

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE FOUND IN HARRY STYLES’ SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

Figurative language is a language that conveys thoughts or feelings in different forms to obtain effects and to emphasize certain meanings. This study describes the analysis of figurative language in Harry Styles’ song lyrics. The purpose of this study was 1) to determine the type of figurative language in Harry Styles’ songs using the theory of Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963) and 2) to explain the meaning of the figurative language contained in it (Leech, 1981). The data sources were obtained from 10 Harry Styles songs that have the highest number of viewers on their YouTube channel. This research used the descriptive qualitative method to analyze data and the observation method in collecting research data. From the results of the analysis, there are ten types of figurative language in thirty-four sentences of the data. They are simile (1 sentence, 2.94%), metaphor (5 sentences, 14.70%), personification (5 sentences, 14.70%), synecdoche (1 sentence, 2.94%), metonymy (3 sentences, 8.82%), hyperbole (14 sentences, 41.18%), irony (2 sentences, 5.90%), paradox (1 sentence, 2.94%), dead metaphor (1 sentence, 2.94%), and allusion (1 sentence, 2.94%)

Keywords: Figurative language, lyric, song.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool used by humans and has an important role in social life. According to Chaer (2014: 32) language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by members of social groups to work together, communicate, and identify themselves. The same thing was also stated by Hall (1968) that language is an institution where humans communicate and interact with each other by using arbitrary spoken-hearing symbols that are commonly used. On the other hand, language is also said to be a means of self-expression which can be seen in various literary works. Most literary works contain the social life of a person or the author. One of these literary works is in the form of a song.

A song is a part of music that is formed with words that are made to be sung. Songs are often used as a tool to convey a message to express feelings, thoughts, and emotions to others. The song expresses the message through the lyrics which is one of the elements of the song. As stated by Moeliono (2007: 628) who explains that song lyrics are literary works in the form of poetry containing the outpouring of the heart, as the composition of a song. Listening to a song is a fun activity but in the lyrics of the song, there are many hidden meanings in it.

Song lyrics use figurative language so that the lyrics sound more beautiful with a deeper meaning. Figurative language is part of semantics. According to Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963:367), figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language or

simply metaphor. They also state that the word metaphor comes from the Greek ancestor: *metapherein* which means to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning (meta = *beyond* + *pherein* = to bring – for example “to bring beyond”). According to them, there are 10 types of figurative language, namely simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, dead metaphor, allusion, and paradox. Figurative language is mostly found in songs. In fact, many people do not know that in the songs they hear there is a figurative language and do not know the meaning contained in the figurative language. Knowing the meaning of the song is very important because we will know the meaning or message conveyed by the author in the song.

There are several studies have been done previously using different data sources. The first study related to figurative language was taken from Fransiska Neny's (2018) thesis entitled *A Study of Figurative Language in the Script's Album No Sound Without Silence*. from this research she found ten types of figurative language in The Script album, namely metaphor, simile, hyperbole, meiosis, idiom, rhetorical statement, metonymy, irony, sarcasm, and personification. The researcher also found the dominant type of figurative language, namely hyperbole and rhetorical questions. The second was taken from the journal by Putu Ayu (2012) with the title *The Analysis of Figurative Languages in Adele's Song Lyrics*. From the analysis, the researcher found several figures of speech, namely personification, metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, allusions, paradoxes, symbols, and dead metaphors. The contextual understanding of the whole song is about the contradiction and betrayal in love. The third is taken from an article made by Triguna Aditya (2017) entitled *The Analysis of Figurative Language in Linkin Park's Song Lyrics*. He found five types of figurative language, namely; Paradox, Personification, Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Simile.

Harry Edward Styles, also known as Harry Styles, is an English singer and actor. He started his career in international music when he auditioned for *The X Factor 2010* in the UK. He is also known as a member of the boy band *One Direction*. Harry Styles opted out of *One Direction* in 2016, then released a solo song called *Sign of The Times* in 2017, and recently released the first of his three (*Harry's House*) called *As It Was* and broke the record for most-played song of all time, 24 hours on Spotify. Harry Styles' songs were chosen because they have received Grammy, Juno, Brit Awards, and other awards, this is also because the song contains figurative language that makes the song more interesting and tells the story of his life.

So, this research focuses on the figurative language used in the song lyrics and the meaning contained in the song lyrics. The purpose of this study is to find out the types of figurative language used in Harry Styles' songs and the contextual and connotative meaning of the figurative language used in Harry Styles' song lyrics.

