



## Discovering the Intended Meaning of Figurative Languages in Damian Marley's Song Lyrics

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### Abstract

The objectives of this study are to find out types of figurative language and their intended meanings. There are two theories that used in this research. The first theory is proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974) which is used to find out types of figurative language used in Damian Marley's song lyrics. The second theory is proposed by Leech (1981) which is used to find out the meaning of figurative language used in Damian Marley's song lyrics. The method used in collecting the data was observation method. The writer collected the data of song lyrics by browsing and downloading song lyrics from the internet, reading and understanding song lyrics, taking note and classifying the data based on type's figurative language. The writer analysed the data descriptively by using qualitative method. After analyzing the data, the writer found that there are six types of figurative language used in Damian Marley's song lyrics which consist of 3 metaphors (19%), 5 similes (32%), 2 irony (12%), 3 allusion (19%), 1 synecdoche (6%), and 2 metonymies (12%). All of the figurative language have connotative meaning which implicitly deliver hidden messages and life values.

**Keywords:** *figurative language, song lyrics, meaning*

### Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan dan makna yang dimaksudkan. Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Teori pertama dikemukakan oleh Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974) yang digunakan untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu Damian Marley. Teori kedua dikemukakan oleh Leech (1981) yang digunakan untuk mengetahui makna bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lagu Damian Marley. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data adalah metode observasi. Penulis mengumpulkan data lirik lagu dengan browsing dan mendownload lirik lagu dari internet, membaca dan memahami lirik lagu, mencatat dan mengklasifikasi data, berdasarkan jenis bahasa kiasan. Penulis menganalisis data secara deskriptif dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Setelah menganalisis data, penulis menemukan bahwa ada enam jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu Damian Marley yang terdiri dari 3 metafora (19%), 5 simile (32%), 2 ironi (12%), 3 ilusi (19%), 1 synecdoche (6%), dan 2 metonimi (12%). Semua bahasa kiasan memiliki makna konotatif yang secara implisit menyampaikan pesan-pesan tersembunyi dan nilai-nilai kehidupan.

**Kata kunci:** *bahasa kiasan, lirik lagu, dan arti.*

## **Introduction**

Language is communication tools that used by humans to communicate each other. People can share their opinion, experience, ideas, and emotions by language. Language could be either in the written and spoken form even gesture, but inside of the language contains the meaning. Language may represent explicit and implicit feeling. According to Kreidler (1998: 55) language is complex and capable of expressing whatever its speakers need to express and capable of changing the need of speakers. It means that language is an instrument or a media of communication process.

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974: 283) stated that figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language, or simply metaphor because its Greek ancestor "Metapherein" means to carry the meaning beyond its literal meaning. Figurative language used in literary works to demonstrate the creativity of the author also as the beauty of language itself. Figurative language is the part of speech that uses the words to convey the meaning that is different from literal meaning or interpretation. Figurative language is very common in poetry and prose, but it also be able found in the song lyrics.

Song lyrics are the author's way to describe his or her feelings, emotion, and attitude. Song lyrics are arranged in such a way that contains rhythms, tones, and harmony, especially from the sounds produced. Song lyrics commonly use figurative language because it is the way of the author to deliver his or her feelings in a beautiful way. When we are listening to the music, sometimes we find some lyrics which are ambiguous, confusing and hard to understand because there are many figurative languages that we have never heard and find in our daily life conversation.

This study was conducted by reading and reviewing some references that related to figurative language. The first study conducted by Rahmat (2020) entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in the Song Lyrics by Ziggy Marley's Album Entitled Fly Rasta". The second study conducted by Dewi (2019) entitled "Analysis of Figurative Language Found in the song lyrics Made in the A.M Album By One Derection". The third study conducted by Dimu (2018) in her thesis entitled "Figurative Language in Blunt's Song Lyrics". Based on the previous related literature above, the similarities is discussed about figurative language in the song lyrics. And the differences is data source, this data takes data source from Damian Marley album.

