# A PHONO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ROSE MILLIGAN'S POEM
## *DUST IF YOU MUST*

# ANALISIS FONOLOGIS PUISI *DUST IF YOU MUST*
## KARYA ROSE MILLIGAN

**Witness Eunike Margaretta[1], Salwa Saleh Madi [2] & Rahmadsyah Rangkuti [3]**
**1,2,3 English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara**
**Jl. Dr. T. Mansyur No. 9, Medan, Medan, Sumatera Utara, 20155, Indonesia**
Email: witmly9@students.usu.ac.id[1], madhysalwa@gmail.com[2], rangkuti@usu.ac.id[3]

## Abstract
*This research presented the stylistic analysis at the phonological level of Rose Milligan's poem "Dust If You Must." Through this poem, Rose Milligan beautifully emphasizes the importance of seizing our moment in life. Employing a qualitative data analysis approach, the study identified the five most prominent consonants and vowels, including /t/, /n/, /d/, /s/, /m/, and / ə/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /u/, /æ/, respectively. The data is displayed in four tables that show where these sounds appear in every line of the poem. The combination of these phonetic elements yielded words like 'dust,' 'must,' and 'man,' which strongly resonate with the poem's theme. This focus on how the sounds in the poem connect to its meaning helps us understand the poem better. It shows that the poet chose these sounds on purpose to make the poem more meaningful. In addition, this emphasis on specific sounds can reinforce the themes and messages the poet intends to convey, deepening our comprehension of the connection between phonetics and interpreted meaning. This study has the potential to raise appreciation for literary works and support the development of new theories in stylistic analysis by providing a better understanding of how sounds in poems relate to the theme*
***Keywords:*** *meaning, phonological level, Rose Milligan, stylistics, theme*

## Abstrak
*Penelitian ini menyajikan analisis gaya bahasa pada tingkat fonologi dari puisi Rose Milligan "Dust If You Must." Melalui puisi ini, Rose Milligan dengan indah menekankan pentingnya memanfaatkan momen dalam hidup. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis data kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi lima konsonan dan vokal yang paling menonjol, termasuk /t/, /n/, /d/, /s/, /m/, dan /ə/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /u/, /æ/. Data ditampilkan dalam empat tabel yang menunjukkan di mana bunyi-bunyi ini muncul dalam setiap baris puisi. Kombinasi dari elemen-elemen fonetik ini menghasilkan kata-kata seperti 'debu', 'harus', dan 'manusia', yang sangat sesuai dengan tema puisi. Fokus pada bagaimana bunyi-bunyi dalam puisi terhubung dengan maknanya membantu kita memahami puisi dengan lebih baik. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa penyair memilih bunyi-bunyi ini dengan sengaja untuk membuat puisi tersebut lebih bermakna. Selain itu, penekanan pada bunyi-bunyi tertentu dapat memperkuat tema dan pesan yang ingin disampaikan oleh penyair, memperdalam pemahaman kita akan hubungan antara fonetik dan makna yang ditafsirkan. Penelitian ini memiliki potensi untuk meningkatkan apresiasi terhadap karya sastra dan mendukung pengembangan teori baru dalam*

*analisis stilistika dengan memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang bagaimana suara dalam puisi berhubungan dengan tema*
**Kata kunci:** *makna, Rose Milligan, stilistika, tema, tingkat fonologi*

## Introduction

Language and literature are two closely related and inseparable aspects. Language is the primary tool of human communication used to convey ideas, knowledge, and to build relationships among individuals in society. As expressed by Meyerhoff & Ehrlich (2019) language is a symbolic system that arises from within each individual and is used in communication to achieve specific goals and objectives. In other words, language is also employed to achieve a variety of communication goals, both practical and emotional. On the other hand, literature, whether oral or written, conveys the thoughts, emotions, perspectives, and culture of individuals Hornby (2000). Literature cannot exist separately from language because language serves as the primary medium for expressing the thoughts and meanings in literary works. In the world of literature, many authors employ unique comparisons to enhance the impact, intrigue, and clarity in their descriptions. Therefore, to understand the underlying meanings in a work of literature, stylistic analysis is required.

