Analysis of Figurative Language in "Rewrite the Stars" Song Lyrics

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Abstract: It is important to analyze the use of figurative language in song lyrics. That is why the researcher wants to examine figurative language more thoroughly, especially in the song "rewrite the stars" Therefore, this research will concentrate on the figurative language and the context of song lyrics. The present study employed the qualitative method in order to examine more thoroughly and solve problems in this review. The researchers collect data from several sources, i.e., journals, the internet, or other written sources. It was concluded as follows: In Comparative Figurative Language, was found data in simile, personification, and Metaphor. The personification found was 1 data. In Contradictive Figurative Language, it was found litotes, irony, and paradox. The only one Contradictive Figurative Language that was not found. It was hyperbole. The data of litotes was 1 data. the data of irony was 1 data. The data of paradox was 1 data. In Correlative Figurative Language, there are four kinds. The data of allusion was 1 data. The data of ellipsis was 1 data. The data of allusion was 1 data. this data also has a symbol in figurative language. The word "stars" in sentence "rewriting the stars" has a symbol as relationship. So that is why this data classified as symbol in figurative language. The data of metonymy was 1 data, and the data of synecdoche was 1 data. Based on the result analysis, this song lyric had many figurative languages. It means this song lyric tried to use figurative language to express the feeling or idea imaginatively. In other word, this song lyric tried to create a special image and bring out one's emotions.

Keywords: semantics, figurative language, song analysis, linguistics

INTRODUCTION

One of the communication mechanisms used by humans is language. As a result, without words, humans would never be able to communicate with other beings. To share, support, discover, and provide useful ideas and knowledge for others, people need language. In literature, people use language, both spoken and written, in different ways. People understand the shape of the language or its expression and its significance in studying and interpreting literary works. This means that they want the meaning found in them to be felt by readers or listeners and interpreted. However, it is often difficult for the reader to grasp the meaning of the utterance since the lyrics typically interpret it indirectly while constructing the meaning of the utterance used by the composer (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018).

The song is one of the literary types. Most literary authors use it to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. A song grabs the attention of an audience and is usually composed by a talented composer and lyricist. Songs communicate several messages. Via songs, individuals can express their thoughts and feelings via sound to others. People can interact through

songs with other individuals. In other words, as a means of communicating thoughts and feelings, the song should be used so that the audience can understand what the composer intended (Swarniti, 2022). Therefore, in the lyrics of the song, there is a secret message. Song lyrics use words that are less common in daily speech than those used. To construct their meaning, the lyrics use figurative language; if we can understand it, the meaning can sound deeper. He would have his view, even though the listener knows the meaning of the lyrics. Therefore, humans can perceive it without knowing the reality or conforming to the maker's intent with their interpretation. Beautiful words have precious meanings and involve the ability to express ideas in song lyrics through figurative language.

Figurative language is a type of language used by authors or speakers who articulate something outside Tarigan's literal sense (Azwardi, 2016). However, using figurative words is one way of interpreting the meaning of the expression and avoiding multiple interpretations. According to (Dancygier and Sweetser (2014:1) say that figurative language is thought related to one aspect of what gives a text in expressing the idea in particular language and a poetic text-special esthetic value. It means that figurative language express of idea, opinion, or author's thinking which is consist of syntax, that consist of words, clause to pass certain condition and situations. To research the implicit sense of language or expression in songs written by songwriters, these objectives can be felt and realized by readers or listeners. The language that cannot be taken literally (or can not only be taken literally) is figurative language. It utilizes words or phrases with meanings that are distinct from literal interpretations. In line with Defisyani et al. (2016), she claims that not only in writing but also in spoken language. In literary works, figurative language is often used, such as in articles in magazines, advertising, novels, and poetry (Siallagan et al., 2017).

Song is a term that refers to a work of vocal music which generally consists of lyrics (text) sung by a vocalist and accompanied by music. A song can include various musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and musical instruments. Songs are often used as a medium to convey messages, stories or express emotions. Songs can vary in genre and style, including pop, rock, hip-hop, jazz, and more. A song can be part of a variety of contexts, including a concert, a record album, or digital media such as streaming music. The song writers "rewrite the stars" in the fame album are Benj Pasek and Justin Paul for the musical film "The Greatest Showman" which was released in 2017. There are many messages delivered in their song and the language that is used to convey the messages in the song isn't figurative language, so the listener will be interested in listening to the song to obtain the purpose and the message delivered in the song. Most of the song lyrics in her song use figurative language to convey the ideas as well as to create the effect of beauty so that the language or the words in the song are more interesting.