METHOD

In this study the writer used qualitative methods to analyze the data with the intention of examining more thoroughly and solving the problems in this study. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects as a whole by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in the special contexts experienced, and by utilizing various scientific methods (Moloeng, 2007: 6). The data collection used the observation method which is a method of collecting

data through observation and accompanied by note taking of the observed target object. Widoyoko (2014: 46) suggests that the observation method is a systematic observation and recording of the elements that appear in a symptom in the object of research. In collecting data there are several things the writer has done. First, searching for song lyrics on the internet with the AZlyrics.com site. Secondly, reading the lyrics and listening to the song carefully. Lastly, noting the figurative types contained in the observed data. The data in this study uses 10 songs from Harry Styles with the highest number of viewers on their YouTube channel. The songs are titled Sign of the Times, Adore You, Watermelon Sugar, Golden, As It Was, Falling, Lights Up, Kiwi, Daylight, and Little Freak.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are ten types of figurative language found in ten songs from Harry Styles using the theory of Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963). Ten types of figurative language found are Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Hyperbole, Irony, Paradox, Dead Metaphor, and Allusion. All complete data are shown in table 1.

Table 1. The Types Used In Harry Styles' Song Lyrics

No.	Types	Total	Percentage
1	Simile	1	2,94 %
2	Metaphor	5	14,70 %
3	Personification	5	14,70 %
4	Synecdoche	1	2,94 %
5	Metonymy	3	8,82 %
6	Hyperbole	14	41,18 %
7	Irony	2	5,90 %
8	Paradox	1	2,94 %
9	Dead Metaphor	1	2,94 %
10	Allusion	1	2,94 %
	Total	34	100 %

From the table above, thirty-four sentences of figurative languages are found in ten Harry Styles songs. The data consists of one simile, five metaphors, five personifications, one synecdoche, three metonymy, fourteen hyperboles, two irony, one paradox, one dead metaphor, and one allusion. The following describes only one data from each type of figurative language along with their conceptual and connotative meanings.

Simile

Simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison is expressed by the specific use of a word or phrase such as like or as (Knickerbocker & Reninger. 1963)

She sits beside me like a silhouette
(Kiwi: Line 23)

The sentences in the lyrics are simile because there are comparisons that use certain words such as the word "like". The comparison is in the words "sit" and "silhouette". The word "sit" is a verb that expresses the act of being still with the body positioned on the buttocks and the silhouette is a black shadow. "Silhouette" in the Oxford Learner's Pocket

Dictionary has a meaning of dark outline of the subject. It can usually be found in various subjects such as goods or humans and have the nature of following the shape of the subject. The word "she" in this sentence refers to an anonymous woman. So, based on Leech's (1981) theory, the conceptual meaning of the phrase "She sits beside me like a silhouette" is that Harry Styles compares a woman sitting next to him to a black shadow. Silhouette has a connotative meaning and it can also be said to be a symbol of mystery or something unknown. So, the connotative meaning in this sentence states that Harry Styles found that there was a woman he didn't know sitting next to him like a mystery where the woman made him start to like her as if influencing him.

Metaphor

Metaphor is an implied comparison, with like or as omitted (Knickerbocker & Reninger. 1963:367)

You're so golden
(Golden: Line 9)

This sentence is included in the type of metaphor because it compares one thing to another without using comparative words such as "like" or "as". The comparison in this sentence is in the words "You" and "Golden". As we know, "You" is a pronoun that refers to a person, both male and female. In this sentence "You" refers to a woman. "Golden" can generally be interpreted as something that is gold in color or something that is made of gold and looks shiny. According to the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, the word "golden" is something like or as gold. In this sentence, conceptually it can be interpreted that Harry Styles compares someone to something gold or made of gold that looks very shiny. "Golden" also has a different meaning or in other words has a connotative meaning and it can be interpreted as something special and extraordinary. So, the connotative meaning in this sentence states that the songwriter expresses his admiration for someone he wants to belong to and feels that someone is a special person for him.

Personification

Personification is a metaphor, of course, in the sense that there is an implied comparison between a nonhuman thing and a human being (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:367)

Why are we always stuck and running from your bullets, the bullets?
(Sign of the Times: Line 9)

The phrase above is personification because it gives human characteristics to inanimate objects. The inanimate object in this sentence is "bullets" and the inanimate object in the sentence is stated as if it can chase and follow someone. According to the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, the word "bullet" is a round or pointed piece of metal shot from a gun. This sentence conceptually can be interpreted as someone who wants to run away but is still trapped by something that has happened. Based on the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1981), this lyric is a connotative meaning. "bullets" has other meanings or connotations that indicate a difficult situation. So, the sentence in the lyrics of this song has the meaning that someone who is in a difficult situation is trying to get out and still avoid the fate that has been obtained. Based on the song entitled Sign

of the times, Harry Styles revealed in an interview that the song is from a young mother being told she has five minutes left to live.

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech that uses part of something to represent the whole or the whole of something to represent a part of something (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963)

I'm on the roof
(Daylight: Line 1)

The sentence in the lyric is synecdoche because it uses parts of something to represent the whole. The meaning of the word "roof" from the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary book is the top covering of a building, car, etc. In this lyric, the word "roof" is the part of the house covering that is located above and it replaces the word house. The sentence does not can be interpreted connotatively because after the sentence is followed by the sentence "you're in your airplane seat" where the songwriter only conveys the difference in his location with the woman he loves. Based on the theory from Leech (1981) the conceptual meaning in this lyric is Harry Styles is at home and describes that he misses and feels lonely about the departure of someone he likes to a different place.

