Textual analysis

**A Word is Dead**

In the present test I am going to analize Emily Dickinson’s poem “A Word is Dead”.

Considering the title I suppose the reader will be curious to find out/discover why words could be dead. Indead, generally speaking one does not expect words to have a life. Therefore, reading the test will help me find out a possible answer to the question.

The layout shows the poem just consists of 6 lines arranged/organized in two tercets (=stanzas of three lines each). This may suggests that each tercet may have a specific function. The poet expresses some people’s opinion in the first stanza, she says “Some say”, that when people speak their words die. In the second stanza the poetess conveys her opinion which is totally different from the people’s one. Therefore there is a contrast (an opposition) that gives body to the textual organization (to the structure of the test).

A deeper and more detailed analysis of the use of language shows that the poem expoits some rhyme scheme that sounds AAB; CDB. The repetition of sound “d” underlines the idea of people and the concept of dead is well conveyed by a dental sound, that creates a brake in the line and he results, focuses the reader’s attention on the idea od death. The rhyme that ends both tercet seems to state/afferm some truth. Because the last line of each tercet is shorter that the previous lines and therefore it sticks in to the mind of the reader. To tell the truth, line three and line six seems to highlight the two different position express in the poem. Intresting to notice that while the first stanzas uses the passive form, the second tercet (one) explains the active form “This is a suitable way/choise to underine one and again the two opposit point of view. When a word id dead it does not signify and therefore it has a passive role. Viceversa according to the poetess, words have a life of their own and this explains/justifies the use of the active form. He goes without saying that the poetess cannot imagine words have no function otherwise che wouldn’t write or compose. A sense of ending is conveyed by the passive form, on the contrary life seems to Spring from the second tercet and therefore the intelligent reader may not perfectly understands the simbolical function of the title where the word is Personified. The use of personification is based on the idea of giving life or animation to the object quote. The concect of time is relevant (suitable functional) in the text because death and life exist in time so that if one is dead, he or she is dead in time. His life has stopped. On the contrary/differently/viceversa, life is active in time, there are planty/several references to time passing in the poem: “dead”, “when”, “just”, “begins”, “to live”, “that” and “day”. The poem indirectly refears to the life and death of words and this makes the intelligent reader understands the reason why the test expresses to different opinion. It goes without saying that words that is comunication is more significant for a poet who’s material is made of words than it maybe for the common people.

In conclusion, the poem sends the message that speaking that is comunicated is a dynamic prouces. Any speech act, according to the poetess maybe an important carrier of meaning. This explains for the shift from the passive form of the first tercet to the active form of the last one. Indead it takes time for meaning to reach the common people, who’s level of owerness about the workings of comunication is definitely lower that the one of a poet or a poetess.