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:366) stated that figurative languages are images used in particular way to explore the less known through the known. It can be a special repetition, arrangement or mission of words with literal meaning or a phrase with a specialized meaning not based on the literal meaning of other words in it. Figurative language will give more meaning to the words, beautify them, and emphasize their meaning.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to analyze the use of figurative language in song lyrics. That is why the researcher wants to examine figurative language more thoroughly, especially in the song "rewrite the stars" Therefore, this research will concentrate on the figurative language and the context of song lyrics.

Figurative words are one way of interpreting the meaning of the expression and avoiding multiple interpretations. Figurative language is a type of language used by authors or speakers who articulate something outside Tarigan's literal sense. According to Kalandadze et al. (2018), he argues that by learning figurative language to modify the meaning of a word or idea by contrasting it with other things, figurative language can enhance social communication skills.

Personification is expressing something by comparing it with human behavior. In line with Tairako (2018), personification is a kind of figurative language style that describes inanimate objects as if they have human characteristics.

Hyperbole is figurative language that aims to explain something but is done by exaggerating the original reality to increase the impression and influence of something being discussed (Burgers etal., 2016). Hyperbole is often found in literary works to convey that the message conveyed feels more influential on the reader. Besides, this figurative language is also often used in daily communication to make a dramatic impression to attract others' attention.

In general, this figurative language states something by reversing the context of what occurred (Tarigan, 2013); it can also be said that this figure of speech is concealing or hiding its real meaning. The sense of irony is contrary to what is said; it is subtle, but it can also offer a crude declaration of sense; humor or contrary figures categorize this figurative language.

The simile is a figurative language that uses direct comparative words to express something else. According to Hidayati (2017), simile compares two different things, which usually do not go together. Simile usually uses conjunctions such as: as if and like.

Repetition is the repetition in a practical sense of sounds, syllables, words, or other parts of a sentence deemed necessary to emphasize (Keraf,2009). Repetition is part of an affirmative figure of action and is also used as a rhetorical weapon. It is possible to use repetition to display or even threaten humor or illustrate strength, mood, and picture (Liontas, 2018).

Several studies have been conducted as the previous study. First, Dewi et al. (2020) examined figurative language in "Lose You to Love Me" song lyric. The researchers found that the song lyrics contain several kinds of figurative language. Further, Fitria (2018) examined several types of figurative language used in One Direction's album. She found that repetition is the most frequently used in the lyrics of the song. Another study came from Arditami (2017), who analyzed the use of figurative language in Katy Perry's song lyrics. She found that symbols were the most frequently used in the song lyrics. This study has several gaps with the previous studies above. In most previous research, they only classified figurative language types in the song lyrics without analyzing the meaning of the song lyrics they studied. Furthermore, this study focused on analyzing the types of figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics of the song "rewrite the stars".

RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The present study employed the qualitative method in order to examine more thoroughly and solve problems in this review. Data is the portion to be analyzed and be carried out using the qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research concentrates on the exploration of "what is" through findings and descriptive data. Therefore, data sources would be taken from the song of rewrite the stars in this research. The data collection method in this study used the library study. According to George (2008), library research requires identifying and locating sources that include objective information or personal/expert opinion on the research issue. The

researchers collect data from several sources, i.e., journals, the internet, or other written sources. The procedure began by reading the lyrics. Second, the researchers sought to identify words, phrases, and phrases that involved figurative language and caught each figurative language's context. Thirdly, the researchers took some notes about figurative language. Finally, the researchers classified and re-checked the details and analyzed them. The next step was the discussion of each category's results. The last step was drawing conclusions based on the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, there some theories about figurative language were analyzed. They were Comparative Figurative Language, Contradictive Figurative Language, and Correlative Figurative Language. The result of this analysis found based on the data source. This analysis found based on the data source. The data were classified based on the theory used. Then, the researcher explained the reason why the finding belongs to Comparative Figurative Language, Contradictive Figurative Language, and Correlative Figurative Language.

A. Comparative Figurative Language.

Comparative figurative language is a type of figurative language that involves comparing one thing to another to create a particular effect. There are several types of comparative figurative language, including simile, metaphor, personification, allegory, and antithesis. In the data source, it was found simile, metaphor, and personification.

1) Simile.

According to Tarigan (1985), a simile is an explicit, direct, and clear comparison. A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares one thing to another using connecting words such as: like, as, so, then, resembles, and seems. A simile is used to compare two things that are essentially different but have similarity in

one aspect. The data and the analysis as follow:

- Data 1   I know there is *but you're here in my heart*."

For data above the phrase from This sentence explicitly compares *"you"* (the lover) with *"in my heart"* using the word *"here"* as a comparator. The word *"here"* indicates a simile because it directly states the analogy between the lover and the speaker's heart. This is the main characteristic of a simile, which is an explicit comparison using specific comparative words. so, we need to know that a simile is a type of figurative language that directly compares one thing to another by using comparative words. The purpose of a simile is to clarify and beautify language by explicit comparison.

