

UNCOVERING THE MEANINGS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN SELECTED TAYLOR SWIFT SONGS

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ABSTRACT

Songs can often cheer someone up when listening to it. However, a song does not forget the figurative language used by the songwriters to make it sound appealing to the listeners. The purpose of this study is to find and analyze the meanings of the figurative language used in selected Taylor Swift song lyrics. The data in this study were taken from Taylor Swift's songs. The study utilized the qualitative method by presenting an overview of the data. Data collection was carried out using the observation method with the following steps: downloading song lyrics, then selecting data using figurative language. In data analysis, two theories were used by researchers to analyze figurative language and its meanings, and these theories are the Figurative Language theory from Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and the Meaning theory used is the theory proposed by Leech (1974). From the results of the study obtained 29 data which include: metaphor (7 items or 23,33%), personification (5 items or 16,66%), simile (5 items or 16,66%), hyperbole (5 items or 16,66%), metonymy (2 items or 6,66%), paradox (2 item or 6,66%), synecdoche (1 item or 3,33%), irony (1 item or 3,33%), and allusion (1 item or 6,66%). The dominant figurative language used is metaphor for comparing two different things so that they can become a unified whole.

Keywords: song lyrics, meaning, figurative language

ABSTRAK

Lagu adalah salah satu hal yang dapat membuat kita semangat saat mendengarkannya. Namun, sebuah lagu tidak melupakan bahasa kiasan yang digunakan oleh penulisnya untuk membuatnya terdengar menarik bagi pendengarnya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dan menemukan makna dari bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu Taylor switt. Data dalam penelitian ini diambil dari lagu Taylor Swift. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan penyajian gambaran data. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode observasi dengan langkah-langkah sebagai berikut: mengunduh lirik lagu, kemudian memilih data menggunakan bahasa kiasan. Dalam analisis data, ada dua teori yang digunakan peneliti dalam penelitian ini untuk menemukan bahasa kiasan dan maknanya, dan teori tersebut adalah teori Bahasa Kiasan dari Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1963:367) dan teori Arti yang digunakan adalah teori dari Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1963:367). Lintah (1974). Dari hasil penelitian diperoleh 29 data yang meliputi: metafora (7 item atau 20%), personifikasi (5 item atau 16,66%), simile (5 item atau 16,66%), hiperbola (5 item atau 16,66%), metonimi (2 item atau 6,66%), paradoks (2 item atau 6,66%), synecdoche (1 item atau 3,33%), ironi (1 item atau 3,33%), dan kiasan (1 item atau 3,33%. Bahasa kiasan yang dominan adalah metafora karena penulis membandingkan dua hal yang berbeda sehingga menjadi satu kesatuan yang utuh.

Kata kunci: lirik lagu, makna, bahasa kiasan

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool used by humans to establish relationships with each other, and this is one of the important factors in human life in daily activities, without which humans cannot communicate. One of the most important languages to learn is English because with this language we can interact with many people from all over the world. English can be difficult to learn for some. One of the best ways to learn English is by listening to English songs because this can improve understanding by finding out every word used in context.

In addition, language is needed by humans in communicating and exchanging opinions with each other. Meyer (1997:1) states that the language used by people can be categorized in two ways, i.e., in writing and orally. Literature itself, according to Meyer, is a term written text usually characterized by careful use of language, which includes: various features such as, beautiful phrases, creative metaphors, aesthetic alliteration, as well as elegant syntax, and rhyme.

In making work and a song sound interesting, usually lyrics are needed by the songwriters, through these lyrics we can convey our ideas, thoughts, and circumstances through the arrangement of words in the lyrics. With this listener can enjoy every song they listen to. In essence, understand English again is not so difficult, but the important thing that needs to be done is to understand the core meaning and also the intent of the song. There are so many English songs that use figurative language and this is what makes it a little difficult for non-native speakers to understand.

