



Types of Figurative Language Found in White Swan Selected Song Lyrics

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Abstract

This study aims to find out and analyze types of figurative language in White Swan selected song lyrics on album Behind the Door. The objective of this research was to identify the types of figurative language and analyze their meaning. There are two theories that are used in this research. The first theory is proposed by Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) to analyze the types of figurative language. The second theory is proposed by Leech (1981) to analyze of the meaning. This study used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data source. For the result there were six types of figurative language that find in White Swan selected song lyrics, such as: 4 data of simile (16,67%), 5 data of metaphor (20,83%), 2 data of synecdoche (8,3%), 1 data of metonymy (4,16%), 6 data of personification (25%), and 6 data of hyperbole (25%). Based on the result the types of figurative language that dominantly used in White Swan selected song lyrics is personification and hyperbole.

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

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan dan menganalisis jenis bahasa kiasan dalam lirik lagu terpilih dari White Swan pada album Behind The Door. Objek dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan dan menganalisis maknanya. Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Teori pertama dikemukakan oleh Knickerbocker dan Raninger (1963) untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan. Teori kedua dikemukakan oleh Leech (1981) untuk menganalisis makna. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis sumber data. Hasilnya terdapat enam jenis bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam lirik lagu White Swan yang dipilih, yaitu: 4 data simile (16,67%), 5 data metafora (20,83%), 2 data sinekdoke (8,3%), 1 data metonimi (4,16%), 6 data personifikasi (25%), dan hiperbola sebanyak 6 data (25%). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian jenis bahasa kiasan yang dominan digunakan dalam lirik lagu White Swan yang dipilih adalah personifikasi dan hiperbola.

Kata kunci: *bahasa kiasan, lirik lagu, makna, White Swan*

Introduction

Language is the most important aspect in human daily life as a tool to help a communication with each other. Humans can express their feelings, emotions, ideas and opinions by languages. Beside that, people need a language to interact which other

people to get and share some information. According to Ngailo and et al (2022: 111), language is very important for humans to connect with each other, communicate, and receive information from others in everyday life. In addition, Barung and et al (2023: 32) stated, the purpose of language is to obtain information through interaction, language can be in the form of writing, speech, or gestures that contain meaning. In the world of art, language is the main means of expressing ideas and emotions into works of art. For example, when humans express their ideas into literary works, there is a language art known as figurative language.

Linguistic is the scientific study of language and language structure. In linguistics can include several aspects that are divided into several parts, one of which is semantic. Semantic is a branch of linguistic that specifically studies the meaning in language. According to Kreidler (1998:3), semantics is the structured analysis of meaning, while linguistic semantics specifically examines how languages arrange and convey meanings. In semantics focuses on how a word, phrase, sentence and text can convey meaning as a whole. In semantics there is one element in it, namely figurative language.

Figurative language is language used to express something without using the literal meaning to give a strong, deep and colorful meaning. According to Perrine (1977: 61), figurative language is where a language that used figures of speech which that cannot be taken literally. Figurative language is commonly used in poetry and prose, and it can also be found in song lyrics (Aman and et al, 2022). According to Bagul and et al (2023), song is an art form that involves singing and can convey a range of emotions, both happy and sad. Song often contains figurative language to convey meaning and emotion in deeper and more creative. Songwriters can express their feelings, emotions and ideas in song lyrics. Song lyrics are an interesting thing to analyze because contains figurative language that can convey the message of the songwriter implicitly and explicitly.

This research was conducted by comparing it with previous research which analyzed type of figurative language which has similarities with this research. The first review was taken from thesis entitled *Figurative Language Found in Tylor Swift's Song Lyrics in the Album Folklore* by Nabila (2022). The study utilized descriptive qualitative research. The author used theory proposed by Kennedy (1983). The similarity of the study used figurative language as a research subject. However, the difference in the study are the data source and theory. The previous study used data source from Tylor Swift's Song Lyrics in the Album *Folklore* and used theory of Kennedy (1983). Meanwhile, the data source of this study was taken from White Swan selected song lyrics and used theory of Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) to analyze types of figurative language.

The second was taken from an article entitled *An Analysis Figurative Language in Bruno Mars Selected Song Lyrics: "It Will Rain"* by Renda and Pratiwi (2024). The research used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. As a result of the study, the author found that there are four types of figurative language, namely: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and repetition. The most dominant of figurative language from their research is hyperbole. The author used theory proposed by Perrine (1969) and Leech (1981). The similarity is the used figurative language as the research subject and theory of Leech (1981) to analyze the meaning. However, the differences in the

study are the data source and theory. They used data source from Bruno Mars Selected Song Lyrics: “It Will Rain” and used theory of Perrine (1969) to analyze type of figurative language, while the data source this study was taken from White Swan selected song lyrics and used theory of Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) to analyze type of figurative language.

