

## AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN LADY GAGA'S SONG LYRICS

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### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze figurative language in Lady Gaga song of Chromatica album that were released in 2020. There are two problems that are formulated in this study, they are: (1) what kinds of figurative language found in Lady Gaga song lyrics, (2) what are the meaning of figurative language found in Lady Gaga song lyrics. There are two theories used in this research; the first theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) that is used to identify the kinds of figurative language and the second theory is the theory of meaning which supported by Leech (1974) to analyze the meaning. The method used in collecting the data was done by formal and informal method. The writer collected the data by downloading the song, listening carefully, reading the scripts, underling, and classifying the lyrics which are contain the kinds of figurative language. The method of analyzing data was identifying, analyzing and making conclusions. The frequency of each kinds of figurative language was 18,18% contained simile type, 40,90% contained hyperbole type, 13,63% contained metaphor type, 4,54% contained personification type, 4,54% contained paradox type, 9,90% contained metonymy type and 9,90% contained allusion type. The result of meaning in Lady Gaga was conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, affective meaning and reflected meaning. It can be concluded that figurative language has important roles in created the song lyrics

Keywords: Figurative language, song lyrics and meaning

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bahasa kiasan dalam lagu Lady Gaga dari album Chromatica yang dirilis pada tahun 2020. Ada dua masalah yang dirumuskan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu: (1) jenis bahasa kiasan apa yang ditemukan dalam lirik lagu Lady Gaga, (2) apa arti bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam lirik lagu Lady Gaga. Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini; teori pertama dikemukakan oleh Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1963:367) yang digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan dan teori kedua adalah teori makna yang didukung oleh Leech (1974) untuk menganalisis makna. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode formal dan informal. Penulis mengumpulkan data dengan mengunduh lagu, mendengarkan dengan seksama, membaca skrip, menggarisbawahi, dan mengklasifikasikan lirik yang mengandung jenis bahasa kiasan. Metode analisis data adalah mengidentifikasi, menganalisis dan membuat kesimpulan. Frekuensi masing-masing jenis majas adalah 18,18% mengandung tipe simile, 40,90% mengandung tipe hiperbola, 13,63% mengandung tipe metafora, 4,54% mengandung tipe personifikasi, 4,54% mengandung tipe paradoks, 9,90% mengandung tipe metonimi dan 9,90% mengandung tipe kiasan. Hasil makna dalam Lady Gaga adalah makna konseptual, makna konotatif, makna afektif dan makna refleksi. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa bahasa kiasan memiliki peran penting dalam menciptakan lirik lagu*

*Kata kunci: Bahasa kiasan, lirik dan makna lagu*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the tools for human to communicate with each other and also to show and share an information, experience, knowledge in certain situation and also people need language to interact and share some idea. According to Harmer (2007) language is used widely for communication between people who do not share the same first (or even second) language. It signified that language is very essential to learn in human life. In spoken language, the purpose of language is to understand on what being said. However, in written language someone can have different understanding of meaning in some literature as poem, prose, and song lyrics. Talking about the song lyrics, there are many of song lyrics took the form of kinds of figurative language that are convey some meaning behind them. As the main study in semantic terms can be divided generally in two types, those are literal meaning and non literal meaning. One subject of study that explain broadly about non literal meaning. Meanwhile non literal meaning is opposite of it which has different of hidden meaning. Non literal meaning has been famous used in literally word and becomes the characteristics of language style in this field. One subject of study that explain broadly about non-literal meaning is called figurative language. Figurative language is language using figure of speech in a way of saying one thing and has the meaning. Based on Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) stated that figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language of simply metaphorical language or simple metaphor and it is used to increase the effect by introducing and comparing the way of a particular object or thing which object or anything else that is more common. When the

writer used the literal language, he or she is simply stating the fact as they are. Figurative language is usually applied in literary work. One of literary work is song.

Cuddon (2013:666) stated that song is music and word may be composed together; or the music may be “fitted” to the words and vice versa. Song is one the most attractive ways to express human feeling and ideas which is combined by the beauty and the harmony melody. There are many messages delivered in a song which especially through lyric. Lyrics have big influence in song because they express messages and arise the imagination of the listeners. Mostly, song lyrics contain figurative language. The figurative language that applied in song lyric mostly convey a message which share about the writer feeling, ideas, emotions, even life experience of the song writer.