One of the most popular song writers and also a famous singer is Damian Marley. He is the youngest son of a phenomenal reggae singer Bob Marley. He wrote his song lyrics beautifully with many figurative languages. Thus, Damian Marley conveys hidden messages inside his song lyrics implicitly. Damian Marley is one of the top singers, song writer and record producers from Kingston, Jamaica. He has many albums, but in this research, the writer chose the "Welcome to Jamrock" album which released on September 12, 2005. The songs in the album are very interesting because there are so many types of figurative language that used in the song lyrics. This album is also the winner of GRAMMY awards for the best Reggae album in

2006 and the best Urban/Alternative Performance from the albums *Welcome to Jamrock*.

## Method

The data of this study were taken from song lyrics in "*Welcome to Jamrock*" album by Damian Marley. The writers used observation method in collecting the data by conducting several steps: (a) browsing and downloading the song lyrics; (b) reading repeatedly and understanding the song lyrics; (c) taking note and classifying the data based on types of figurative language. This research used descriptive qualitative method in analysing the data. It was done in the following steps: (a) analysing the types of figurative language using theory of figurative language by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974) and (b) analysing the meaning of figurative language using theory of meaning by Leech (1981). In presenting the data of this research, the writer used formal and informal method. The formal method used table to show types of figurative language found in Damian Marley's song lyrics. The informal method used descriptive paragraph to describe the types of figurative language and their meaning.

## Result and Discussion

This part showed the finding of figurative language used in song lyrics "Welcome to Jamrock" by Damian Marley. This study found six types of figurative language such as Metaphor, Simile, Synecdoche, Irony, Allusion, and Metonymy. The table below presents six types of figurative language found in Damian Marley song lyrics.

| Figurative language | Occurrences | Percentages |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Metaphor            | 3           | 19%         |
| Simile              | 5           | 32%         |
| Irony               | 2           | 12%         |
| Allusion            | 3           | 19%         |
| Synecdoche          | 1           | 6%          |
| Metonymy            | 2           | 12%         |
| Total               | 16          | 100%        |

Table 1. Types of Figurative Language

This part discussed the types and meaning of figurative language used in the song lyrics "Welcome to Jamrock" album by Damian Marley. The analysis of the figurative language consist of Metaphor, Simile, Irony, Allusion, Synecdoche, and Metonymy. The discussion can be seen as follows.

## **Metaphor**

Metaphor is figure of speech which concisely compares two things. It is considered as implied comparison without used words “like” or “as” (Knickerbocker and Reninger, 1974: 283). The examples of metaphor can be seen in the following discussion.

### **Data 1**

*She's only queen, the king is designating  
And so me seal the deal I am  
negotiating, I know it's kinda deep but keep on concentrating  
Because Jazzy lay di beat and I am clearly stating (Beautiful, L4, S36)*

The data above categorized as metaphor since the singer clearly compares his girlfriend and the “queen”. The singer compares them without using the word “as” or “like”. Literally, “queen” is the female ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth. However, in this context, it has implied meaning since his girlfriends is not a queen literally. By using a comparison, he wants to describe that his girlfriend has something identical with a queen. It could be her beauty or her characteristic since a queen is typically very beautiful, gorgeous, smart, nice and lovable. The singer tries to convey his feeling that he really loves his girlfriend and she is the only queen in his heart which means the only one lady in his life and he admired her like people admire a queen.

### **Data 2**

*Smarter than most intellectual fools  
Weh spend the time pon internet chat rooms  
She said “junior” you're a genius  
You think with your mind and not your penis (pimpas paradise)*

The data above categorized as a metaphor because somebody compares “Junior” and “a genius”. “Junior” in this context refers to the singer. “Junior” is commonly used to denote young or younger people. Meanwhile, “a genius” means an exceptional intellectual or creative power or other natural ability. In other words, a genius is a person who is exceptionally intelligent or creative, either generally or in some particular respect. In the song lyrics above, his girlfriend said that he is a genius. It implicitly represents her feeling that she likes him who is intelligent, creative and inspiring.