The third was taken from an article by Swarniti (2022) entitled Analysis of Figurative Language in “Easy on Me” Song Lyrics. The author implies qualitative research. Based on the result of this study showed in comparative figurative language only found personification. In contradictive figurative language found hyperbole, litotes, and paradox. In correlative figurative language found allusion, ellipsis, metonymy, and symbol. The author used theory proposed by Miller and Greenberg (1981). The similarity is used figurative language as a research subject. However, the difference in the study are the data source and theory. The data source of her study used from song lyrics of Adele’s Song entitled “Easy On Me” and used theory of Miller and Greenberg (1981), meanwhile the data source of this study was taken from White Swan selected song lyrics and used theory of Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) to analyze type of figurative language.

The last was taken from an article by El Sawati et al (2022) entitled Analysis of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift’s Song “Fearless” Album. The research used qualitative method to analyze the data. As a result of the study, the author found that there are seven types of figurative language, namely: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, synecdoche, paradox, metonymy, and allusion. The most dominant of figurative language from their research is hyperbole with 36%. While from the types of meaning, the author found three types of meaning, namely: connotative, conceptual and affective meaning. The author used theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) and Leech (1974). The similarity is used figurative language as the research subject and theory of Leech to analyze the meaning and also theory of Knickerbocker to analyze the types of figurative language. However, the differences in the study are the data source. They used data source from Taylor Swift’s Song “Fearless” Album, while the data source this study was taken from White Swan selected song.

Method

The data source of this study was taken from White Swan selected song lyrics on album Behind The Door. There are three steps in collecting the data. The first step was listening the song carefully on channel YouTube official White Swan and understanding the content of the songs. Second, notes taking and underlining the sentence figurative language in the songs. Third, classifying the data based on types of figurative language. This study was used qualitative method to analyzed the type of figurative language. This research was used theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) to analyze type of figurative language and theory proposed by Leech (1981) to analyze the meaning. The study was used formal and informal method in presenting the finding. The formal method used to present the result of the data analysis by table and for the informal method used to present description the analysis data.

Result and Discussion

The research data was taken from White Swan selected song lyrics which were released on “Behind the Door” album November 2022. In this table below are type of figurative language and percentage that contained in the White Swan selected song lyrics.

Table 1. Types of Figurative Language

Figurative Language	Occurrences	Persentages
Simile	4	16,67%
Metaphor	5	20,83%
Synecdoche	2	8,3%
Metonymy	1	4,16%
Personification	6	25%
Hyperbole	6	25%
Total	24	100%

Based on the table above, this study found out there were five types of figurative language in White Swan selected song lyrics there are Simile, Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Personification and Hyperbole. The author found 24 data, there were found 6 data of Hyperboles, 6 data of Personifications, 2 data Synecdoche, 1 data of Metonymy, 5 data of Metaphor and 4 data of Simile. Based on the results the types of figurative language that dominantly used in White Swan selected song lyrics is Personification and also Hyperbole. Songwriters can express their feelings through metaphorical language by conveying the meaning of the song lyrics without using literal meaning so that the meaning delivered message aesthetically.

Simile

According to Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 370), simile is a comparison, comparing two unlike thing by using the word “like” or “as”. For example: “My Love is Like Red Rose” (Knickerbocker and Raninger, 1963: 370).

Data 1

I will runaway [line 5]

I can die if I have to stay [line 6]

Screaming like a creep [line 7]

Day after day [line 8]

Song lyrics above contains figurative language which is categorized as simile because seen from song lyrics above the songwriter use the word “like” as a comparison. The word “screaming” is compared with “a creep”. Even though they are different thing, but it shows the similarity between “screaming” and “a creep”. The writer wants to describe that someone is screaming to the behavior of a creep. By

likening the screaming to the behavior of a creep, the speaker is likely trying to convey the unsettling or disturbing nature of the screaming.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning. Based on Leech (1981), connotative meaning is about communicative value and expression based on what it refers to. The connotative meaning can be seen by word “creep”. Based on the lyrics the word “creep” indicated a freak person which has a negative connotation. So songwriter wants to describe that the screams can be disturbing or frightening.

