Translation of Metaphors Within The Lyrics of Queen’s Songs

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**Abstract-** This research is entitled “Translation of Metaphors Within the Lyrics of Queen’s Songs” and was made to identify metaphors contained in several Queen’s songs, furthermore is to find out the meaning contained of the metaphorical lyrics written. Data sources were obtained from Queen’s songs on A Night at the Opera, Queen II, and Jazz albums. Data samples were obtained through the lyrics contained from Queen’s Official YouTube music videos. The theoretical foundation used in compiling this research is the theory of metaphor proposed by Marcella (2017), and Nurgiyantoro (2017) and the theory of translation proposed by Frans Sayogie (2014). The method used in this research is a qualitative method, starting with collecting metaphor samples contained in three different Queen songs from three different albums, then the samples are analyzed to find out the meaning or message contained in each metaphor samples and then translated into Indonesian (TL). The results of this research presented a total of 23 metaphorical sentences, and this study concludes about the importance of translating metaphorical sentences appropriately and acceptably without losing the message contained in the metaphorical sentences, in this case the songwriter uses metaphors to convey the depiction of something based on events and personal experiences of the songwriter.

**Keywords:** Lyric, Meaning, Metaphor, Queen, Translation

# INTRODUCTION

As a music enthusiast, the researchers have been listening to the music since childhood, the researchers get interest with the band formed in the 70s era named Queen, because the lyric of their are very interesting in terms of language and literature, there is a poetical lyric and contain deep meaning in some of their songs, the most popular song from Queen is “Bohemian Rhapsody” and for your information that song has become an endless debate regarding the meaning contained in it, the songwriter of the “Bohemian Rhapsody” Freddie Mercury never explain the meaning contained in that song until he passed away in 1991. However, the researchers would not including “Bohemian Rhapsody” song in this scientific research since there is a lot of research has exploring the song that are mentioned that discussed about their writing.

The researchers researched about the band more deeply and found that many of their songs are quite unique and kind of different from any other band in that era, the researchers found a lot of metaphors in any songs of any albums they made, therefore, this is what motivated the researchers to conduct this scientific research, as mentioned before that the lyric of their are very interesting in terms of language and literature, this scientific research would be discuss about the metaphor written in some of Queen’s songs, and entitled “Translation of Metaphors within the lyrics of Queen’s songs”.

The researchers would like to begin by explaining the meaning of music, lyric, and song before get to the subject of the discussion, music has a lot of interpretations, music is a human art as an expression of heart that manifested in the form of regular sounds or voices that has rhythm, melody, and harmonization, Wisnawa. K (2020). In this era, many people use music as a tool to express themselves and it has been going on for decades, as members of the band Queen did to express themselves, the researchers know how Brian May (Queen’s Guitarist) often makes songs based on his personal experiences from life for instance he wrote a song called ”White Queen” based on his love experience with a woman who was described through the lyrics of the song he created very beautifully combined with the music he made with his bandmates, he and the rest of the band made a lot of songs to be a medium to load their thoughts to be something, in this case a song. According to Hasbillaah, L.N & Rachmaningtyas, A.A (2022), they define that “the song is an art of combination between the art of sound and the art of language”. Referring to the title of this research about metaphor, and to know the meaning by metaphor there is an explanation about it, that “metaphor are indirect and implicit comparisons”, Nurgiyantoro (2017). Metaphors has a function to facilitate understanding, strengthen meaning, and represent something that is abstract to be more real and familiar to the others, moreover metaphor is also something important because it can be used to express something implicitly, and overcome limitations in expressing, also to avoid boredom and entertaining for the readers.

Within the song there must be a lyric, song lyrics are one of the elements in a group of literary works such as poetry, Simanjuntak, M.B., & Lumingkewas, M.S (2022), like any other songs usually the lyrics of the songs there is always metaphor used, it is a common thing that the artist using metaphor in the song they are written, metaphor usually used to give the impression of beauty in lyrics, as mentioned by Marcella (2017) “The function of using metaphor in a literary work is to make it more lively, beautiful, and interesting”.