### **Data 3**

**Yeah, yes me lion**  
*Always look on the brighter side of life, you know Nih must  
Now, don't you give up, don't you ever give up (We're gone make it, L1, S1)*

Song lyrics above are categorized as metaphor since the sentence compares two things implicitly “me” and “lion”. “Me” literally refers to the singer. Meanwhile “lion” is literally a wild animal, the strongest animal and the king of the jungle. When somebody is compared with a lion, it implicitly means that he has certain qualities or characteristics of a lion. In this context, it shows that the singer is brave, willing to fight, protective, never give up and powerful like a lion. Women typically love these characteristics from men since women will feel safe and guarded.

### **Simile**

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974: 283) simile is figure of speech involving comparison, it draws resemblance with the help of the word *like*.

### **Data 4**

*She can't keep herself up to par*  
***She plays like a broken guitar***  
*She always want take it too far*  
*Me wonder if she makes it so far ooo yee (Pimpa's Paradise, L91, S9)*

The song lyrics above categorized as simile because they compare two things, “she” and “broken guitar”. The sentence used the word “like” as comparison. Guitar is one of music instruments which created beautiful tone and melodies. But in this song's lyrics, the author compares his girlfriend to a broken guitar. Broken guitar is unworthy and cannot be used since it has been broken. Connotatively, broken guitar refers to human attitude because broken guitar cannot produce good tone or melodies. The meaning of the sentence above is the singer wants to describe about his girlfriend who always forces everything, always want to take something too far although she knew it is impossible.

### **Data 5**

***She rises and fall like a star***  
***Her life rides off like a car***  
*Her face full of all kind of scar*  
*Always with fist start a war (Pimpa's Paradise, L83, S8)*

Song lyrics above categorized as simile because the sentences compare two things, “she” and “a star”. Another one is “her life” and “a car”. The song lyrics used the word “like” to compare two things above. The meaning of figurative language above is categorized as a connotative meaning as stated by Leech (1981) because the meaning is beyond its literal meaning. In this sentence, the author describes his girlfriend's life is like a star and a car. Like a star, she also rises and falls. In her life sometimes she is on top, sometimes she is down. Her life is also like a car, the wheels roll and go through both smooth and rocky roads. It represents life which is not always good, sometimes people also face bad path.

## **Data 6**

***She she want me ride her like a Ferrari sign***

*Put appointment aside*

*Nothing can't compromise (All Night, L6, S34)*

Song lyrics above categorized as simile because it compares two things by using the word “like” which can be seen from the sentence “...ride her like a Ferrari sign”. Literally, Ferrari sign is a horse. A horse symbolize power, speed and masculinity. Ferrari itself represents an expensive car. It also represents luxury and life style. Implicitly, it shows his girlfriend’s expectation toward him. She wants him to be powerful, masculine and wild like a horse. In addition, she wants him to be a classy man with luxurious life style just like a Ferrari.

## **Data 7**

*Cause what I'm seen is haunting*

***Human beings like Ghost and Zombies***

*President Mugabe holding guns*

*to innocent bodies in Zimbabwe (Road to Zion, L46, S5)*

The data above categorized as simile because this song lyrics compare two things. It compares between “human” and “Ghost and “zombies”. Literally, the word “Human” means someone or something that relates to people or humanity. The word “ghost” means apparition of a dead person which is believed to appear or become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image. And the word “zombie” is a dead human then rises up to be a hideous creature with no soul and no thought. Human is social creature who was created to help each other. In fact, human have many other characteristics. “Ghost and zombie” represents darkness.

Implicitly, the words “ghost and zombie” represent people attitude. The sentences “human beings like ghost and zombie” is explaining that human lost his/her characteristics and changed into ghost and zombie who have no feelings and empathy. Human sometimes become cruel and brutal like ghost and zombies.

