



Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Selected Song Lyrics of Arctic Monkeys in “Am” Album

Rahmad Dede Asriadi¹, Andi Muhammad Irawan²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: rdedeal642@gmail.com

amuhirawan@fbs.unp.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed to find the types of figurative languages used in selected song lyrics in Arctic Monkey “AM” album. The Figurative Language found in six songs lyric in AM album. There were "R U Mine?", "Do I Wanna Know?", "Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?", "One for the Road", "Arabella", and "Snap out of It" songs lyric. This research aimed to show how language can be so in many forms. This study showed how many figurative language and language can be in so many ways to express. This research used qualitative method as a way to analyze figurative language in selected song's lyrics from the album “AM” by Arctic Monkeys. The data in this research used collections of words within their categories of figurative language from Arctic Monkeys’ song lyrics. The result of this study showed types of figurative languages and most used types of figurative languages in selected song by Arctic monkey. There were five types of figurative languages that found in song lyric by Arctic Monkey AM album. There were methapor, simile, hyperbole, methonymy and synecdoche.

Key words: Figurative Languages, *AM* Album, Song Lyrics

A. INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a rhetorical or a stylistic tool that can be used to conceptualize imagery that is expressed by an author or writer. Dancygier (2017:28) explained that “figurative language is a study that conceptualizes the hidden figuration in literary works. Hence, figurative language is a non-literal language often found in literary works.” In literary works, Dancygier (2017:28) mentions that “figurative language is used as a way to create an empathetic and acute comparisons and expressions.” These comparisons and expressions used special effects or feelings in the language to create the essence of style and beauty. Figurative language is used in any form of communication, such as in daily conversation, articles, advertisements, novels, poems, song lyrics.

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on March 2022

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



Song is an interesting source to study language use, style, and idea. Song has two major components, the music as a companion and lyrics. Thompson and Russo (2004: 51) explained that a “song is a combination of melody and lyrics. This means that one cannot be without the other”. Similarly, Pradopo (2012: 11) stated that “lyric is a key element in a song that is used to bring out sentiments from the writer. This means that lyric is an integral part in a song and is used to help express the sentiments the writer tries to deliver.” Regarding lyrics in songs Turner (2009:70) mentioned “linguistic devices can be used as tools to transcend conventional expression. From the statements above, it can be said that lyrics are an essential tool used in a song that is used to artistically or aesthetically express the writer's idea.”

There were some studies on figurative language in songs. First is An Analysis of Figurative Language in The Song Lyrics by Zain written by Qurrotul'ain (2013). It analyzed the quantity of Figurative Language in the songs created by Maher Zain. The result of the studies is that Maher Zain used hyperbole the most. The second study is Figurative Language Analysis in Five John Legend's Songs by Khadijah (2016). In this study, she tried to find what kinds of figurative language that were used in 5 John Legend's songs and their contextual meanings. The results were hyperbole is the most used figurative language in the five John Legend songs and that it is used to exemplify situations. The latest study is An Analysis of Figurative Language Found on The Song Lyric by Taylor Swifts Speak Now Album by Listiani (2015). She tried to find the most used figurative language which is hyperbole.

There are some of the Arctic Monkeys' songs have topped playlists on song-playing platforms around the world. The song lyrics used in this research are unique. The Arctic Monkey were considered as the trendsetter in the way emerging bands promote themselves and reach the market via online. Thus, it makes the researcher interested to analyze the selected song from arctic monkeys' lyrics. Theoretically, this study also aims to have an impact on subsequent research. It means that this research give contribution to other researcher that want to analyze study about figurative language. It helps as a reference to other researcher.

Stylistics is the study of distinctive styles found in particular literary genres that can be used to dissect ideas from the writer. According to Leech (1969) explains that :

“The term 'style' is used in linguistics to describe the choices which language makes available to a user, above and beyond the choices necessary for the simple expression of a meaning. Linguistic form can be interpreted as a set of possibilities for the production of texts, and thereby linguistic form makes possible linguistic style. Stylistics is the study of linguistic style, whereas (theoretical) Linguistics is the study of linguistic form. Linguistic form is generated from the components of language (sounds, parts of words, and words) and consists of the representations-phonetic, phonological, morphological,

syntactic, semantic etc. - which together form a code by which what we say or write has a specific meaning” (Leech:1969:43)

According to Warner (2013: 363-364) explains that “stylistic theories could help scholars to find out how the used of style in a language can express meaning found in texts.” This notion is also supported by Simpson (2004:3) who described the act of doing a stylistic analysis as a way to explore the art or the creativity that lies in the language used in literary works. Figurative language is a style of language that focuses on the aesthetical or artistic way of explaining or comparing a subject rather than being literal. The figure of speech is often used in literary works such as novels, poems, prose, song lyrics, etc. Montgomery et al., (2007:117) stated that figure of speech is the non-literal uses of language in literary works. This means that figurative language is used as a way to express meaning using non-literal expressions.