The researcher was interested in analyzing the lyric of Lady Gaga songs because she is very famous singer and an inspiring song to many people around the world. In lyrics also contains many expressions from the singer that consisting figurative language especially in Chromatica album. Hence, it is principle for those who loves song to figure out what are the literal meaning of figurative language which found in the song lyrics. This research specifies to analyze the types of figurative language and also to analyze the meaning which found in Lady Gaga song lyrics.

Regarding to the research background, there are two problems raised by the researcher as follows: 1) What kinds of figurative language found in Lady Gaga song lyrics? 2) What are the meaning of figurative language used in Lady Gaga song lyrics? In this research also the writer proposed two objectives of the study that deals with the problem of the study as follows: 1) To

identify the kinds of figurative language used in Lady Gaga song lyrics. 2) To analyze the meaning of figurative language found in Lady Gaga song lyrics.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

In this section involved the data source, data collection, data analysis and finding presentation. Those four subject were explained as follows:

The data source of this research was taken from the song lyrics by Lady Gaga's album namely *Chromatica* which was released in 29 May 2020 and there were 12 songs entitled, *Alice*, *Stupid Love*, *Rain On Me*, *Free Woman*, *Fun Tonight*, *911*, *Plastci Doll*, *Sour Candy*, *Replay*, *Sine From Above*, *1000 Doves* and *Babylon*.

In collecting the data, the writer used the data collection was conducted by some steps: downloading the song lyrics from internet, listening the song carefully and repeatedly to understand the content of the song, underlining the sentence that has figurative language and classify the data based on types of figurative language.

In analyzing the data, the resercher used the descriptive qualitative method. In this analysis was identyfying the types of figurative language in the data source by using the theory Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and also Leech (1974) to support the understanding the meaning.

## III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this section the resercher present the result of data analysis that cover the description of the figurative language in Lady Gaga's song. Here are the findings as the answer of the research problem, including types of figurative language and the meaning

### 3.1 Finding

The writer analyzed the figurative language of the songs which consist of simile, hyperbole, metaphor, personification,

paradox, metonymy and allusion. The types of figurative language of Lady Gaga's song of *Chromatica* album follow:

Tabel 4.1 The Occurrence Figurative Language in Lady Gaga Song Lyrics.

No	Types of Figurative Language	Number of case	Percentage
1.	Simile	4	18,18 %
2.	Hyperbole	9	40,90%
3.	Metaphor	3	13,63%
4.	Personification	1	4,54%
5.	Paradox	1	4,54%
6.	Metonymy	2	9,09%
7.	Allusion	2	9,09%
	Total	22	100%

From the table above the researcher found 22 data. Thus, this research can be concludes that the song lyrics found in the Lady Gaga song lyrics is very imaginantive because the song writer can interpret all expression in different types of figurative language in the song lyrics.

### a. Discussion

This part, the researcher wants to analyze the types of figurative language and also analyze the meaning of Lady Gaga,s song of album *Chromatica*.

#### 1. Simile

Simile is a state comparison of two dissimilar things introduced by the words "like" or "as" or simile is a figurative language of speech in which a comparison is expressed by specific use a word or phrase such as: like, as.

#### Data 1

"we can party like it's B.C" (Babylon, Stanza 1, Line 3)

In the expression above, the type of figurative language that the researcher found is simile. There is a word "like" to compare the party and B.C (Before Christ Era). As we know, party is a gathering of people which typically feature food, beverages while enjoy

the music and B.C mean here is referred to the period the birth of the Jesus Christ. The situation party on that era is really much free where the people can enjoy the party and can doing whatever to reach their happiness and also it is identical with their sensual pleasure. In this case, the song writer said that they can party like B.C it means that the sentence supposed their situation like on that era where they have much free to enjoy their party. The song writer said that they can party like B.C era, it means that the sentence supposed their situation like on that era where they are free to party.

This sentence is classified into affective meaning because the meaning reflected personal feeling of the speaker. Based on the sentence *we can party like it's B.C* in this sentence means want to express the writer feeling. Actually when we think about the party certainly it is about the happiness and here the song writer combine with B.C (Before Christ) which means here is they have much free to enjoy their life and in that time they still not bound with the religion rules. Thus the lyric above have a meaning that they feel happy because they have much free to enjoy the party.

In the context of the situation of the song lyrics, it explained that the song writer was on a party and feel free like in the era before Jesus Christ born, which in this era the human not bound with the religion rules. The participants are the song writer and her boyfriend because the word "we" here refers to the song writer and the man who are enjoy the party. The text above used informal sentence and it is used figurative language because the sentence above express the feelings of the song writer.