Data 2

We face poor laws in this civilization [*line 4*]

Break the rules and fight for a bite of rice [*line 5*]

Our life is like gambling a dice [*line 6*]

Break the wall and we're not going down [*line 7*]

Stand up! Wake Up! While rolling around [*line 8*]

Song lyrics above contains figurative language which is categorized as simile because seen from song lyrics above the songwriter use the word “like” as a comparison. It is used to compare “life” with “gambling a dice”. The word "life" here means a person's life then equated with "gambling a dice", which refers to gambling activities involving the use of dice and there is a bet in this game. In general, dice are used in this game to produce random results, and the results determine whether a person's bet wins or loses. So in this case, the songwriter wants to convey a life that is uncertain and full of risk, similar to when someone throws dice in a gambling game, where the results are unpredictable and depend on luck.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning. The connotative meaning can be seen by phrase “gambling a dice”. Based on the lyrics the phrase “gambling a dice” is identical with uncertainty, risk, luck, destiny, and the emotional feelings associated with facing unpredictable outcomes. The figurative language above means that the songwriter wants to describe that life is full of random and unpredictable similar to the outcome of a dice roll.

Metaphor

Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 367) stated metaphor is makes an implicit comparison, compare different thing without uses word “like” or “as”. For example: Life's but a walking shadow”.

Data 3

You just need to change [*line 17*]

You think you're fine [*line 18*]

Your comfort zone [*line 19*]

It's Your Enemy [*line 20*]

Song lyrics above is categorized as a metaphor because compare different things without saying “like” or “as”. The songwriter compares two different things

such as the word “comfort zone” and “enemy”. The songwriter wants to describe that implies if someone doesn't want to get out of their comfort zone then it can be a barrier to developing for the better. This is implemented with the word "enemy" which means an opponent or an obstacle.

The lyric above contains affective meaning. According to Leech (1981), affective meaning is expression personal feeling of the speaker to the listener. The words “your comfort zone it's your enemy” is delivered by the songwriter to express him personal feeling to the listener. Songwriter wants to describe about a person's habits or comfortable routines are an obstacle without realizing it.

Data 4

We wanna live on the fire [*line 11*]

We wanna live on the fire, then we take [*line 12*]

Control our lives [*line 13*]

We're stuck with your advice [*line 14*]

We are a rainbow for the Hopeless Light [*line 15*]

Song lyrics above is categorized as metaphor because compare different thing without using word “like” and “as”. Based on the lyrics above can be seen the comparison between the word “we” and “rainbow” both words have different meanings, "we" refers to the group or individual who is speaking or singing in the lyrics, while "rainbow" symbolizes something positive, colorful, and full of hope. In this case, songwriters want to emphasize that their presence or actions bring positive change and hope into the lives of others who feel hopeless or lost.

Figurative language above contains connotative meaning. Based on Leech (1981), connotative meaning is communicate a value and expression of a word's meaning based on what it refers to. In a connotative context, the word "we" here is likened to a rainbow that can provide beauty and hope to the "hopeless light," which indicates that they (we) provide positive emotions and motivation in the midst of difficulties.

Personification

According to Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 367), personification mean giving human characteristic to an object, animal, or abstract idea. Personification also implied comparison between a human or an inanimate object. For example: “There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray”

Data 5

When all of human being starts a war [*line 1*]

We always blame each others [*line 2*]

Over control [*line 3*]

When all of creatures want a rain to fall [*line 4*]

The sun was did a mistake [*line 5*]

Overheat [*line 6*]

The lyrics of the song "the sun makes a mistake" contain personification, which is a figure of speech in which human characteristics are associated with non-human objects. In this case, the songwriter wants to illustrate that the sun is personified by stating that he has the ability to make mistakes, which is human nature. By giving human qualities to natural elements like the sun, it can evoke emotions, create imagery, and convey complex ideas in a more interesting way. In this example, personifying the sun in the sense of making a mistake could imply a feeling of unpredictability or imperfection in nature.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning. Based on Leech (1981), connotative meaning relates to the values and communicative expressions that arise from the reference intended by a word or phrase. The lyrics of the song above contain connotative meaning because we know that the sun cannot possibly make mistakes like humans who make mistakes. The songwriter imagines the mistakes made by the sun referring to the condition or temperature of the sun's rays which are too hot or the scorching sun rays make living things feel burned.