Language usually uses various kinds of figurative language, and the figurative language mentioned is a traditional literal lift that aims to describe people from an object (Reaske, 1996). The figurative language used is usually contained in literary works, both songs and

poetry because both are exact components. Rhythm is one of the important elements used by both, because poetry is also usually composed of a lyric which is called lyric poetry and this has to do with the lyrics of a song. Song lyrics usually contain hidden meanings with words that are not typically used in everyday conversations. Usually, figurative language used in song lyrics can give rise to special meanings, and knowing the meaning of the lyrics can help listeners form their own meanings of the song without having to know the suitability and truth of the songwriters' intent. Every beautiful lyric usually has a valuable meaning and it requires the ability to convey it through the figurative language in the lyrics

Figurative language is the semantic part used in song lyrics, to make it easier to understand the meanings contained in the lyrics of the song. Knowing someone and even the music they sing cannot guarantee understanding of the lyrics sung because some of the lyrics used contain figurative elements.

One form of literature is a song. A song is part of music that is made with various words that are intended to be sung. (Griffie, (2001).) Most songs are used by their songwriters to convey certain intentions and purposes such as conveying their feelings, emotions, and ideas. Songs, as creations of professional lyricists and songwriters, usually have the allure to invite the interest of listeners. Songs can be used to convey ideas and feelings so that everyone can understand the meaning of the creator behind the song.

To make song lyrics sound more interesting, besides choosing words, writers must understand the rules in making rules that will make a song easier to understand. There are several theories about language style or figure of speech, one of which is (Knickerbocker, 1963), and to find out the meaning of the figurative language used, the authors also uses the theory from (Leech, 1974). This research is focused on

the uncover meaning figurative language used Taylor Swift's selected song. The aims of this researches are to know and analyze the type of figurative language used in the song lyrics.

II. METHOD

The data were taken from Taylor Swift's selected song, i.e., Betty, Exile, Mirror ball, This is Me Trying, Invisible things, The Last Great American Dynasty, Seven, My Tear Ricochet, Peace. In collecting data, the authors used observation methods by conducting some steps: downloading the song lyrics from the website; reading carefully and repeatedly to find the sentences that contain figurative language, and also find out the meaning of figurative language itself. The method used in analyzing the data in this study is the

qualitative method. Two theories, i.e., one proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) and one theory from Leech (1974) were used to find out the meaning of each figurative language. The formal and informal method would be used to describe the result of discussion in this analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the table of finding below there are seven types of figurative language used in the Taylor Swift's selected song: metaphor (7 items or 23,33%), personification (5 items or 16,66%), simile (5 items or 16,66%), hyperbole (5 item or 16,66%), metonymy (2 items or 6,66%), paradox (2 item or 6,66%), synecdoche (1 item or 3,33%), irony(1 item or 3,33%), and allusion (1 item or 3,33%) in each figurative language.

Table 1. Figurative language type Used in Taylor Swift's Selected song

No	Types of Figurative Language	Number of Cases	Percentage
1	Metaphor	7	23,33%
2	Personification	5	16,66%
3	simile	5	16,66%
4	Hyperbola	5	16,66%
5	Metonymy	2	6,66%
6	Paradox	2	6,66%
7	Irony	1	3,33 %
8	Allusion	1	3,33 %
9	Synecdoche	1	3,33 %
	Total	29	100%

There are 29 data of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's Selected Song, they are: The 1, Cardigan, The Last American Dynasty, Exile, My Tears Ricochet, Mirrorball, Seven, August, This Is Me Trying, Illicit Affairs, Invisible String, Mad Woman, Epiphany, Betty, Peace, Hoax. The discussion of the data figurative language is presented below.

3.1 Metaphor

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) metaphor is an implied comparison, such as: "like" or "as" are omitted. Metaphor and simile have close relation because comparing different things. A metaphor is also called an implied simile. In simile, however, the comparison is seen more clearly.

Data 1:

You're not my homeland anymore

The lyric above is categorized a metaphor because the songwriters use and compare two different things. It can be seen by the words “you’re” and “homeland”. As we know the word “you’re” subject or who is spoken to; who is greeted, and “homeland” the nationality country, the country where people grew up, the country where one's ancestors lived for generations, or the country considered home. The sentence assert that the songwriters want to describe that the former lover became someone who gave protection but now everything has has changed.