The stylistic analysis focuses on the study of language and aims to identify how writers use language in a unique and creative way to achieve their goals. Stylistics can be understood as a branch of linguistics that deals with the analysis of language style and its usage in specific texts. Leech (1988) states that stylistics is essentially the study of the way language is used in literature, specifically the examination of literature. This perspective is supported by Turner (1977) who defines stylistics as a branch of linguistic studies that focuses on how language use varies. It can be defined as the analysis of unique language expression and the explanation of its purpose and impact. Stylistic analysis can draw attention to particular language features within a text, thereby offering a textual basis for the diverse literary effects it may have on the reader.

The object to analyse by using stylistics analysis at the phonological level is the poem *Dust If You Must*, composed by Rose Milligan. Rose Milligan is a contemporary poet originating from North Lancashire, UK. This poem was initially published in The Lady magazine in 1998 and has subsequently been

cited and occasionally misquoted in diverse contexts. *Dust If You Must* is a timeless and well-known poem conveying a profound message, available in a concise and elegant gift book. It offers a beautiful reflection on life. The poet envisions people as akin to dust and articulates what individuals should prioritize before reaching old age. In modern times, many have forgotten to appreciate life's simplicity, despite the numerous sources of genuine happiness that exist.

In the context of stylistic analysis, phonological-level research in literature has improved a lot. However, there is a research gap, mostly with regard to the relationship between phonological features, especially the dominant sound in a poem, and the message, theme, or title of a poem. Previous study has usually concentrated on lexical and grammatical features, so the possible impact of phonology on stylistic analysis, especially for understanding how different sound patterns can expand the interpretation of themes in poetry, frequently gets ignored. So, the main problem that occurs is that it is not clear whether phonology, especially the dominant sounds in the poetry, may be helpful or hinder how to comprehend and interpret the themes that are contained in the poetry.

There are several relevant studies regarding this topic. Lang & Liu (2023) conducted research on the linguistic features of Katherine Mansfield's *Miss Brill*. They discovered multiple foregrounding elements at various language levels. They recognized the usage of alliteration and coda on a phonological level. Punctuation parallelism was detected graphically. The researchers found a wide range of material and mental processes, diverse modalities (high-value, median-value, and low-value), and marked themes at the lexical-grammatical level. Parallel means of connection were highlighted on the semantic level. The research successfully brought the story reality through the analysis of these linguistic features, allowing readers to get an in-depth understanding of the novel's linguistic nuances in addition to a deeper comprehension of the story's important message.

In a different study Hammadi (2022) conducted research on phono-stylistics in Emily Dickinson's poem *Our Share of Night to Bear*. The study proposed a hypothesis that phonological elements, such as alliteration, meter, rhyme, and onomatopoeia, effectively convey the poem's two distinct themes. Through this research, it was discovered that there is diversity in the utilization of meters within the poem, variations in the nature of

rhyme in each quatrain leading to phonological deviations, and a strong correlation between the use of onomatopoeia and phono-semantics in the poem.

Research conducted by Prastya Syahputra et al. (2018) examined one of Allama Iqbal's poems, *The Bird's Complaint,* at the phonological level using a stylistic approach. This research revealed that the poet employed various phonological devices in stylistics, including alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme scheme, and onomatopoeia. These phonological devices were utilized in the poem to enhance the rhyme and melodic qualities, making the poem more melodious when recited aloud. Among these phonological devices, consonance was identified as the most frequently employed in the poem.

Al-Hindawi, F. H., & Hussien, N. D. (2020) examined William Blake's poem, *Cradle Song*. This study explored style from a phonological and phonetic perspective, with a focus on highlighting the connection between the poem's theme and its effect. The primary objective is to identify the most prominent device used in the poem. It is found that Blake employs various phonostylistic devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, rhyming words, and euphony to convey its theme. The study suggests that rhyming words are likely the most common sound device in the poem.