Data 6

Overheat [*line 25*]

If you angry the fire will burn you [*line 26*]

You're careless with someone who cares to you [*line 27*]

Take my hand once again [*line 28*]

We must carry on [*line 29*]

The song lyrics above can be categorized as a personification in figurative language because the word "fire" relate with human characteristics can be seen by word "burn". In this case, fire has the ability to burn like humans, but generally fire cannot burn without humans as the person who does it. So the songwriter wants to convey a deeper meaning through the lyrics of the song where the word fire implies a feeling of being too angry which can be self-destructive.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning. According to Leech (1981), connotative meaning refers to the communicative value and expressive nuances that arise from what is referred to by a word or phrase that can go beyond its literal definition. The connotative meaning of the song lyrics refers to feelings or negative emotions of anger. So the songwriter wants to convey connotatively to control emotions to avoid the bad impacts of anger.

Data 7

The passions find a path of your way [*line 12*]

I'm not going to stay [*line 13*]

I'm flying on away [*line 14*]

Don't ever think your gonna fine [*line 15*]

Just don't make trouble and problems with the time [*line 16*]

The song lyrics above are a personification category in figurative language because they relate human characteristics to "passion". Here, "passion" is described as a force that is able to "find a way" by itself, as if it had a will. By implicating "passion"

in this way, the statement suggests that passion is not just a feeling or emotion but rather a guiding force that can lead a person along a journey. The song's lyrics can imply that when someone is truly passionate about something, that passion can act as a compass, directing them towards their goals or desires. This conveys the idea that passion has power like a human being.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning because it can be seen from the word "passion". In literally, the word "passion" means "arousal" or "desire." It refers to a strong, deep feeling for something, such as an intense interest or emotional drive, that it has a connotative meaning that refers to feelings, emotions, and strength. This can imply that if someone follows the passion in themselves, then the passion will provide its own path, where passion here is powerful.

Synecdoche

Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 367), synecdoche is about applying a part for the whole or whole for the part of things.

Data 8

Facing thousands of lies [line 18]

The wrong options [line 19]

Add more opinions [line 20]

We just need a solution [line 21]

We don't need isolation [line 22]

We will break The Cage [line 23]

The lyrics of the song above contain synecdoche, an example of synecdoche because "cage" is used to represent a wider range of restrictions or restraints, and "break" refers to the act of overcoming or breaking down those restrictions. This phrase symbolizes the struggle against a situation that restricts freedom or potential and the urge to overcome or change that situation.

The lyrics above contains a social meaning. Based on Leech (1981), social meaning means conveys about the circumstances of its use that related to the situation in which utterances used. The phrase "break the cage" is often used in a social or political context to refer to a struggle against oppression or injustice. In this context, "cage" can represent a social or political structure that restricts freedom, and "break" means to fight or change that structure.

Data 9

(Life is hard as a rock) [line 20]

But we have to keep rolling [line 21]

(Throw me **a stone**) [line 22]

I collect it and build an **empire [line 23]**

in the lyrics of the song above contains synecdoche as evidenced by the word "stone" here functioning as a part that represents the whole "empire" (kingdom). Stone is an important element in building a large structure, So, in this phrase, "stone" can

indeed be considered to represent the entire process or materials needed to build a kingdom, making it an example of synecdoche where the part (stone) represents the whole (Empire or kingdom).

The lyrics of the song also contain connotative meaning because the word "stone" here refers to a challenge or challenge, so connotatively the songwriter wants to convey the implied meaning by collecting and overcoming various stones, one can build and achieve something big and important. This highlights how every small challenge can contribute to a significant achievement.

Metonymy

Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 367), metonymy means describing one thing with another by using terms for other things that are closely related.

Data 10

God gave me an armor [line 1]

To defend from my opponents [line 2]

Too much obstacle [line 3]

Wiser than before [line 4]

In the phrase "God gave me an armor" from the song lyrics, we can see the use of metonymy. Here, "God" represents a higher or divine power that provides protection, rather than literally providing physical armor. Armor, which is literally a protective shield in battle, is used as a symbol for the inner strength and resilience needed to face life's challenges. In this context, armor replaces the idea of spiritual support, courage, and mental resilience provided by God or a divine force. In other words, "God" is interpreted as a symbol of strength or guidance that provides emotional and moral protection, while "armor" is a metaphor for these qualities that enable one to face and overcome obstacles. Through this metonymy, the song lyrics convey that one's protection and strength come from a higher power or faith, rather than just material sources, and thus deepen the meaning of how one can remain strong and steadfast in the face of life's challenges.

Connotatively in this phrase, "armor" is not only understood as a physical object, but as a metaphor for protection or strength. This reflects how the songwriter understands and processes the idea of protection given by God in the context of life and challenges.

Hyperbole

Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963: 402) hyperbole is a figurative language of an exaggeration that used for special effect. For example: "Go and catch a falling star".