Data 2

You were my town

The data above is categorized a metaphor, i.e., the process of comparing two different things as if became one thing and the comparison is seen clearly. It can be seen from the words “you” and “town”. “You” refers to the person being spoken to and “Town” refers to a place where people live, it usually large than a village and smaller than a city. In the sentence above, the songwriters explained that the lover was someone who had been there for them.

Data 3

You were my crown.

The data above is categorized a metaphor because the writer used two different things to compare it. It can be seen by the words “you” and “crown”. “You” refers to the person being spoken to, and “a crown” is something usually worn by nobilities.

3.2 Personification

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) personification is giving human characteristics to an object, animal, or abstract idea. There is an implied comparison between a non-human being and a human being.

Data 4

The town said, "How did a middle-class divorcée do it?"

The data underlined is categorized as personification because this sentence is giving human characteristic to inanimate objects. It can be seen by the phrase “the town said”. As we know town is the places where people staying and it is not a human being. This lyric is giving human characteristic to make the song more interesting.

Data 5

My words shoot to kill when I'm bad

The data underlined is categorized as personification because that sentence is giving human characteristics to an object. It can be seen from the words “words” and “shoot”. A language unit consisting of one or more spoken or written sounds that function as the main meaning carrier. The word “kill” is an activity that is usually reserved for humans and animals.

Data 6

Something wrapped all of my past mistakes in barbed wire.

The lyrics underlined is categorized as personification because giving non-human characteristic. It be seen by the phrases “Something wrapped” and “Mistakes”. Mistakes are not something that we can touch, it is just wrong actions that from any other people. So, impossible to wrapped any mistakes.

3.3 Simile

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) simile is a statement of comparison, introduced by the words “like” or “as”.

Data 7

*Love you to the moon and to Saturn,
Passed Down Like Folk Songs*

The data underlined is categorized as simile because of the songwriters use the word “like” in comparing and introducing the lyrics of a song. The simile of the

sentence can be seen from the lyrics “Passed Down Like Folk Songs”. The phrase “Passed Down like folk song”. Passed down means usually this word is conveyed by a leader with the aim that the poll will yield good results. “Folk songs” are traditional songs that are usually characterized by a simple melody form.

Data 8

Running like water

The data above is categorized as simile because the song lyrics a statement of comparison, introduced by the words “like”. It is can be seen from the lyrics “Running like water”. song writer used the like to made the words used in the song's lyrics are related. The words “Running” and “Water” are two different things. Running is an activity carried out by living things to move that allows them to move quickly using their feet. Meanwhile, water is one of the liquid objects which is one of the necessities of mortals.

Data 9

August sipped away like a bottle of wine

The data above is categorized as Simile because of the songwriter comparison and introduced the lyrics used a word like. The simile of the song showed by lyrics “August sipped away Like a bottle of wine”. “August”, “Sipped” and “Wine”. As we know August is the one of named from twelve months in a year, “Sipped away”. “Wine” is the fermented product of juice wine in the form of a drink mixed with alcohol. The sentence “August sipped away Like a bottle of wine” means described the songwriter feelings because she has lost her lover.

3.4 Hyperbole

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) hyperbole is an exaggeration used for special effect.

Data 10:

Holdin' all this love out here in the hall

The data above contains hyperbole because there is an exaggeration. The hyperbole from this sentence can be seen from the lyrics “Holdin' all this love out here in the hall”. Since “love” cannot be touched, it is usually is an abstract concept or feeling felt by humans. The sentence above does not represent the meaning of the lyrics itself but is representing about the songwriter feelings. In this data, the songwriters want to describe the feelings to the target that they should believe with his personal feeling to them.

Data 11

Slept next to her, but

I dreamt of you all summer long

The data above is categorized as a hyperbole because the songwriters use exaggeration to make the lyrics of the song. The Hyperbola from the data can be seen from lyrics “I dreamt of you all summer long”. The sentence above is an exaggeration. As we know, humans are not free from love and attraction to the opposite sex, but it doesn't have to be excessive. The sentences above usually described the songwriter feelings.