Due to the non-literal nature of figurative language, it can be said that it used abstract or imaginative expressions. Lems (2018: 66) explained that writers used figurative language as a way to help readers and listeners to immerse themselves into the abstract words, which help them understand the meaning that the writer tried to express. This means that using the abstract or non-literal expressions used in figurative language can help the writer express the meaning clearly towards the listener and reader.

Similarly, Risdianto (2011:33) also stated that figurative language is a style of language used to make a comparison. This can be seen in metaphors and similes. This means that comparing things with imagery invokes imagination. This also means instead of abstractly the meaning will be complex and meaningful.

In song lyrics, many linguistic perspectives can be used to analyze them. From a semantic perspective can be used to analyze lyrics. It analyzed the lyrics using polysemy and synonymy. Another linguistic perspective that can be used to analyze song lyrics is Stylistic. Researchers used stylistic as a way to explain literary works and the relation between language and its artistic function. This means that figurative language can be analyzed using stylistic theory. This research will see figurative language in slow rock music selected song by Arctic Monkey. This study also will see the type of figurative language in slow rock music and the use of figurative language in the lyrics help to build the the messages conveyed in the selected song lyrics by Arctic Monkey.

In conclusion, figurative language is a language style that focuses on a figurative meaning rather than the literal meaning. The figurative language also mainly focuses on the aesthetic or the artistic style of the language. This can be seen by the use of imagery. This chapter discusses Figurative language such as Metaphor, Simile, Personification, and Hyperbole.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used used the qualitative method as a way to analyze figurative language in a selected song's lyrics from the album “AM” by Arctic Monkeys. Qualitative content analysis is a way of understanding how a human

perceive meanings or understanding something (Bengtsson, 2016: 8). By using qualitative content analysis, the researcher was categorize and draw out the meaning or idea from the data collected and make logical conclusions.

The source of the data of this research were the six song lyrics from the album "AM" created by Arctic Monkeys. The song lyrics are "R U Mine?", "Do I Wanna Know?", "Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?", "One for the Road", "Arabella", and "Snap Out of It". The data in this research used collections of words within their categories of figurative language from Arctic Monkeys' song lyrics.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The finding data analysis lyrics and the selecting the figurative language in selected song lyrics help the readers understand what are provided by the researcher. This analysis used 5 song lyric by arctic monkey. This chapter presents types of figurative languages and most used types of figurative languages in selected song by Arctic monkey.

1. Types Of Figurative Language

1.1 Methapor

A. Song Analysis- *Why'd You Only Call When You're High?*

This is one of the songs lyric that has methapor in it. The title *why'd you only call when you're high* give the explanation about the dissappointment of something. In word *High* means something abstract which can be explain in literal way. It kinds of analogy that community uses to explain someone who is "drunk". Thus, the word *high* help to explain two different things to help describe the subject using the imagery.

"Why'd you only call when you're high?"

"Hi, why'd you only call when you're high?" (Why'd you only call when you're high Song,12-13 lines)

The explanation about the word *high* which used by the singer was to explain that the speaker was upset about his/her ex-girlfriend/boyfriend. It is because the Ex only contact when she or he get drunk. It means that the Ex only need when in temporary situation. The word of tall is an expression as in case demonstrates that the songwriter who needed to induce in contact to ex-lover due to the songwriter feel chafed on his ex-lover in which fair do conversation or call at time that they were not sober.

B. Song Analysis- *Arabella*

This arabella song is about space aged lover named Arabella serves as track four on the Arctic Monkeys' 5th album *AM*. It furthers the album's motif of passion's incessant pull, both for better and worse, with the titular woman's unavoidable appeal. Thus, in this song lyric found a methpor of type figurative language. Int this song lyric, there is kind of transition of concrete into abstract things. There is the word of kiss which is something or activity that humans usually do each other using their lips and it is also a concrete thing whereas the

word of constellation is an abstract thing. Literally, according to Meriam Webster (2021) Constellation is a group of stars forming a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent form or identified with a mythological figure. Modern astronomers divide the sky into eighty-eight constellations with defined boundaries.

*“And her kiss the colour of a **constellation** falling into place”*
(Arabella Song, 19th lines)

The word give the explanation about how beautiful his lover lips. It is sparkling like the star in the sky. It gives explanation about ny of the groups of stars in the sky that seem from earth to form a pattern and have been given names that people can imagine. The word *constellations* give the songwriter purpose to describe the perfect lips that his lover has.

Another figurative language that found in Arabella song is in the sentence *But she’s a modern lover* (Arabella – line 14). In this lyric explains that “she” is the first idea as a topic, and the second idea is “modern lover” as an images. The point of similarity of “she” and “modern lover” is “a youthful”. The meaning of this lyric is explaining Arabella is an old woman but still act like a youthful. It means that the Arabella still looks energetic and young.

C. Song Analysis- *Do I Wanna Know*

Do I Wanna Know? (D.I.W.K) is the first track off the critically acclaimed album “AM”, released in 2013. With Turner’s husky, rough yet sweet voice, accompanied by simple electric guitar, electronic drums and bass guitar, D.I.W.K is a honest modern love ballad capturing a confusing, complex and perhaps unrequited romantic relationship. In this part, the song lyric of *Do I Wanna Know*, there is kind of transition of concrete into abstract things. There is found the word of feeling which is an something can be explain literally thing that every human own it. Whereas the word of *flows*, from the verb of *flow* is a concrete thing because it can be seen for every human. But, it is not the actual meaning and it is about the feeling which flowing into two directions by the feelings of do not want to let go but try to let go at the same time due to the songwriter has broken up to his lover.