ASHIPU, K. B. C. (2015) focused on a phone stylistic analysis of Bette proverbs, asserting that studying linguistic activities in traditional societies is valuable when considering the aesthetic and functional aspects of language. This study aims to explore the sound qualities of Bette proverbs seeking to understand why these proverbs have endured unchanged in the collective memory of Bette speakers across generations. The selected Bette proverbs are analysed for their artistic and cognitive effects, shedding light on the oral artists' ingenuity and contributing to the understanding of Linguistic Stylistics in folk languages within traditional societies.

A comparison between the present study and previous research highlights how the dominant sounds of a poem have a relation to the theme of the poem. Currently, stylistic research on poems usually only focuses on the meaning of the words used, the style of the language, and the structure of the poem's sentences, making it too common. The growing field of knowledge in stylistics has given researchers the ability to analyse phonology in much greater detail, enabling the identification of sound patterns

that may not have been the main focus in previous studies that also analysed at the sound level. In addition, more curiosity about how the relationship between phonology and meaning has been highlighted, leading to the exploration of how the sound of words in poetry can enrich the understanding of themes and meaning.

Research by Prastya Syahputra et al. (2018) on the poem *The Bird's Complaint* by Allama Iqbal focuses on the use of various phonological devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme schemes, and onomatopoeia, in contrast to the research conducted by Hammadi (2022) on the poem *Our Share of Night to Bear* by Emily Dickinson which emphasises the diversity in the use of meter, variations in rhyme patterns, and the strong correlation between the use of onomatopoeia and phono semantics in creating phonological differences that affect different themes in the poem. Meanwhile, this study focuses on what and how the dominant sura found in a poem has a relationship with the meaning in the poem.

Al-Hindawi, F. H., & Hussien, N. D. (2020) focuses more on phono stylistic devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, rhyming words, and euphony in the poem. It analyzes the

relationship between the theme of the poem and its devices. Meanwhile, the research by Lang & Liu (2023) on the short story *Miss Brill* focuses more on analysing linguistic features at various levels of language. They focused on elements such as alliteration and coda at the phonological level, as well as material and mental processes, multiple modalities, and marked themes at the lexical-grammatical level. These two studies relate language elements or levels to the situation or meaning in the poem but this research focuses on the phonological level whereas the previous two studies did not focus on phonology.

The goal of this study is to fill this research gap by examining the contribution of the sound that is dominant in poetry in the context of stylistic analysis. The purpose of this research is to figure out the dominant sounds in *Dust If You Must* poem and examine how these sounds relate to the conveyance of themes and ideas in the poem. This research aims to bring more information about how phonological features in literature may impact and broaden the understanding of the complicated issues that frequently appear in poems. It is expected that the results of this study will strengthen the study of stylistic analysis and help readers and

academics understand more about how many different sounds in the poem can convey detail and meaningful meaning.

Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct this research since there is an urgent opportunity to fill in the gap in understanding between phonological features, especially the dominant sound in a poem, and how they relate to the theme in a poem. A deeper understanding of the role of phonology in literature will be helpful for recognizing hidden messages and aesthetics in literary works when the field of stylistic analysis expands. This research has the potential to increase appreciation of literary works and support the creation of new theories in stylistic analysis by a deeper comprehension of how sounds in poetry relate to them.

**Method**

In analyzing this poem, the researchers conduct a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis at the phonological level within the poem, as well as explore the relationship between sound and theme of the poem. This research focuses on stylistic analysis. The poem that will be analyzed or used as a data source is *Dust If You Must*. The analysis will concentrate on the phonological level and the relation between the most dominant consonants and vowels and the theme of the poem. To collect the data, the researchers applied a documentation technique, looking for any linguistic devices at the Phonological Level in each line of the poem. So, the data in this research is sounds from Rose Milligan's poetry *Dust If You Must*. The qualitative data analysis method was applied for data analysis ((Hammarberg et al., 2016; Miles et al., 2014) Thus, this research specifically examines the lines of the poem at the Phonological Level, which have been identified in every line of the poem. To present the data, the researchers used four tables.