Metonymy

Metonymy is the figure of speech that describes one thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:367)

Stay green a little while
(Little freak: Line 4)

This lyric is metonymy because the "green" in this sentence represents calm. Generally, the word "green" is one of the secondary colors. Based on the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, the word "green" is having the color of grass. The word is also usually used to express fertility or freshness associated with nature. The connotative meaning based on Leech's (1981) theory of the lyrics means that the songwriter says to stay calm for a while. This lyric depicts that the songwriter wants to remember the memories of the two of them about what they had done casually without worrying about where and with whom the woman was after breaking up with him.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggeration used for special effects (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:367)

I get so lost inside your eyes
(Adore You: Line 3)

The sentence from the lyrics above is hyperbole because it gives an exaggerated effect. The songwriter explains about getting lost in the eyes. This is not possible because the eyes are one of the organs of the body that has an important role in the visual system. On the other hand, the word "lost" according to the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2008) cannot find your way; don't know where you are. Getting lost generally occurs

due to a large area whereas the eye is a small organ. Based on the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1981), the conceptual meaning of the lyrics is that the songwriter is trapped in the eyes of a woman he loves, while the connotative meaning of the lyrics is that the songwriter Harry Styles really admires his lover and will do anything for her.

Irony

Irony is a figure of speech that contains a statement in which its real meaning is completely opposed to its professed or surface meaning (Knickerbocker & Reninger. 1963:367)

In this world, it just us
(As It Was: Line 10)

The sentence in the lyrics above is an irony because the statement contradicts its true meaning. The lyric "In this world, it's just us" which is conceptually based on Leech's (1981) theory of meaning means that in this world only the two of them live and are in it. This is very contrary to the truth because the world is the whole environment of so many people. the word "world" can also have the meaning of life. So, the connotative meaning of the lyrics is the songwriter states that in his life there is only himself and his irreplaceable lover.

Paradox

Paradox is a statement of which surface, on obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd, but making good sense upon closer examination (Knickerbocker & Reninger. 1963:367)

You look pretty good down here but you ain't really good
(Sign of the Times: Line 6)

The statement in this sentence is paradoxical because the sentence contains contradictions and illogical. The sentences "You look pretty good here" and "you're not very good" suggest a paradox. Conceptually the phrase "you look quite good here" means someone who appears to be in good shape or situation and the phrase "you are not very good" means someone who does not appear to be in a good situation. From the lyrics above, we can see that the lyrics are contrasting and this lyric is illogical because generally if someone looks fine, then you can imagine that person doesn't have much problem whereas in that sentence it also states "You're not really that good" and the words sound incoherent. So, the conceptual meaning based on Leech's theory (1981) is that this lyric describes a person who looks good but not very good, while the connotative meaning describes that the sentence in this lyric expresses a person whose soul and condition are not good but still trying to appear strong because destiny says that his death is near.

Dead Metaphor

Dead metaphor is a metaphor that has its figurative meaning but which has lost its figurative sense through endless use (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:368)

She's driving me crazy, but I'm into it, but I'm into it
(Kiwi: Line 5)

This sentence is a dead metaphor because it has a different conventional meaning from the original. Literally "Driving" is the operation of a vehicle that is manually controlled by humans, while "Crazy" is a general term for mental disorders. The phrase "he's driving me crazy" has a completely different meaning. The word "driving" in this context is used as "make". So, this sentence probably means to drive someone crazy. This can be positive or negative. Connotatively based on the theory proposed by Leech (1981), the figurative sentence in this lyric has a positive meaning where Harry styles like and loves a woman who makes him crazy in love and makes his mind out of control.

Allusion

Allusion is a reference to some well-known place, event, or person (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:368)

Little Freak, Jezebel
(Little Freak: Line 2)

This sentence is an allusion because "Jezebel" in this sentence refers to the daughter of the king of Sidon. Jezebel who is the daughter of the king of Sidon has a strange nature. So, based on Leech's theory (1981), this lyric has a conceptual meaning that is someone who is a little weird like a Jezebel and the connotative meaning of the sentence is Harry Style's ex-girlfriend is a bit strange because it can make him keep thinking about her even though they broke up before his ex knew everything about her.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that in the Harry Style songs selected based on the highest number of viewers on YouTube, there are ten types of figurative language. The songs are Sign of the Times, Adore You, Watermelon Sugar, Golden, As It Was, Falling, Lights Up, Kiwi, Daylight, and Little Freak. The types of figurative language found are; 1 data of simile, 5 data as metaphor, 5 data as personification, 1 data as synecdoche, 14 data of hyperbole, and 2 data of irony. Meanwhile, paradox, dead metaphor, and allusion have only one data that has been identified as figurative language. So, the number of figurative languages found is thirty-four sentences. With this number, it indicated that the use of figurative language has an important role in a song to express indirectly the songwriter's feelings or ideas. Furthermore, it also functions in making the song sounds more beautiful and creative because it has a deeper meaning.

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