## **Data 8**

*See it deh now...hey*

*Now wi fore parents sacriffe enough*

***Dem blood sweat and tears run like syrup***

*Any day a revolution might erupt, and the sky's over Kingston lighting up  
(Confrontation, L77, S 13)*

The data above categorized as simile because it compares two things such as “blood, sweat and tears” and “syrup”. “Syrup” refers to a thick sweet liquid made by dissolving sugar in boiling water, often used for preserving fruit. The sentence “...run like syrup” shows that it runs hardly and slowly since syrup is a thick liquid which is

hard to run. Meanwhile, something that involving blood, sweat, and tears mean that it is a very hard thing to do and requires a lot of effort. The lyrics used it to describe the amount of efforts put into something. If someone has given all of his strength and abilities to a relationship, one might say that he has given his blood, sweat and tears to the relationship. This is another way of saying that someone has tried his or her best above what was expected. They have tried so hard at what they have been working on that it is as if their whole body has been thrown into the relationship.

### **Irony**

Irony is a statement of which the real meaning is completely opposed to its professed, or surface meaning. Irony is figure of speech that gives meaning which is not true. It is different between appearance and reality.

### **Data 9**

*Beneath the demons she's a one person  
When she's not fiendin, "swearin" and cursin  
**Behind the certain she's really hurting**  
And while her people don't even trust her at home (Pimpa's paradise, L10, S62)*

The song lyrics used an irony because the meaning is the opposite of the surface sentence. "Behind the certain she's really hurting" implicitly means that the appearance and reality are totally contradictive. Apparently she is certain but actually she is not. In fact, she is really hurting. The song lyrics have connotative meaning because it has hidden message. It shows that she tried to hide her pain by showing that she is strong and has no doubt. What people can see is different from what she really feels inside.

### **Data 10**

*Hey, she love to party, have a good time  
She looks so hearty, feeling fine  
She love to smoke, sometime she ship some dock  
**She's laughing when there ain't no joke, hey** (Pimpa's Paradise, L1, S8)*

The song lyric classified as irony because the condition is not the same with the reality, and it can be seen by two words "laughing" and "no jokes". Laughing happens when things are funny. However, in this case there are no jokes. The sentence represents someone who is defending the reality of life. She is hurt inside, but she pretends to be happy. In addition, it shows that life is a struggle and we have to be strong and positive so we can overcome whatever the problems in this life.

## **Allusion**

The allusion is a reference to some well-known place, over or person, not comparisons in the exact sense, but a figure in the sense that implies more than its narrow meaning (Knickerbocker and Reninger, 1974: 284). The data were analyzed as follows.

### **Data 11**

*Zion, holly mount Zion, Zion*

**Better to go to Zion, more than burn in a fire**

*Better to go to Zion, more than burn in a fire*

*Me say dash your badness, and your mind (Carnal Mind, L1, S2)*

The data above categorized as allusion because the sentence used well known place. "Zion" is a hill in Jerusalem and is called sanctum in the bible based on Christian reliance. Zion hill is the place which is very peaceful in Jerusalem. Hence, there are many people who want to visit Zion hill. Conceptually, the author defines Zion hill as a place to repent. He directly recommends all the people to go there. He wants to tell to all the people that Zion is the best place to refresh mind and soul. This sentence has connotative meaning because "Zion" represents peaceful life. The message of these lyrics is that go to Zion is the best way to heal, relax and find happiness.

### **Data 12**

*Use cheddar as the bait then you recruit a rat*

*So, we listen couple speech of **Martin Luther chat***

**Dennis Brown, Bob Marley and some super cat**

*Yow, seem like she upside the Duko shop (Beautiful, L11, S1)*

The data above categorized as allusion because this sentence used well known people "Martin Luther, Dennis Brown and Bob Marley". Martin Luther is a song writer also as the Baptist minister, and activist of the United States who is both of spokesman and a leader of the civil rights movement. Meanwhile, Dennis Brown and Bob Marley are Jamaican reggae singers. They are all great public figure who are very influencing so that what they say and what they do become very inspiring for others and can motivate others as well. The sentence "So, we listen couple speech of Martin Luther chat Dennis Brown, Bob Marley..." implicitly means that it is important to learn from public figures about many things in life to be positive and keep motivated and inspired.