Two of the tables are formatted with three columns to present the line of the poem, phonetic transcription, and the consonants and vowels. In addition, other tables are formatted with 19 columns to present the most dominant sound of consonants and vowels in every line of the poem. The researchers will draw a conclusion based on the findings in this study.

**Result and Discussion**

To find the most dominant sounds, the researcher used two tables to classify the sounds into consonants and vowels. Based on these two tables, the researcher finds out the most dominant consonants and vowels.

**Table 1. Phonetic transcription of the poem**

| Poem | Phonetic Transcription |
|---|---|
| Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ˈwʊdnt ɪt biː ˈbɛtə |
| To paint a picture, or write a letter, | tuː peɪnt ə ˈpɪktʃə, ɔː raɪt ə ˈlɛtə, |
| Bake a cake, or plant a seed; | beɪk ə keɪk, ɔː plɑːnt ə siːd; |
| Ponder the difference between want and need? | ˈpɒndə ðə ˈdɪfᵊrᵊns bɪˈtwiːn wɒnt ænd niːd? |
| | |
| Dust if you must, but there's not much time, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðeəz nɒt mʌtʃ taɪm, |
| With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb; | wɪð ˈrɪvəz tuː swɪm, ænd ˈmaʊntɪnz tuː klaɪm; |
| Music to hear, and books to read; | ˈmjuːzɪk tuː hɪə, ænd bʊks tuː riːd; |
| Friends to cherish, and life to lead. | frɛndz tuː ˈtʃɛrɪʃ, ænd laɪf tuː liːd. |
| Dust if you must, but the world's out there | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðə wɜːldz aʊt ðeə |
| With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair; | wɪð ðə sʌn ɪn jɔːr aɪz, ænd ðə wɪnd ɪn jɔː heə; |
| A flutter of snow, a shower of rain, | ə ˈflʌtər ɒv snəʊ, ə ˈʃar ɒv reɪn, |
| This day will not come around again. | ðɪs deɪ wɪl nɒt kʌm əˈraʊnd əˈgɛn. |
| Dust if you must, but bear in mind, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt bear ɪn maɪnd, |
| Old age will come and it's not kind. | əʊld eɪdʒ wɪl kʌm ænd ɪts nɒt kaɪnd. |
| And when you go (and go you must) | ænd wɛn juː gəʊ (ænd gəʊ juː mʌst) |
| You, yourself, will make more dust | juː, jɔːˈsɛlf, wɪl meɪk mɔː dʌst. |

