

AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

This research is entitled An Analysis of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's song lyrics it aims to know the types of figurative language that are used in Taylor swift lyrics and describe the contextual meaning of the figurative language used in Taylor's lyrics. The research data is obtained from two songs from one album of Taylor Swift. The album titled *Red* with three songs taken entitles *Red* and 22. This research uses descriptive qualitative method in observation and library research in collecting data of this research. Figurative language found consists of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, paradox, irony and personification. In this research, these findings show that hyperbole is the most dominant in Taylor Swift's song and based on the contextual meaning of overall song lyrics of Taylor Swift tell about conflict, pain heart and deeply treachery.

Keywords: song, lyric, figurative language, contextual meaning

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of tools for human communication. Without language, people will never able to communicate with others. Besides that, people need language to interact, to look for and give people benefit information. In literary works, people use the language in various ways, spoken and written language. According to Meyer(1997:1) literature is a term that describes written texts characterized by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, beautiful phrase, elegant syntax, rhymes, and aesthetic alliterations. The author intends to read himself aesthetically and deliberately slightly open in interpretation.

In learning and understanding literature, people not only understand form of language or utterances, but also the meaning in it. It means they want to make the readers or listeners also feel and catch the meaning in it. However, sometimes the readers feel difficult to understand the meaning of the utterances because the lyric in creating the meaning of utterances, the author use usually put the meaning implicitly. They also use certain diction and imagery within it and what conventionally says is not always same as intends to express.

One of literature forms is song. Griffiee (2001) mentioned that song is part of music that is formed through words that aims to be sung. Mostly, the literature writers used it to express their ideas, feelings, and emotions. A song has appeal and attracts interest to the listener and usually created by composers and professional lyricists. There are many message delivered by song. Through song people can convey their ideas and feeling to other by voicing. People can communicate to others through song. In other words, song can be used as the way to deliver idea and feeling, so that the people can understand what the composer means.

There is hidden meaning in song lyrics. Song lyrics use uncommon words, compared to the word used in daily conversation. The lyrics use the figurative language to create its own meaning itself; if we can interpret it the meaning can be seemed deeper. While the listener

knows the meaning of the lyrics, it will have its own opinion. Therefore, people will interpret it by their understanding without knowing the truth or conformity with the purpose of a composer. Beautiful words will have valuable meanings and require ability to deliver ideas through figurative language in song lyrics.

One of way to understand the utterances meaning and to avoid various interpretations can use figurative language. Figurative languages are forms of language used by authors or speakers delivering something beyond the literal meaning Tarigan (Azwardi, 2016). In studied the implicit meaning of language or utterances in songs created by composer so that the readers or listeners can feel and realize that aims.

There are several studies which have conducted as previous study. The first, (Retnayanthi, 2012) she researched about The Analysis of Figurative Languages in Adele's Song Lyrics. The result from research in the lyric of Adele's song, the author found figurative language that is personification, metaphors, synecdoche, hyperbole, allusions, paradoxes, symbols and metaphors. Based on the contextual notion of the entire Adele's song tells of betrayal and contradictions in romance. The literary context approach in this case the poem in the form of songs really helps to deepen and expand our literary knowledge. Another research conducted by Apriono (2017) his research entitled An Analysis of Figurative Languages Used in Lyrics of Scorpion Songs. He analyzed from two Scorpion song albums there are Crazy world and Love. He found several kinds of figurative languages that are personification, simile, metonymy and metaphor. The function of figurative language found in Scorpion song lyrics is a language or expression used verbally to describe an intention, idea, or message of a speaker.

Taylor Alison swift or famous by name Taylor swift is American singer/song writer. She was born on December 13, 1989. In 2010 at the age of 20 Taylor swift became the youngest artist in history to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year. In 2011 Swift was named Billboard's Woman of the Year. She also has been named the American Music Awards Artist of the Year, as well as the Entertainer of the Year for both the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music, among many other accolades. As of this writing, she is also the top-selling digital artist in music history. Beside the reason above, the researchers picked up the artist because in her songs have many hidden meanings, so the author wants to investigate more deeply to be able to know the meaning.

Therefore, this study focused on figurative language commonly used in song lyrics and the meaning contained in song lyrics. As for aims this research to know : Types of figurative language are used in Taylor Swift songs and the contextual meaning of figurative language used in Taylor Swift song lyrics.

Definition of Literature

According to Hornby (1995) "Literature is a piece of writing valued as work of art compared to technical language." As we know that a composer is not carelessly in creating a song lyric because they write it with heart and use technical language to express feeling and thought and is usually inspired by all aspects around such as, emotion and situation or condition. Therefore, there were hidden meaning in every words of lyrics, as the listeners if we want to know it we should listen carefully of the song. In this, the composer and singer are collaborative. A composer looks for an appropriate singer to sing his/her song because only professional singer can convey message using expressions, intonation and gestures so that, the listeners can suggest the meaning.