## 2. Hyperbole

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

### Data 2

"When I was young, I felt immortal" (Sine From Above, Stanza 5, Line 5)

The sentence consists of hyperbole because in this sentence give an exaggeration statement that she felt immortal. As we know, as human being it is impossible if someone can be living forever in this world. Immortal is having no limits or boundaries in time. Everybody will feel the same when we are young because we simply do not believe that anything truly bad will ever happen to us. We think that lives stretch out before us to the horizon and we feel living forever with our strong on that period. The hyperbole added to make the readers more understand about the meaning of song and make it more interesting.

The sentence above is identified as affective meaning because the meaning in this sentence is conveys feeling expression of the song writer. The song lyric above is the way of configuration of the song writer feeling that she feel immortal when she was young. Affectively, the song writer feels that she can do anything with her power. Thus the meaning of the song lyrics above is the song writer tries to conveys her feeling that she is able to face any challenge in her life.

Based on the lyric above the context of situation emphasized to the song writer feeling got when she was young. The participant of song lyric above is only song writer itself. The text above is used formal language and it is used figurative language to make the lyric more interesting.

## 3. Metaphor

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) stated that metaphor is an Implied, comparison, introduced by like or as omitted.

### Data 3

"Hands up to the sky, I will be your galaxy" (Rain On Me, Stanza 9, Line 2)

The sentence above is a kind of metaphor in figurative terms. There is comparison found in this sentence. The

author compares herself that presented by word “I” with galaxy. The word *I* here refers to the song writer itself and galaxy is any of the very large groups of stars and associated matter that are found throughout the universe. Here the song writer wants to make sure someone that she can give everything for her boyfriend.

Based on the theory of Leech (1974) the lyric above categorized as connotative meaning. In this sentence brings beyond from literal meaning. In the song lyric, the song writer describes that she wants to be galaxy for her boyfriend. As we know, galaxy is a system of billions stars that has a big role for bright lights for the universe. In the lyric above the song writer uses the word *galaxy* just wants to tell that her character like and the word “galaxy” means here refers to a famous person who has powerfull in life. However the meaning of figurative language above is the song writer wants to describes her self that she can be the best one and she always give everything for her boyfriend.

Talking about context of situation in the lyric above can be explained that the song writer wants to give everything to his boyfriend that she loves. She hope that she will be the one that can make her boyfriend happy and find more happiness. The participants in the context are Lady Gaga and her boyfriend, because the word “you” in the lyric refers to the man. The lyric above is informal word. So the writer suggest to the reader to listen to the song to understand about the context situation inside. Meanwhile the lyric above is written text and it’s used figurative language.

#### 4. Personification

Personification is giving human characteristic to an object, animal, or abstract idea. Personification is a metaphor, in the sense that there is an implied comparison between a non human thing and human being.

#### Data 4

“I want your stupid love” (Stupid Love, Stanza 4, Line 1)

Lyric above consists of personification because the author gives attribute of human being to an object or concept. As we know love is an intense feeling of deep affection. It said that love is stupid because she couldn’t think clearly when she likes that man.

The song lyric above belongs to connotative meaning. According to Leech (1974) connotative meaning is the communicative value and expression has by virtue of what refers to. In denotative meaning stupid is having or showing a great lack of intelligence to think something. The connotative meaning is expressed with “I want your stupid love” which is impossible that love can be said stupid. The word *stupid love* here reference to personal character of someone. The hidden meaning that the song writer to convey is that she really wants her boyfriend to love her and give everything for her life without any reason.

Based on the context of situation in the lyric above emphasized to the song writer that she wants something more from her boyfriend especially about love that make her feel happy. Based on the context above the word “stupid” means that the song writer wants to her boyfriend to loves her without any reason. The participants of this song are Lady Gaga and her boyfriend. Because the word “you” in the lyric refers to her boyfriend. Meanwhile the lyric above is used informal sentence and the song writer used figurative language because the sentence above express about the feeling of song writer.

#### 5. Paradox

Paradox is a statement whose surface obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd but which makes good sense upon closer examination.