**Table 2. Sound of Consonants**

| Poem | Phonetic Transcription | Consonants |
|---|---|---|
| Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ˈwʊdnt ɪt biː ˈbɛtə | /d/, /s/, /t/, /f/, /j/, /m/, /s/, /t/, /b/, /t/, /w/, /d/, /n/, /t/, /t/, /b/, /b/, /t/ |
| To paint a picture, or write a letter, | tuː peɪnt ə ˈpɪktʃə, ɔː raɪt ə ˈlɛtə, | /t/, /p/, /n/, /t/, /p/, /k/, /tʃ/, /r/, /t/, /l/, /t/ |
| Bake a cake, or plant a seed; | beɪk ə keɪk, ɔː plɑːnt ə siːd; | /b/, /k/, /k/, /k/, /p/, /l/, /n/, /t/, /s/, /d/ |
| Ponder the difference between want and need? | ˈpɒndə ðə ˈdɪfᵊrᵊns bɪˈtwiːn wɒnt ænd niːd? | /p/, /n/, /d/, /ð/, /d/, /f/, /r/, /n/, /s/, /b/, /t/, /w/, /n/, /w/, /n/, /t/, /n/, /d/, /n/, /d/ |
| Dust if you must, but there's not much time, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðeəz nɒt mʌtʃ taɪm, | /d/, /s/, /t/, /f/, /j/, /m/, /s/, /t/, /b/, /t/, /ð/, /z/, /n/, /t/, /m/, /tʃ/, /t/, /m/ |
| With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb; | wɪð ˈrɪvəz tuː swɪm, ænd ˈmaʊntɪnz tuː klaɪm; | /w/, /ð/, /r/, /v/, /z/, /t/, /s/, /w/, /m/, /n/, /d/, /m/, /n/, /t/, /n/, /z/, /t/, /k/, /l/, /m/ |
| Music to hear, and books to read; | ˈmjuːzɪk tuː hɪə, ænd bʊks tuː riːd; | /m/, /j/, /z/, /k/, /t/, /h/, /n/, /d/, /b/, /k/, /s/, /t/, /r/, /d/ |
| Friends to cherish, and life to lead. | frɛndz tuː ˈtʃɛrɪʃ, ænd laɪf tuː liːd. | /f/, /n/, /d/, /z/, /t/, /tʃ/, /r/, /dʒ/, /n/, /d/, /l/, /f/, /t/, /l/, /d/ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dust if you must, but the world's out there | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðə wɜːldz aʊt ðeə | /d/, /s/, /t/, /f/, /j/, /m/, /s/, /t/, /b/, /t/, /ð/, /w/, /l/, /d/, /z/, /t/, /ð/ |
| With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair; | wɪð ðə sʌn ɪn jɔːr aɪz, ænd ðə wɪnd ɪn jɔː heə; | /w/, /ð/, /s/, /n/, /n/, /j/, /r/, /z/, /n/, /d/, /ð/, /w/, /n/, /d/, /n/, /j/, /h/ |
| A flutter of snow, a shower of rain, | ə ˈflʌtər ɒv snəʊ, ə ˈʃaʊər ɒv reɪn, | /f/, /l/, /t/, /r/, /v/, /s/, /n/, /ʃ/, /r/, /v/, /r/, /n/ |
| This day will not come around again. | ðɪs deɪ wɪl nɒt kʌm əˈraʊnd əˈgɛn. | /ð/, /s/, /d/, /w/, /l/, /n/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /r/, /n/, /d/, /g/, /n/ |
| Dust if you must, but bear in mind, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt beər ɪn maɪnd, | /d/, /s/, /t/, /f/, /j/, /m/, /s/, /t/, /b/, /t/, /b/, /r/, /n/, /m/, /n/, /d/ |
| Old age will come and it's not kind. | əʊld eɪdʒ wɪl kʌm ænd ɪts nɒt kaɪnd. | /l/, /d/, /dʒ/, /w/, /l/, /k/, /m/, /n/, /d/, /t/, /s/, /n/, /t/, /k/, /n/, /d/ |
| And when you go (and go you must) | ænd wɛn juː gəʊ (ænd gəʊ juː mʌst) | /n/, /d/, /w/, /n/, /j/, /g/, /n/, /d/, /g/, /j/, /m/, /s/, /t/ |
| You, yourself, will make more dust | juː, jɔːˈsɛlf, wɪl meɪk mɔː dʌst. | /j/, /j/, /s/, /l/, /f/, /w/, /l/, /m/, /k/, /m/, /d/, /s/, /t/ |