The researchers were impressed by the writing style of Queen's songs, because the songs were written by the members themselves and they came from different backgrounds, but they were made a great songwriting and most of their song written based from their personal experience in life as mentioned in a book “Great Songwriting Technique” songwriting usually based from a personal experience, Jack Perricone (2018).

The most important thing to know in translation a metaphor is the deliver of meaning should be the same with source language (SL), the translator must understand the message contained in a sentence before translate it to target language (TL), Translation has the intention of conveying meaning from one language to another, Frans Sayogie (2014).

This research is based on the researchers interest in literary art within a song lyrics, the researchers like to read or to hear the beauty of words and Queen serve so many songs with poetical lyrics, and also this research aimed to enrich another research about Queen’s songs and contribute to literary works discussed about something similar within the richness of the world of literacy. Futhermore this research is conduct to find out and also to identify the metaphors found within the lyrics in the songs, this research also aims to interpret the metaphors meaning contained in the songs and the researchers seek to contribute to the understanding one of figure of speech about what metaphor is.

For the last opinion, in translating metaphors the researchers need more knowledge about the metaphor that will be translated from the source language and the translator must be able to translate the metaphor by understanding more about the meaning or message contained in the source text, and that is the reason about the importance of giving a good metaphor translation so that the readers in the target language would get a better understanding of the meaning of what has been translated.

# METHODS

This research is conducted through a qualitative method, according to Soegiyono (2018: 140), “Qualitative method is a collecting method of data obtained through observation, interviews, documentation and triangulation”, this scientific research obtained the samples data through observation by collecting several fragments of song lyrics from the band Queen that contain elements of metaphor, in this study the researchers will attenpt to translate the metaphor into TL with the method of Literal Translation and also the researchers try to give an opinion about the meaning contained in the metaphor in several Queen’s songs. This allows researchers to contribute to related research on intrinsic elements contained in literary works of art, in this case a song.

Based on the data that will analyze here, the researchers must first learn about the background of the lyric written by Queen members, therefore the researchers tries to use Ethnographic Theory by understanding culture and social practices as proposed by Siddiq, M., & Salama, H. (2019) from the perspective of Queen Band members obtained through several interviews with the media and the history of the Band itself.

All data collected in this research is obtained through independent observation by collecting some lyrics that contain metaphorical elements from watching the official music video from Queen Official YouTube , these data will later be translated to see the acceptability of metaphorical translation results in the TL so that the right equivalent can be found in the TL.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First of all, in the translation, the most crucial thing to do is convey a meaning without losing it, furthermore in translating metaphorical sentences, the translator is required to understand the meaning contained in the metaphor, as mentioned in a study, metaphor is seen as a figure of speech which the importance lies in its literary form and aesthetics. Hong. W., & Rossi. C (2021). A good translation must be able to maintain the beauty of the literary elements as well as the content of the meaning conveyed. Putri, G., & Gusthini, M. (2022) Based on the researchers experience there are some mistakes the researchers found in the translation of the Queen's lyrics especially in the part of the metaphors, if you looking for the translation of Queen's song lyrics on the internet, there are many unacceptable translations, the mistakes occurred because the translator did not understand the meaning contained in the song so the translator only translated the text freely, furthermore many of the metaphorical translations that the researchers found were unacceptable and made the translation result of the song lyrics a little strange.

In this section of the results and discussion, the researchers get help to understand some of the terms or words contained in the lyrics through the oxford dictionary and also the “kamusku” app by looking at the meaning of the word or term, and also this section will display all the data collected and then the researchers will analyze the meaning of the sentence and give the translation result.

1. The Prophet’s Song (A Night at the Opera)

The first song that will be discuss in this paper is the song from the album “A Night at the Opera” The song is called “The Prophet’s Song”. There are 9 Metaphors will be discuss from the song displayed in the form of a table below.