Song

Song is one of the familiar literatures in the listener's ear. According to Jamalus(1988:5) reveals that songs can be described as art works in singing to musical instruments accompaniment. In addition, Hornby USA (1995) can be defined song as a short rhyme or set of verses in music and aimed to be sung.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the song is one of the literature in the form of poem which is showed by sung and accompanied by musical instruments

Lyric

According to Dallin (Firdaus, 2013) "Lyrics are printed as a form of communication between the author and the readers". Mainly of the times, they carry a message (whatever that might be) with the purpose of inspiring the listeners, at least, to think about it. Such a purpose and form of communication are entrenched in the cultural context of these people, according to their musical preference occasion, etc.

Figurative language

Many theories of figurative language put forward by experts but this study, the writer uses the theory of Kennedy. According to Kennedy (1983: 481) there are 4 types of figurative language but in this study the researcher use two types that is comparative and contradictive, relation. The first type is **Comparative figurative language**; there are personification a language in the imagination of something that has no soul, as if it has a human quality (Potter, 1967:54),it means that the dead objects in this world are considered animated by giving some attributes to inanimate objects. So people who read, guess, can do everything as a person. The second there is metaphor is a multitude of analogies that directly compare two things, but in a short schema (Keraf, 1994: 139) and the last is simile a comparison with an explicit feature, which means that it immediately gives something similar with words like, as and such (Potter, 1967: 54).

Then,the second type there is **Contradictive figurative language**; there are Hyperbole or overvaluation is a figurative language that contains an element of exaggeration about something (Potter, 1967: 135), it means that there is something bigger than the fact. The second there is litotes is a figurative language that contains a sentence that minimizes the actual reality (Potter, 1967: 135), this means that people often use it for simplicity. They are not arrogant because they suspect something worthless thing , although it is so worth. The last ,paradox is a variety of images that contrast with a fact. All things can be meant that are interesting because of their truth (Potter, 1967:136). The last is irony is the middle way between what is said and what is understood, or the understanding of others about what is said and what is understood (Diyanni, 2004).

METHOD

In order to analyze more deeply and solve problems in this research, writer will apply qualitative method. According to Moleong(2010: 4)the qualitative method is used as a research technique that obtains a description of the words and the performance of people that can be observed.

Data is the element to be analyzed and will be done with descriptive qualitative method. According to Borg, W.R. & Gall(1989)descriptive studies focus on the discovery of "what is" so that observations and descriptive data

Data sources in this study were taken from Taylor swift's song. The songs are on one album. The album titled is *Red* which was released in 2012, there are two songs taken entitle *Red* and *22*.

The data collection method in this study uses the library study. According to Rasmuson(2017) library research includes a process stages used to gather information for writing articles, making presentations, or completing a project. The researchers collect data from several sources i.e. journals, internet or other written sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

The writer analyzed figurative language of the songs which consist of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, pleonasm, symbol, rhetoric, paradox, irony, personification, repetition and anti climax. Here are the figurative languages of Taylor swift song lyrics:

		22	
Figure of speech		Lyric	
Simile	•	Hipster	
Hyperbole	•	It's miserable and magical	
Paradox	•	Yeah, we are happy, free, confused and lonely at the same time	
Irony	•	And make fun of our exes	

		Red	
No.	Figure of speech	Lyric	
1	Simile	•	Forgetting him was like trying to know somebody you're never met
2	Metaphor	•	Faster than the wind, passionate as in, ending so suddenly
3	Hyperbole	•	Loving him is like trying to change your mind
		•	Once your already flying through the free fall
4	Personification	▪	When I still see it all in my head
		▪	And that's why he's spinning round in my head

Discussion

The Analysis of Figurative Language And Contextual Meaning in Song Lyric 22

Simile

It fells like a perfect night to dress up like hipsters

The lyrics are included into the simile because it expresses the explicit comparison expressed by the connector and the word "like" relationship and juxtapose an activity with phrases. As in the phrase "*It fells like a perfect night to dress up like hipsters*" meaning that women who are in the lyrics want to dress up with hipster style at night.

Hyperbole

It's miserable and magical

The lyrics are obviously exaggerated and include hyperbole as in the lyrics "It's miserable and magical" meaning that the thing done by her lover is terrible and impressed like magic.

Paradox

Yeah, we are happy, free, confused and lonely at the same time

The lyric is included into the paradox because it expresses by stating two or two things that seem contradictory, but actually both are true. As in the lyrics "Yeah, we are happy, free, confused and lonely at the same time" explains two different circumstances at the same time.