**Table 3. Sound of vowels**

| Poem | Phonetic Transcription | Vowels |
|---|---|---|
| Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ˈwʊdnt ɪt biː ˈbɛtə | /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /ʌ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɪ/, /iː/, /ɛ/, /ə/ |
| To paint a picture, or write a letter, | tuː peɪnt ə ˈpɪktʃə, ɔː raɪt ə ˈlɛtə, | /uː/, /eɪ/, /ə/, /ɪ/, /ə/, /ɔː/, /aɪ/, /ə/, /ɛ/, /ə/ |
| Bake a cake, or plant a seed; | beɪk ə keɪk, ɔː plɑːnt ə siːd; | /eɪ/, /ə/, /eɪ/, /ɔː/, /ɑː/, /ə/, /iː/ |
| Ponder the difference between want and need? | ˈpɒndə ðə ˈdɪfərəns bɪˈtwiːn wɒnt ænd niːd? | /ɒ/, /ə/, /ə/, /ɪ/, /ə/, /ə/, /ɪ/, /iː/, /ɒ/, /æ/, /iː/ |
| Dust if you must, but there's not much time, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðeəz nɒt mʌtʃ taɪm, | /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /ʌ/, /ʌ/, /eə/, /ɒ/, /ʌ/, /aɪ/ |
| With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb; | wɪð ˈrɪvəz tuː swɪm, ænd ˈmaʊntɪnz tuː klaɪm; | /ɪ/, /ɪ/, /ə/, /uː/, /ɪ/, /æ/, /aʊ/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /aɪ/ |
| Music to hear, and books to read; | ˈmjuːzɪk tuː hɪə, ænd bʊks tuː riːd; | /uː/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /ɪə/, /æ/, /ʊ/, /uː/, /iː/ |
| Friends to cherish, and life to lead. | frɛndz tuː ˈtʃɛrɪʃ, ænd laɪf tuː liːd. | /ɛ/, /uː/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /æ/, /aɪ/, /uː/, /iː/ |
| Dust if you must, but the world's out there | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt ðə wɜːldz aʊt ðeə | /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /ʌ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /ɜː/, /aʊ/, /eə/ |
| With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair; | wɪð ðə sʌn ɪn jɔːr aɪz, ænd ðə wɪnd ɪn jɔː heə; | /ɪ/, /ə/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /ɔː/, /aɪ/, /æ/, /ə/, /ɪ/, /ɪ/, /ɔː/, /eə/ |

| A flutter of snow, a shower of rain, | ə ˈflʌtər ɒv snəʊ, ə ˈʃaʊər ɒv reɪn, | /ə/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /əʊ/, /ə/, /aʊ/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /eɪ/ |
|---|---|---|
| This day will not come around again. | ðɪs deɪ wɪl nɒt kʌm əˈraʊnd əˈgɛn. | /ɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /aʊ/, /ə/, /ɛ/ |
| Dust if you must, but bear in mind, | dʌst ɪf juː mʌst, bʌt beər ɪn maɪnd, | /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /uː/, /ʌ/, /ʌ/, /eə/, /ɪ/, /aɪ/ |
| Old age will come and it's not kind. | əʊld eɪdʒ wɪl kʌm ænd ɪts nɒt kaɪnd. | /ə/, /ʊ/, /eɪ/, /ɪ/, /ʌ/, /æ/, /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /aɪ/ |
| And when you go (and go you must) | ænd wɛn juː gəʊ (ænd gəʊ juː mʌst) | /æ/, /ɛ/, /uː/, /əʊ/, /æ/, /ə/, /ʊ/, /uː/, /ʌ/ |
| You, yourself, will make more dust | juː, jɔːˈsɛlf, wɪl meɪk mɔː dʌst. | /uː/, /ɔː/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɔː/, /ʌ/ |

## 1.Consonants

| No. | Line / Consonants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | /t/ | 6 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 38 |
| 2 | /n/ | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | - | 34 |
| 3 | /s/ | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 19 |
| 4 | /ð/ | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 8 |
| 5 | /r/ | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 11 |
| 6 | /d/ | 2 | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 28 |
| 7 | /l/ | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 12 |
| 8 | /m/ | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 16 |
| 9 | /z/ | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| 10 | /w/ | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| 11 | /k/ | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 11 |
| 12 | /p/ | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| 13 | /v/ | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| 14 | /h/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| 15 | /b/ | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 10 |
| 16 | /e/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17 | /ŋ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18 | /ʧ/ | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| 19 | /f/ | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 9 |
| 20 | /g/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| 21 | /ʃ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| 22 | /dʒ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| 23 | /j/ | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 12 |

**Figure 1. Dominant consonants**

There are five dominant consonants found in the poem, with the consonant /t/ appearing 38 times, consonant /n/ appearing 34 times. The consonant /d/ appears 28 times, /s/ appear 19 times, and consonant /m/ appears 16 times.