2) Personification

Personification is a figurative language that gives human attributes to inanimate objects or things that are not human. According to Keraf (2004), personification is a figurative language that describes inanimate objects or things without life as if they have human characteristics.

- Data 1   *"fate is pulling you miles away".*

This sentence depicts fate doing a human action which is "pulling you" (pulling you). Fate as an inanimate thing is depicted as having human capabilities to pull someone. Giving human actions and abilities to inanimate things like this is called personification. researchers concluded that personification is a figurative language that gives human traits to inanimate objects or things that are not human. Personification aims to create imagination and a more vivid depiction.

3) Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech that expresses meaning indirectly by comparing two different things that have something in common. Metaphors are often used in poetry, prose, and everyday speech.

Because metaphor is a major topic of study in many disciplines, especially linguistics, literary theory, philosophy, and psychology, concepts of metaphor, including its definition, are diverse (Picken: 1988: 108).

- Data 1   *"But there are mountains and there are doors that we can't walk through"*

In data 1, the phrase is a metaphor because it compares the challenges of a relationship with mountains and closed doors implicitly without using words of comparison such as "like", "as", "like", etc. The comparison is made directly without the intermediary of words. The phrase, *"mountains"* and *"doors"* are used to represent the challenges of a relationship. Mountains have the meaning of something big and tall, while doors have the meaning of something that blocks. Both of these things are used to describe the great challenges of a relationship that are not easy to overcome."

B. Contradictive Figurative Language

Besides Comparative Figurative Language, this research also analyzed about Contradictive Figurative Language. The types of Contradictive Figurative Language are hyperbole, irony, litotes, and paradox. Some of figurative language like hyperbole cannot be find in data source. The data found below was based on the data source in this research. Then, it was followed by the analysis of each data.

1. Irony

According to Keraf (2010), "Irony is a reference that aims to convey something through an expression that is actually contrary to the intended meaning." Irony is a figure of speech that expresses a meaning opposite to its literal meaning. Irony is often used in poetry, prose, and everyday conversations.

- Data 1   *"You think it's easy"*

This data above is an example of verbal irony. The statement implies that the situation is not easy, but the person saying it thinks that the situation is easy. For instance, a student struggling with a difficult homework assignment might say to a friend, "This assignment is a breeze." The sentence is ironic because, in reality, the assignment is challenging to complete. By employing irony, writers or speakers can convey meanings indirectly. Irony can also be used to create a humorous or sarcastic effect. Therefore, the sentence *"You think it's easy"* means that the person stating the sentence has the opinion or belief that the situation is easy, but in reality, the situation is not easy. In this context, the conveyed understanding may not reflect the difficulties faced in a situation that is, in fact, not easy.

2. Litotes

Jonathan Culler (1944-): Litotes is the use of language to express a meaning opposite to its literal meaning. Litotes is a figure of speech that states something by negating or understating the actual reality. Litotes is often used to convey a meaning opposite to the literal one, but in a more subtle and polite manner.

- Data 1   *"It's not impossible"*

The data above is an example of litotes. The sentence implicitly means *"it's possible"* by negating the opposite. In this sentence, the word *"impossible"* means *"not possible."* Therefore, the sentence *"It's not impossible"* implies that something is possible. The use of litotes in this sentence aims to soften the statement. By saying *"It's not impossible*," the speaker does not directly state that something is possible. According to Aminuddin (2013), litotes is a figure of speech that diminishes reality. The speaker only states that something is not impossible. The word *"not"* indicates that the speaker is negating the opposite of the word *"impossible."* The word *"impossible"* means "*not possible."* Therefore, the sentence "*It's not impossible*" means that the speaker negates the idea that something is not possible. In other words, the speaker is stating that

something is possible.

3. Paradox

Paradox is a statement that appears to contradict itself or common knowledge but is actually true. Paradox is often used to express complex meanings or capture the reader's attention. Jonathan Culler (1944-): Paradox is the use of language to express a meaning contrary to its literal meaning.

- Data 1 "*Nothing could keep us apart...*"

The data is an example of a paradox. The sentence implicitly means *"nothing could separate us."* However, the sentence also contains a contradiction because, in reality, there are many things that can separate two individuals, such as distance, time, or differences in opinions. The use of paradox in this sentence aims to convey a complex meaning. The sentence indicates that the relationship between the two individuals is very strong, to the extent that nothing can separate them. The word *"nothing"* indicates that there is nothing that could separate the two individuals. The word "*keep*" means "*to separate*," and the word *"apart"* means "*separate."* Therefore, the sentence "*Nothing could keep us apart...*" means that nothing could separate the two individuals.

C. Correlative Figurative Language

In Correlative Figurative Language, there are five kinds. It consists of allusion, ellipsis, metonymy, symbol, and synecdoche. Four kinds of Correlative Figurative Language were found in this data source, namely: allusion, ellipsis, metonymy, and symbol. One kind of Correlative Figurative Language that cannot be found was ellipsis.