Data 11

The passions find a path of your way [line 12]

I'm not going to stay [line 13]

I'm flying on away [line 14]

Don't ever think your gonna fine [line 15]

Just don't make trouble and problems with the time *[line 16]*

Song lyrics above categorized as a hyperbole because the word “I’m flying on away” is an exaggeration and illogical. In this case the song lyric talking about the action to leave but the songwriter used the word “flying” as if go out with flying. As we know the human can not fly. The word “lying on away” can implies someone going out with happiness.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning which involves its communicative value and expression based on its reference. If seen by the words "I'm flying on away" this is impossible to happen to humans because humans basically cannot fly. From the phrase "I'm flying on a way" can refer to a feeling or state in which someone feels free, inspired, or has achieved something important. Connotatively, this phrase can describe a feeling of floating high, being in a state of complete freedom, or feeling significant progress in life. Also, the meaning of the lyrics of the song above expresses that someone leaves with a sense of joy and freedom.

Data 12

I give you a thousand chances *[line 21]*

But I can't stay *[line 22]*

I rise to be champion *[line 23]*

It's my destiny *[line 24]*

Song lyrics above is categorized as a hyperbole because the lyric describes illogical thing and there is exaggeration. The hyperbole in this lyric can be seen by words “thousand chances”. In this case, songwriter used an exaggeration to emphasize thing or to make dramatic effect. In this phrase "thousand chances" is not a literal meaning namely the number, but refers to a way to show that someone will give a lot of opportunities or more than expected. This aims to indicate how big the opportunity is given.

The lyric above contains a connotative meaning. Leech (1981) said that connotative meaning is related to communicative value and expression based on what it refers to. Connotatively the lyrics of the song above means that the speaker is very patient, and gives many opportunities without limits. This shows great support or high tolerance towards the recipient. This phrase can imply that the speaker is very committed to the recipient and believes in their potential despite previous failures or mistakes.

Data 13

My shelter was full in by sin *[line 19]*

You all did this things to us *[line 20]*

Overheat *[line 21]*

You broke our place to live *[line 22]*

You all did this things to us *[line 23]*

Overheat *[line 24]*

Song lyrics above is classified as a hyperbole because there is exaggeration and illogical. The use of the words "full in by sin" exaggerates the situation, describe as if the place were so completely filled with sin that there was no more space. In reality, a shelter cannot be completely filled with sin because sin is a moral and spiritual act or concept, not a physical form that can fill space. In this case the songwriter want to convey the feeling of being stuck in a place that should be a place of comfort and safety.

Based on the meaning, song lyrics above is classified as connotative meaning because the lyrics has implied meaning. In literally the lyrics has the meaning of a shelter filled with sin, but in the connotative context the word "sin" here can refer to an uncomfortable feeling because "sin" is identical to something bad that violates norms. So based on the lyrics of the song above, the songwriter wants to convey that his shelter feels burdened and uncomfortable anymore.

Data 14

We build our masterpiece [*line 5*]
And you were not believe [*line 6*]
But I fought myself to make dreams [*line 7*]
I had fallen and waked again [*line 8*]
I dash Through The Wind [*line 9*]
No matter the time I have spent [*line 10*]

Song lyrics above is categorized as a hyperbole in figurative language because the lyric describes illogical thing and there is exaggeration. In this statement, the phrase "dash through the wind" may not be literally realistic because running or moving quickly against the wind is something that is difficult to do. In this case it can imply that someone is moving very fast despite being against a strong wind. In reality, strong winds often become an obstacle to someone's running speeds, and it is difficult to move quickly in such conditions. The songwriter wants to convey how extraordinary his efforts are in overcoming the difficulties within himself.

The song lyrics above are considered to have connotative meaning because they contain implied meaning. According to Leech (1981), connotative meaning includes communicative and expressive values related to its reference. Based on the word "wind" it can symbolise challenge or difficulty, while the word "dash" can refer to speed, enthusiasm, and energy. This word is often associated with an act of determination or courage. So the songwriter wants to express his journey or struggle which is full of challenges and dynamics.

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, can concluded that the writer showed figurative language in White Swan selected song lyrics based on theory by Knickerbocker and Raninger (1963) consists of six types of figurative language namely, simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, personification, and hyperbole. This research found twenty-four data of figurative language, there are 4 data of simile, 5 data of metaphor, 2 data

of synecdoche, 1 data of metonymy, 6 data of personification, and 6 data of hyperbole. While for the meaning that contained in the figurative language, the writer found four types of meaning, namely: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, and affective meaning. The dominant types of figurative language are used in White Swan selected song lyrics is personification and hyperbole, and also the types of figurative language that are least frequently found is metonymy.

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