Irony

And make fun of our exes

The lyric is included into the irony because Irony is the master who declares things contrary to the intent to insinuate a person. For example "And make fun of our exes" the sentence meant to insinuate his exes and actually she did not want to make her exes happy because his exes had left her.

The Analysis of Figurative Language and Contextual meaning in Song Lyric Red

Simile

Forgetting him was like trying to know somebody you're never met

It is easy to find a comparison speech figures simile, because simile is one of ways of comparing one thing with another by combining words or use comparators of words: "as, as if, like, such as", etc. In the lyric above uses word "like". Therefore, the lyrics of the song belong to the simile because it compares two things between the "Forgetting him" and "trying to know somebody you're never met".

If you see a glimpse of the meaning of the lyrics there are things that are not logical. There is a hidden meaning in the above utterance because we cannot know people we have never met are impossible. The point is that Taylor finds it impossible even the hardest thing to forget her ex because of a deep love.

Metaphor

*Loving him is like driving a new Maserati down a dead-end street
Faster than the wind, passionate as in, ending so suddenly*

Metaphor is a variety of analogy which compares two things directly. The metaphorical expression below compares "Maserati" is a car with "wind" is nature. The word "Maserati" is a luxury car from Italy while "wind" is something that involves nature. Both have the same character it is "fast". Two implicit things are seen it means in the lyrics above that Taylor wants to describe his relationship with a man. They are attracted to each other quickly and having relationships is a couple, so that their relationship is easily intertwined.

It expressed in the "Maserati". However, their relationship did not long last and ended suddenly that is symbolized by "wind". The point is that their relationship is intertwined and ends so quickly even though their love story is filled with happiness.

Hyperbole

*Loving him is like trying to change your mind
Once you're already flying through the free fall*

Hyperbole is one of the figures of speech that imply an exaggeration of ideas due to the emphasis. In "trying to change your mind" it means to change the condition or situation while "Once you're gone flying through the free fall" is considered as a condition that has happened.

In essence human cannot change events that have occurred in the past because it will be memories. In the lyrics above contains exaggerated statements for loving someone like you want to change your mind when you've fallen free. Changing the mind on this condition will not change anything because the person has changed her mind to not jump, she will not be able to get back to where she jumped it. The meaning is that Taylor want to emphasize she has loved the man and cannot forget him or all of memories with him even especially make a relationship back again with him.

Personification

Whenever an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities, a personification occurs. It seems in following lyric:

*When I still see it all in my head
and that's why he's spinning round in my head*

In this lyrics put human character on an abstract idea. The word "see" is used to see concrete objects. Logically looking at the contents of the head is impossible because we cannot see the contents of the head, there will be brain and nerve cells of the brain so it will be associated with the science. While the word "spinning" we spin by using our feet in the field or the land. It is not logical thing when we can "spinning round in a head ". The implicit meaning here is that everything is not as easy as we think. Taylor still remembers beautiful memories with her ex boyfriend.

CONCLUSION

The study has analyzed two songs of Taylor Swift from one album. Based on the discussion and analytical data in the previous chapter, researchers found several kinds of figurative language. There are seven kind of figurative language that is simile, metaphor, hyperbole, symbol, irony, paradox, and personification. The generalize of all the songs that have been investigated is based on Taylor Swift's life experience. Figurative language in this Taylor Swift song hyperbole and simile becomes the most dominant because most of the lyrical context of the song is about things that are negative so that the words used in the songs is exaggerated from the original meaning comparison with an explicit words and because lyricists want to describe and emphasize conflict, pain heart and treachery are very deep.

After that there are irony, metaphor, personification, symbol, and paradox becomes the second kind of figurative language come after. Here, not a few the composers also use it to compare two things that is the feeling with things that have implicit meaning and the lyrics are made with meaning that is not accordance with the facts for the listener or reader to know and can feel what he/she has experienced. Therefore, to know and understand the hidden meaning in a song can use figurative language so that there will be no misunderstanding in interpreting the meaning.

Through this research, researchers hope to be helpful and useful for people interested in the analysis of a literature especially in the lyrics of the song. In addition, the data can be used as a reference for further researchers who want to deepen in analyzing the text and can make the reader think critically of a text analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah rabil ‘alamin, the researcher expresses his highest gratitude to Allah subhanahu wa ta’ala for blessing, love, opportunity, health, and mercy to complete this article. This article entitled “An Analysis Of Figurative Language In Taylor Swift’s Song Lyrics “ is submitted as the final requirement in accomplishing research paper at English Education Study Program Language And Arts Department IKIP SILIWANGI.

Thanks

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