1. Allusion

Harold Bloom (1930-2019): In his book "The Western Canon," Bloom argues that allusion is a central force in literary creativity. Allusion is a figure of speech that refers to or touches upon something commonly known or familiar to the reader or listener. Allusion is often used to add meaning or depth to a text. He views it as a way for writers to engage in a dynamic dialogue with their literary predecessors, building upon and reinterpreting their works.

- Data 1 "*What if we rewrite the stars?*"

From data above is an example of allusion. The sentence alludes to the idea of defying fate and destiny, possibly referencing myths or stories where characters alter their predetermined destinies. In the context of this sentence, the allusion is used to express the desire of two individuals to be together despite obstacles. They want to change their fate and be together. This allusion can enhance the meaning of the sentence by providing a broader context. The sentence is not just about two people wanting to be together but also about the struggle to defy destiny and pursue their dreams.

2. Metonymy

Metonymy is a powerful figure of speech where you refer to something indirectly by mentioning something else closely associated with it. It replaces the abstract with the concrete, adding vividness and meaning to your message. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) explored metonymy's role in conceptual metaphor, arguing that we understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences.

- Data 1 "*Hands are tied*"

The sentence "Hands are tied" can be considered an example of metonymy. In this context, *"hands are tied"* is used to refer to limitations or obstacles faced, not literally about hands being bound. This metonymy works by substituting the words "*limitations*" or "*obstacles*" with "*hands tied*." This creates a more concrete and dramatic image, as physically bound hands suggest an inability to move freely. In the context of the song "Rewrite the Stars," the phrase *"Hands are tied"* is used to allude to the obstacles faced by two individuals in love. These obstacles could be differences in background, social status, or culture. By

using this metonymy, the song creates a stronger portrayal of the struggles faced by these two individuals. The song also emphasizes the hope that they can overcome these obstacles and be together.

3. Symbol

Roman Jakobson (1896-1982): A symbol is a sign that has an arbitrary relationship with the object it represents. Symbol is a word or image that represents something else. Symbols are often used to convey a message or meaning that goes beyond their literal interpretation.

- Data 1 *"Rewriting the stars"*

Meaning and Significance of the Sentence *"Stars"* Throughout the song, stars symbolize fate or destiny, with *"rewriting the stars"* symbolizing the desire to change that predetermined path. In the context of the song "*Rewrite the Stars*," the term *"Stars"* is used to refer to fate or destiny. This symbol is employed to indicate that the relationship between two individuals in the song faces predetermined obstacles. The phrase *"rewriting the stars"* is used to express the desire to alter that destiny. This symbol signifies that the two individuals are not giving in to the obstacles and are determined to be together. *"Stars"* can be considered as a symbol. In these lyrics, stars may represent dreams or hopes, and "rewrite the stars" becomes a symbol of the desire to change destiny or overcome obstacles.

4. Synecdoche

Henry Sweet (1843-1912): Synecdoche is the substitution of one thing for another that is related to it. Synecdoche is a figure of speech that uses a part to represent the whole, the whole to represent a part, or the whole to represent another whole. Synecdoche is often used to create a more concrete and dramatic depiction.

- Data 1 *"Hands tied"*

This lyric uses synecdoche by using a body part (hands) to represent the whole (freedom or ability to act). Hands are a symbol of the ability to move and act. In the context of this song, the tied hands symbolize the obstacles faced by two people in love. These obstacles can be differences in background, social status, or culture.

CONCLUSION

All of the data found and each analysis were explained in detail above Based on the explanation above, it was concluded as follows: There were Comparative Figurative Language, Contradictive Figurative Language, and Correlative Figurative Language that was done to be analyzed in this research. In Comparative Figurative Language, was found data in simile, personification, and Metaphor. The personification found was 1 data. In Contradictive Figurative Language, it was found litotes, irony, paradox. The only one Contradictive Figurative Language that was not found. It was hyperbole. The data of litotes was 1 data. the data of irony was 1 data. The data of paradox was 1 data.

In Correlative Figurative Language, there are four kinds. It consists of allusion, ellipsis, metonymy, symbol, and synecdoche. The data of allusion was 1 data. The data of ellipsis was 1 data. The data of allusion was 1 data. this data also has a symbol in figurative language. The word "stars" in sentence "rewriting the stars" has a symbol as relationship. So that is why this data classified as symbol in figurative language. The data of metonymy was 1 data, and the data of synecdoche was 1 data.

Based on the result analysis, this song lyric had many figurative languages. It means this song lyric tried to use figurative language to express the feeling or idea imaginatively. In other word, this song lyric tried to create a special image and bring out one's emotions.

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