## 2. Vowel

| No. | Line / Vowes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | /i/ | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| 2 | /ɪ/ | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | 18 |
| 3 | /ʊ/ | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 4 |
| 4 | /u/ | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| 5 | /ɛ/ | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| 6 | /ə/ | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 23 |
| 7 | /ɜ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| 8 | /ɔ/ | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 6 |
| 9 | /æ/ | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 8 |
| 10 | /ʌ/ | 3 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 19 |
| 11 | /ɑ/ | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| 12 | /ɒ/ | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 7 |
| 13 | /ɪə/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| 14 | /eɪ/ | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 7 |
| 15 | /ʊə/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 16 | /ɔɪ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17 | /oʊ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18 | /ɛə/ | -- | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 19 | /ɑɪ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 20 | /aʊ/ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Figure 2.  Dominant Vowels**

There are five dominant vowels found in the poem, with the /ə/ appears 23 times, vowel /ʌ/ appears 19 times. The vowel /ɪ/ appears 18 times, /u/ appears 15 times, and vowel /æ/ appears 8 times.

**The Relation between the Dominant Sounds and Theme**

*Dust If You Must* is a poem written by Rose Milligan, published in 1998. This poem expresses the idea that life is short and temporary, and it urges individuals to fully engage in and savor each moment of their lives. The poet talks about how to make our life better by focusing on simple things we can do every day. Painting, writing letters, baking, or planting seeds can help create inner peace. We need to be aware of what we truly *want* and *need* (Line 4). Otherwise, activities like swimming, hiking, listening to calming music, or reading books may feel pointless. To connect the theme of the poem with the phonological level, we analyse the most dominant consonants and vowels line after line. It is found that there are 5 consonants and 5 vowels as the most dominant phoneme in the poem. Those 5 consonants are /t/, /n/, /d/, /s/, /m/ and the vowels are / ə/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /u/, /æ/. Then, after combining some of the consonants and vowels, it is found words such as *dust* with phonetic //dʌst/, *must* with phonetic /mʌst/, and *man* with phonetic /mæn/.

The word *dust* is one of the words found in the title of this poem. The word *dust* also appears the most, 8 times in the first line

of each stanza. The word *Dust* in this poem represents routine aspects such as housework and daily chores that often consume our time and energy in our lives. Dusting may be necessary, but there are many more meaningful activities in life than focusing on these routine tasks. In the first stanza, it is mentioned that it is better to engage in creative and meaningful activities such as *paint a picture, or write a letter* and *bake a cake, or plant a seed*. When an individual engages in painting or writing simply for the pleasure of it, the act itself brings joy to their heart and rejuvenates their mental energy. *Dust If You Must* encourages readers that there are more valuable and enjoyable things to experience in life than doing household chores.

Additionally, the word *dust* in the poem can be interpreted as a symbol of human mortality and the idea that we all return to dust after death. When we see *dust* as a representation of human mortality, it stresses the importance of not wasting our precious time on tasks that are trivial and repetitive. By interpreting *dust* as a symbol of our eventual return to the earth serves as a reminder that life is brief and should be fully embraced, supported by the line 14 *Old age will come and it's not kind,* which emphasizes

that aging is a reality that is not always friendly. This refers to the fact that as time goes by, the human body undergoes the aging process, often accompanied by physical and health challenges, so there are limitations in doing meaningful things in our lives. The idea of returning to dust after death can also encourage readers to reflect on the legacy they want to leave behind. Through this poem, the poet invites the readers to contemplate creative and meaningful ways to use their time, rather than getting trapped in everyday tasks that may lack significance.