### **Data 13**

*The smell ah gives your girlfriend contact*

*Some boy nuh know dis, dem only come around like Tourist*

*On the beach with a few club sodas,*



*Bedtime stories, and pose like dem name **Chuck Norris** (Welcome to Jomrock, S2, L8)*

The data above categorized Allusion because this sentence used well known public figure “Chuck Norris” as reference. “Chuck Norris” is an American artist, actor, film producer, and screenwriter. Pose like Chuck Norris means that pose like a super star. Pose or act confidently like a celebrity who has no fear and no doubt to show who they really are. Celebrity is a condition of fame and broad public recognition of an individual or group, or occasionally a character or animal, as a result of the attention given to them by mass media. A person may attain a celebrity status from having great wealth, their participation in sports or the entertainment industry, their position as a political figure, or even from their connection to another celebrity. 'Celebrity' usually implies a favorable public image, as opposed to the neutrals 'famous' or 'notable', or the negatives 'infamous' and 'notorious'.

### **Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is a figure of speech using the part of the whole and vice versa (Knickerbocker and Reninger, 1974: 283).

#### **Data 14**

*You're always on my mind  
We need to spend more time  
**Cause no one else can touch my heart inside**  
She look so good in her clothes (Hey Girl, L8, S2)*

The sentence above is categorized as synecdoche because using the part to explain the whole. The song writer used “heart” which is part of human body to represent the whole body as human. Heart is symbol of love or feeling. The sentence “Because no one else can touch my heart inside” has hidden meaning. It implicitly shows that nobody can touch his feeling except the girl he loved. The song lyrics shows that the singer is in love with someone very special that he always thinks of her all the time and always wants to be with her. Nobody can make him feel that way before.

### **Metonymy**

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1974: 283) metonymy is describing one thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it. The data of metonymy can be seen as follows.

#### **Data 15**

*Old friends walk pass going about their own  
As if she is someone that they don't know  
**Then the King of Kings lift her off the floor**  
Saying life is a ting when you learn you grow (Pimpa's Paradise, S7, L60)*

Song lyrics above categorized as metonymy because using a term “King of Kings”. It has connotative meaning because it is beyond its literal meaning. A king is literally a male ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth. Connotatively, king of king refers to God because only God can be the king of the king. This term closely associated with God as king of everything in this universe. It has implicit meaning which shows that there is bigger power from God which can lift someone from their worst condition or situation. In this context, the meaning is that God can lift somebody from the lowest place to the highest one. The message is that you need to fall to grow even stronger.

#### **Data 16**

*Now she calls me on the phone and said she's home alone  
And she wants me to come over and **her house a** home  
Well I gave it to her once  
And I like how she responds (All Night, S2, L6)*

Song lyrics above categorized as metonymy because using a term “home” which associated or closely related to “a comfort zone”. Home is the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household. Home gives people feeling comfortable, happy and full of love. In this case, home represent intimacy. The girl invites him to her house means that she trust him and consider him as someone special who can enter her personal territory. Both of them are happy for each other's companion.

#### **Conclusion**

After analyzing the data, the writer concluded that the “Welcome to Jamrock” album by Damian marley consists of six types of figurative language such as Metaphor, Simile, Irony, Allusion, Synecdoche, and Metonymy. The writer found sixteen data of figurative language. There are three sentences identified as metaphor, five sentences identified as simile, two sentences identified as irony, three sentences identified as allusion, one sentence identified as synecdoche, and two sentences identified as metonymy. The dominant figurative language are used in the song lyrics is simile (32%) which showing comparison between two different objects to show clear analogy. In explaining the meaning of figurative language, the writer used the theory from Leech (1981). From the seven types of meaning the writer analyzed two types of meaning which are conceptual meaning and connotative meaning. Based on the data above, the writer concluded that “Welcome to Jamrock” album used figurative language to convey implicit messages and hidden life values.

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