up, a deliberate act of self-death attempt of the poet, Sylvia Plath depicted in her own works especially her poems. There are four selected poems of Plath that delivered a sequence changes of death's perspective. There are "Full Fathom Five" that shows death as an unacceptable thing, "I am Vertical" that shows death as an unavoidable choice, "Ariel" that shows death as a gate for a rebirth and "Edge" that shows death as a final solution of all life's problems. In general, by analyzing poet's expression from poetic devices used in every selected poem, it is

clearly seen that the poems themselves as the depression evidence before Plath commits suicide. Moreover it proofs that a masterpiece cannot be separated from poet's own experiences. In other words, language used or several linguistics aspects which are used in Plath's selected poems stand as one of evidences to show a series of depressions experienced before she decides to commit suicide which is a criminal act. There are depression evidences of Plath due to her father's death, her surrounding which does not notice her, her own disintegration and all problems in her life so that there is no other choice than commit suicide at the end.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, L. G. (1963). *Poetry and Prose Appresiation for Overseas Students*. London: Longman.
- Collin, Steven. (1990). *Selfless Person: Imagery and Though in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, William. (2010). On Ariel. *Modern American Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Durkheim, Emile. (1966). *Suicide*. New York: Macmillan.
- . (1952). *Suicide, A Study in Sociology*. London: Routledge & Kegan LTD.
- Feinmann, Jane. (1993). Rhyme, Reason and Depression. *The Guardian*. An Article in *The Guardian*, February 16 on theguardian.com Retrieved on August 1, 2018, at 08.00 a.m.
- Hawton, Keith, dkk. (2009). Suicide. *Lancet*. 373(9672):1372-1381.
- Hirst, Damien. (2011). We're Here for a Good Time, not a Long Time. *The Telegraph*. An Interview with Alastair Sooke.
- Jones, Robert Alun. (1986). *Emile Durkheim: An Introduction To Four Major Works*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kean, Danuta. (2017). Unseen Sylvia Plath Letters Claim Domestic Abuse by Ted Hughes. An Article in *The Guardian*, April 11 on theguardian.com Retrieved on August 1, 2018, at 08.00 a.m.
- Kirk, Connie Ann. (2004). *Sylvia Plath: A Biography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

- Kusharyanti, et al.. (2005). *Pesona Bahasa: Langkah Awal Memahami Linguistik*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Lukes, Steven. (1985). *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, a Historical and Critical Study*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- McMenamin, G. R. (2001). *Forensic Linguistics: Advances in Forensic Stylistics*. London: CRC Press.
- Mintowati, Maria. (2016). Pencemaran Nama Baik Kajian Linguistik Forensik. *Paramasastra*. 3(2):27-37.
- Monney, Ginny. (2014). Choosing Death, Choosing Life. An Editorial Article in *Break Point*, October on breakpoint.org Retrieved on August 1, 2018, at 08.00 a.m.
- Natrio, Yeyep. (2013). Investigating the Suicide Motives Through the Transitivity in Famous Public Figures' Suicide Letters: A Forensic Linguistics Research. A Thesis Submitted to Andalas University.
- Olsson, John. (2008). *Forensic Linguistic Second Edition*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press.
- Plath, Sylvia. (1981). *The Collected Poems. Ted Huges (Ed.)*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Rahmat, Wahyudi. (2015). Bahasa Ancaman dalam Teks Kaba Sabai Nan Aluih Berbasis Pendekatan Linguistik Forensik. *Jurnal Arbitrer*. 2(1):81-97.
- Sawirman, et al. (2014). *Linguistik Forensik: Volume 1*. Padang: Andalas University Press.
- Shapero, Jess Jann. (2011). The Language of Suicide Notes. A Thesis Submitted to University of Birmingham for Doctor of Philosophy Degree.
- Stevenson, Anne. (1990). *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Sudaryanto. (1993). *Metode dan Teknik Analisis Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana University Press.