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| ST | Literal Meaning | TT |
| “Beware the storm that gathers here” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict warns of danger implied by a gathering storm. | “Waspadai badai yang berkumpul disini” |
| “Spreading his hand on the multitide there” | The meaning of this metaphor is the depict about a figure who extends his hand over the crowd like a prophet who is calling out to the people. | “Mengulurkan tangannya kepada orang banyak di sana” |
| “A Man who cried for a love gone stale” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict a Man who is sad because of the decline of love, the phrase “love gone stale” describes the feeling of love that has declined and the word “love” is likened to a cake that has gone stale. | “Seorang pria yang menangis karena cinta yang sudah basi” |
| “Hopes of the young in troubled graves” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict the desperation and loss of potential of the younger generation, implying that their hopes are buried by circumstances. | “Harapan kaum muda terdapat dalam kuburan yang bermasalah” |
| “So grey is the face of every mortal” | The word “grey” is used to describe the confusion of humans, because the word grey indicates something that is neither black nor white. And the meaning of this metaphor is to depict the confusian of every human being. | “Jadi bingunglah setiap wajah manusia” |
| “For soon the cold of night will fall” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict a time of impending darkness and hardship that describes a difficult time. | “Karena sebentar lagi dinginnya malam akan tiba” |
| “Summoned by your own hand” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict everything that are come is happen because of own actions or decisions. | “ulah tanganmu sendiri” |
| “Fly and find the new green bough” | The meaning of this metaphor is the command to find a new livelihood symbolized by the phrase “green bough. | “Terbang dan temukan dahan hijau yang baru” |
| "Death all around will be your dowry" | The meaning of this metaphor implies that death will be the dowry due to the disasters caused so many deaths. The meaning of death as a dowry is the most expensive price that must be paid. | “Kematian di sekelilingnya akan menjadi mas kawinmu” |

*Table.1 The Metaphorical translation of “The Prophet’s Songs”*

“The Prophet’s Song” relates the story of a prophet who predicts a dreadful event, potentially the end of the world. The prophet foretells imminent calamity and pleads for repentance, imploring people to change their ways before it is too late. The lyrics depict vivid images of destruction and turmoil, and the prophet’s words serve as a solemn warning to humanity. Despite the grim topic, the song also examines the power of hope and redemption, implying that there is still a possibility for salvation if people listen to the prophet’s message.

The song is written by their guitarist Brian May, it was inspired by his interest in science fiction and fantasy themes, with references to a prophet warning of impending doom, and this song is also inspired by his dream as he told to Melody Maker 1975, he once had a dream that people were walking on the street trying to touch each other’s hands, desperate to try and make some sign that they were caring about other people. He thought that his dream is implying something so that’s why he wrote that song to load his thoughts.

1. White Queen / As It Began (Queen II)

The next songs, the researchers will discussing the metaphors within the song called “White Queen”, there are 6 metaphors will be discuss below.

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| ST  | Literal Meaning | TT |
| “So sad her eyes smiling dark eyes” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict comparison between happiness and sadness, evided by phrase “smiling dark eyes”. | “Begitu sedih matanya tersenyum dengan mata gelap” |
| “On such a breathless night as this” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict the tense atmosphere of nighttime. | “Pada malam yang sesak seperti malam ini” |
| “The White Queen walks and the night grows pale” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict the night atmosphere that changes in a negative connotation when the character "The White Queen" performs an action. | “Ratu Putih berjalan dan malam menjadi pucat” |
| “Stars of lovingness in her hair” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict the beauty, authority and elegance of the White Queen. | “Bintang-bintang cinta kasih di rambutnya” |
| “So sad my eyes she cannot see” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict the sadness feelings, it tells the feeling of the lyricist when he likes a blind girl. | “Sungguh menyedihkan mataku, dia tidak bisa melihat” |
| “My goddess hear my darkest fear” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict that someone who mentioned as a White Queen has known the biggest fear of the speaker's about his feelings. | “Dewiku mendengar ketakutan tergelapku” |

*Table.2 The Metaphorical translation of “White Queen”*

The “White Queen” songs is also written by Brian May, the outlines of this song is about him tells story about someone else he loved described as a “White Queen”, he wrote this song to express what he felt, as metioned by Windle, E. 2020) that “The Songwriter wrote a song to express what is felt, seen, and experienced in society”, he felt that the woman he really liked would never belong to him so he described her figure as very majestic. His sorrow peaks when he realizes that he has stayed silent for too long and he has no brave to confess, so will now never have a chance to be with her, this girl is a girl whom he met at college.