#### Data 5

“you’re the worst thing and the best thing that’s happened to me” (Replay, Stanza 4, Line 4)

The lyric above consists of paradox because this sentence is contradiction each other. This sentence is seems to not make any sense. The paradox appears when two things should not be able to exist together. The word *worst thing* and *best thing* are showing paradox because the statement is showing the contradiction. The word *worst thing* means the most serious or unpleasant thing that could happen and *best thing* is something that is thought to be very good

As stated in the theory by Leech (1974) the lyric above categorized as reflected meaning because this sentence response to another sense. The song lyric describes the song writer tells that she is having unpleasant experienced from her boyfriend but on the other hand her boyfriend is the best one to make her happy. Reflectively, this song lyric has response in other case that the song writer is feel happy even though she has been betrayed by her love. So through this lyric the song writer wants to tell that both of those thing possibility would be happen in her life.

Talking about the context situation in the lyric above is emphasized about the condition of Lady Gaga, which means that in a relationship even it is about love or friendship, we aware that something bad or good possibility will happen, and it is might be make us crying or happy. The participants are the Lady Gaga and the men. The lyric above is written text but can be spoken if this song is sung. However, the song writer wrote the lyric to informal way because this is like personal utterance and it is used figurative language.

## 6. Metonymy

Metonymy is describing one thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it.

### Data 6

“Maestro, play me your symphony” (Alice, Stanza 6, Line 4)

The lyric above consists of metonymy because describing one thing by using the term for another thing. As we know, *Maestro* is the a person who is expert in a certain field. In this case the author is not directly mention name’s of someone but she mention “maestro” as title’s which is closely associated with someone who has skill or master in music. As we know when someone giving you a title of maestro that’s means it refers to someone who has an expert in certain field and also has lot of achievment that they get escpecially in music.

The lyric above is categorized as conceptual meaning. According to Leech (1974) conceptual meaning is called denotative meaning which is considered to be the central factor in linguistic communication. We can emphasize the conceptual meaning of the use for the phrase “maestro”. In denotative meaning, maestro is a title’s that give to someone who has an expert in certain field which is in this case especially in musically. So maestro that the song writer meant is someone who has expert in musically. Thus, the meaning of the song lyric above is the song writer wants to ask someone to entertain her by playing a musical composition of orchestra

Based on the context situation above emphasized to condition or situation of the song writer feeling based on her experienced in the past. So that, the researcher claimed that this situation she feel stress with her problem and she hopes to anyone can entertaint her with playing a musical orchestra and of course the participants are both of them. They are Lady Gaga and her man. Meanwhile the lyric above is written text and also the utterance of the lyric above is used figurative language.

## 7. Allusion

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367) Allusion is a reference to some

well known place, event or person. Not comparison in the exact sense, but figure in the sense that implies than its narrow meaning.

#### Data 7

“Talk it out, babble on battle for your life, Babylon” (Babylon, Stanza 3, Line 4)

The sentence above consists of allusion because this sentence is reference to the well know place or something known. As we know Babylon was the capital city of the ancient Babylonian empire, which itself is a term referring to either of two separate empires in the Mesopotamian area in antiquity. Babylon here refers an era where the people only live for material pursuits and pleasures because at this time there was no religion and rules that apply like now.

The lyric above is categorized as conceptual meaning. According to Leech (1974) conceptual meaning is called denotative meaning which is considered to be the central factor in linguistic communication. The song lyrics describes to someone how to battle for his life like in Babylon era. “battle for your life, Babylon”. this lyric includes conceptual meaning because in conceptual or denotative meaning , Babylon is the most famous city of ancient Mesopotamia on the Babylonian empire identical with a strong and powerful, yet corrupted and immoral place. In this case the song writer uses the city of Babylon to represent the situation of person who is struggle and survive for his life like on Babylonian era because the conceptually life on that era is identical with materialism and

sensual pleasure. So the meaning of song lyric above is the song writer try to make sure someone to keep fighting for his life and not give up whatever the problem.

The context situation of the lyric above shows by the word “Babylon” emphasized to the place which is full of materialism and sensual pleasure. It means in this case the singer try to connected the situation on the babylon era with modern era whereas the people who life in modern era has high of ambition to get something. So that, from the lyric above we can conclude that the singer try to invite the people to not give up and always keep fighting to survive for life. The participants are Lady Gaga and her boyfriend. The sentence wrote in informal word and it is used figurative language to make the lyric more dramatic.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Figurative language is languages which is used to enhance the effect of what it is being said, and it cannot be taken directly. The purposes of figurative languages are to express of someone thought, emphasize personal situation, and to entertain the listener.

Based on the data above it can be concluded that in Lady Gaga’s song lyrics use figurative language style to conveys the message and it means that the listeners of Lady Gaga song lyrics should have deeper understanding to find out the meaning and the message in each song lyrics.

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