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Data 12

I'd give you my sunshine, give you my best

But the rain is always gonna come if you're standing with me

The data above contains figurative language as hyperbole because the writer used an exaggeration to special effect in making the lyrics of a song. The hyperbole in this sentence can be seen from the phrases “I'd give you my sunshine” But the rain is always gonna come if you're standing with me”. Sunshine is usually the kind of light and heat that comes from the sun. Sunshine in this sentence is not representing the meaning of the sunshine itself but it is representing the songwriter desired feels to the target. The phrase “but the rain is always gonna come if you're standing with me” is usually might happen sometimes.

3.5 Metonymy

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) metonymy is usually describing a thing with using the term for another thing closely associated with it.

Data 13

"When no one is around, my dear you'll find me on my tallest tiptoes."

The data underlined is categorized as metonymy because the writer describes a thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it. The metonymy from the song lyrics above can be seen from the song lyrics "When no one is around, my dear you'll find me on my tallest tiptoes". The phrase "Tallest Tiptoes". As we know Tallest Tiptoes are something related to human feet. The song lyrics above usually described human body. In the song lyrics songwriters want to describe their desire to the target.

Data 14

You hear my stolen lullabies

The data above is categorized as metonymy because writer describes a thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it. The metonymy from the lyrics above can be seen from the word "lullabies" which is a kind of song or piece of music that is usually played for (or sung to) children (for adults see music and sleep). The lyrics means that the songwriters convey their feelings that they had lost all the memories they had.

3.6 Paradox

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

Data 15

Hell was the journey but it brought me heaven

The lyric above is categorized as Paradox. It can be seen by the words: "Hell

was the journey but it brought me heaven". "Hell" is a place of tormented and misery in the afterlife that is believed by adherents of divine religions and faiths, while "Heaven" is a place in the afterlife that is believed by adherents of several religions as a gathering place for human spirits who while living in this world do good things according to their religious teachings. The song lyrics above describes the songwriters' attempts to correct their mistakes and failures to establish a relationship with their ex-lover.

Data 16

You paint dreamscapes on the wall

The data above is categorized as a paradox because the sentence is paradoxical, as there is a contrast in this lyric. There are two words which are categorized as contrast, they are "Paint" dreamscape this is a usually an impossible statement that can do in human life. The word "Paint" is something that usually identical with the color while "Dreamscapes" is beautiful scenery that usually seen a scene of romance that had been replaced by a tone that made her feelings is happy.

3.7 Synecdoche

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) synecdoche is a figure of speech that shows the use of a part for the whole.

Data 17

But you would still miss me in your bones

The data above is categorized as synecdoche because the sentence uses a part to explain the whole. It can be seen from the Word "Bones". Bones are part of human or animal bodies. The lyric "You would still miss me in your bones" is representing the songwriters' feeling towards the target means the target of a song would always be missing them.

3.8 Irony

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) irony states one thing in one voice when, in fact, the opposite meaning is intended. From that statement, it can conclude that irony is not seen from what is said but rather to interpret the meaning from the context or situation. It is the difference between appearance and reality.

Data 18

I had the shiniest wheels, now they're rusting

The data above is categorized as irony because of the song lyrics opposite the surface meaning “I had the shiniest wheels, now they're rusting”. In reality humans do not have wheels as humans only have feet. Wheels are not true meaning in the lyric because the wheels mean there is the moment, and rusting usually related to iron objects. In this case, the songwriters want to express their sadness because their love story is just in memory.

3.9 Allusion

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) allusion is a reference for some well-known place, events, or person. It is not just to comparison in the exact sense, but a figure in the sense that it implies more than narrow meaning.

Data 19:

You know I left a part of me back in New York

The data above the figurative language that is found is an allusion because the sentence references some known places. The allusion of the data is “New York” means one of the name big city located in America. New York is a reference to place. The sentence “You know I left a part of me back in New York” describes the songwriters’ memories.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Through this research, researchers hope to be able to help and benefit people who are interested in literary analysis, especially in song lyrics. In addition, the data can be used as a reference for further researchers who want to explore analyzing texts and can make readers think critically about text analysis. The authors hope that this research can be useful for everyone who is interested in analyzing a literary work, especially the figurative language used in a song lyric. On the other hand, the authors also hopes that this research can be used as an additional reference for other researchers who want to raise or explore more in everything related to figurative languages for the title of their thesis.

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