1. Don’t Stop Me Now (Jazz)

The third song will be discuss about their metaphorical lyrics contained are “Don’t stop me now”, there will be 8 metaphorical lyrics discuss below.

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| ST | Literal Meaning | TT |
| “I’m floating around in ecstasy” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about high feeling of the spirit of the speaker to live his life at that moment. | “Aku melayang-layang dalam ekstasi” |
| “I’m a shooting star leaping through the sky” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about power of the speaker comparing to the shooting star leaping through the sky suggesting speed, brightness and excitement feeling. | “Aku adalah bintang jatuh yang melompati langit” |
| “like the tiger defying the laws of gravity” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about power of the speaker compares to the power of tiger defying the laws of gravity which means its speedness defy gravity laws. | “Seperti harimau yang menentang hukum gravitasi” |
| “I’m a racing car passing by like Lady Godiva” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict a comparison between the speaker and a fast racing car, which symbolizes speed and freedom. It also compares the speaker to Lady Godiva, who was known for riding a horse naked, showing her boldness as an act of protest at the time. | “Aku adalah mobil balap yang berlalu seperti Lady Godiva” |
| “I’m a rocketship on my way to mars” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about the spirit of the speaker that comparing himself to a rocketship on the way to mars which is the extraordinary spirit. | “Aku adalah pesawat roket dalam perjalanan ke mars |
| “I am a satelite, I’m out of control” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about the speaker that he's out of control like a satelite. | “Aku adalah satelit, aku diluar kendali” |
| “I’m a sexmachine ready to reload, like an atom bomb about to oh, oh, oh, oh ,oh explode” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about the speaker compared to a sex machine that ready to reload like an atom bomb about to explode which is an extraordinary spirit. | “Aku adalah mesin seks yang siap dimuat ulang, seperti bom atom yang akan meledak” |
| “I’m burning through the sky” | The meaning of this metaphor is to depict about the feeling of the speaker described like he burned through the sky likened a meteor. | “Aku terbakar melintasi langit” |

*Table.3 The Metaphorical Translation of “Don’t Stop Me Now”*

The meaning of this song is the feeling of happiness, enthusiasm, of Freddie Mercury in his life, Freddie Mercury wrote this song to describe how they (the band members) were getting better at having fun as told in the song's lyrics through many metaphorical styles. The song also received criticism from guitarist Brian May as he told to Mojo, he said that the song celebrates the vocalist's hedonistic lifestyle as mentioned in this song tells about the time when Freddie Mercury took a lot of drugs and exceeded the boundaries of the norm, but as time went on, Brian May began to appreciate the song because it represented great joy. This song is one of their best songs that became the most favorite single that had dominated the charts at that time.

# CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, metaphorical translation is a very important thing to pay attention to. Because the songwriter uses metaphorical elements to convey something implicitly by using metaphor as a medium for conveying messages and written poetically. The results of this study show how important it is to understand the content of the metaphorical text first before translating it because if metaphorical sentences are translated freely, it will produce poor translation results, the researchers know that the songwriters of the three songs discussed use metaphors to imply something, in the first song, the context presented is about the events in the dream experienced by the songwriter which he tries to describe through metaphorical expressions, while in the second and third songs the metaphors contained are used to imply about feelings as well as figures with a different context, to conclude this study, the researchers would like to say that the efforts in completing this paper, the researchers realizes the errors or shortcomings that may be contained in it, so that feedback is needed to be a lesson for the future. The researchers hope that this paper can contribute to the translation of literary works, in this case in the form of songs.

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