The interpretation of the word *dust* alludes to death is also emphasized in the final stanza, *You, yourself will make more dust.* This last stanza refers to the fact that every individual, as time passes and through the journey of their life, will ultimately become a part of the dust and meet their end in death. It implies that in the course of one's life, individuals will contribute to the *dust* through their own experiences and life journeys. In other words, as time goes by, we all share the same fate, which is returning to the earth (dust). This statement may also be intended to prompt reflection on how individuals spend their time in life and how their actions and experiences not only affect

themselves but can also impact the society. It can be interpreted as a reminder to live a meaningful life and take positive actions during one's lifetime because, in the end, we all will *become dust*.

In this poem, the word *must* appear five times. The word *must* is closely related to the concept of *obligation*, but in this context, it refers to the necessity of oneself. Milligan wants to convey that it is very important for everyone to distinguish between needs and wants in life. In her poem, Milligan assumes that many people tend to focus on fulfilling their needs and ignore their wants. By repeatedly using the word *must*, the poet emphasizes that it is important for people to recognise their desires. The word *must* in this poem has a connection with the overall theme, which is how one should spend their time in life, not only focusing on fulfilling needs that are considered more important than fulfilling desires that are often considered unimportant in life. In the poem, the poet also writes about some activities that are part of desires that are perceived as a waste of time and not important, but at the end of the poem says that there will come a time when the things we want can no longer be done. Milligan essentially asserts that it is very important for everyone to enjoy life by pursuing what they really want, not

just what they need to survive or social conventions. The word *must* serves as a strong reminder that we should prioritize our desires and dreams, as they are essential for a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

The word *man* is not found in the poem, but by combining the dominant consonants and vowels, it can be seen that this word has a connection to the theme of the poem. *Man* here refers to any person or individual regardless of gender. As mentioned above, the theme of the poem is how one can choose to do what they want because it is as important as their needs. This poem is aimed at people who think that their desires are not important and should be ignored, forgetting the fact that everyone has time and cannot do what they want if their time has passed. Although the word *man* does not explicitly appear in the poem, there is a connection between this word and the theme of the poem. In this context, *man* represents any person or individual, regardless of their gender. The main theme of the poem lies in the choices that individuals make in their lives, specifically the choice between doing what they want and fulfilling their needs. As stated earlier, the poem invites individuals to be aware of the importance of wants, not just needs.

The poem serves as a reminder that everyone has a limited amount of time in their lives. Time is a precious and limited resource, and this poem stresses that we should not neglect our wants and desires. The idea of *man* here highlights that this message applies to everyone, as everyone has dreams, aspirations, and things that they really want to experience. This poem is addressed to those who may have missed out on their dreams, aspirations, and things that they really want to experience. The poem is addressed to those who may have underestimated or ignored their desires, arguing that they are less important than needs. By reminding *manof* the importance of pursuing what they truly want, the poem encourages everyone to have a more fulfilled and meaningful life. The poem is also a call to action, highlighting the idea that a person's time is limited, and if they put off their dreams, they may never get the chance to fulfil them.

**Conclusion**

We may identify sounds that are connected to the author's style and theme of a literary work by analysing its phonological level. The research found that some dominant sounds, both consonants as well as vowel sounds, are capable of creating some words that are strongly related to the theme of the poem, such as in the poem *Dust If You Must*, which speaks of prioritizing life without throwing away the other things in life that are completely important. This kind of emphasis on certain sounds may strengthen the themes and messages that the author wants to convey, allowing us to gain a deeper comprehension of the feelings and context in the text. Thus, the phonological level of stylistic analysis helps us reveal the deep connection between the sounds of language and the meaning contained in literary works, enriching our understanding of the explanation of the themes in the writing.

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