“If this feeling flows both ways”

(Do I Wanna Know, 9th line)

Also, there is the word of heart which is an abstract thing whereas the word of open is a concrete thing because it usually used within conversation by the sentence as well as open the door. But, the word of open has the meaning as an expression whether is there still a feeling to the songwriter or opposite, because the songwriter’s relationship actually has already over.

“Been wondering if your hearts still open”

(Do I Wanna Know, 24th line)

This explains that *open* is not about something that allowing access, passage, or a view through an empty space; not closed or blocked up as usual thing. However, the word *heart still open* mean that if the lover still has the same feeling like they usually did or not have it anymore.

1.2 Methonymy

A. Song Analysis- *Do I Wanna Know*

In this song part, there is a lyric that used a way to substitute a word with another it which is closely related. There is sentence in the song lyric

“Are there some aces up your sleeves?”

(Do I Wanna Know? – line 4)

The lyric is one of the parts of Arctic Monkeys’ song entitled Do I Wanna Know in line 4. The word “Aces” is being used to refer to the word burden. The sentence explains that when people are playing card, so the ace is a special card that could be a killer for each player. The literal meaning is the singer that wondering to the woman that keep the secretes which assume as a burden that should be concealed and cared of by herself, no one knows who she really wants to be with, him or the other guy.

B. Song Analysis- *Why’d You Only Call Me When You’re High?*

In this analysis types of figurative language, there is a word in the song lyric that the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example *suit* for *business executive*, or the *track* for *horse racing*. It means that the word X stand for the word Y. In this part, the lyric in *why’d you call when you’re high* has methonymy.

“More I get through the gears incapable of making alright decisions”

(Why Do You Only Call Me When You’re High? – line 21).

The words “the gears” are meant to the bumpy conditioned that have an association with “the barrier”. The meaning of this lyric is the more he through the barrier, the more he confused to take alright decision.

1.3 Simile

In this analysis, a simile is one kinds of figurative language which is commonly recognizable with a comparison or it shows similarities between two different things. A simile is indicated by the words ‘like’ or ‘as’ to describe the similarities. In this part, there is only one song lyric that contained simile. The lyric that indicate the figurative meaning of simile can be seen in the following.

And her lips are like the galaxy’s edge

(Arabella – line 16).

This lyric also using the word “like” to compare the word “her lips” and “the galaxy’s edge”, which is it clear as simile. The galaxy’s edge is a colorful stripe of stars, gas, and dust whereas it is very beautiful. Lips is a part of human body especially in human face that usually noticed when talking with each other beside the eyes and gesture of that person. The meaning of this lyric is the admiration to the beautiful woman who is that is stunning. Therefore, the singer imagine the woman by the beautiful of the universe.

1.4 Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a language style that involves an overstatement of thoughts for the sake of emphasis. Hyperbole is words and phrases which describe expression that is not quite logically correct due to the exaggeration. There is only one song that found hyperbole in it. Here are the lyrics belong to figurative meaning of hyperbole found in Arctic Monkeys’ songs.

It’s an exploration she’s made of outer space

(Arabella – line 15).

The lyric explains that, it is impossible for the ordinary people to go to the outer space. It is usually only can doing by the astronaut. Outer space is where all of the planets, stars, galaxies, and other objects are found. It means the outer space is the place that really wide. The meaning of this lyric is Arabella has a lot of knowledge because of her experience that are so vast.

1.5 Synecdoche

Synecdoche is an interesting expression where, frequently, a portion of something is utilized to allude to its entirety. Synecdoche is a figurative language used as a way to substitute a whole with a part of the whole or vice versa. Here are the lyrics belong to figurative meaning of synecdoche found in Arctic Monkeys’ songs. From 6 song, there is only one that got synecdoche in it.

Under a spell you’re hypnotized

(Snap out of It – line 24).

The word “spell” refers to the whole part of seduction from another man. It means that the singer explain someone that songwriter mentione was under control of someone which she or he cannot do something. However, The singer explained about the girl who is hypnotized by someone with his words. The literal meaning of this lyric is the woman who is influenced of seduction by another men, she blinded by someone who is make her falling in love and want to forget the sing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the finding and discussion, there were five types of figurative languages that found in song lyric by Arctic Monkey AM album. There were methapor, simile, hyperbole, methonymy and synecdoche. Each of the figurative languages have different purposes to describe the lyric. The explanation about each types of figurative language already give the explanation about it. Metaphor is used as an implied comparison between two different things. A simile is indicated by the words 'like' or 'as' to describe the similarities. Methonymy is a figurative language used as a way to substitute a word with another it is closely related to. Hyperbole is words and phrases which describe expression that is not quite logically correct due to the exaggeration. Least, Synecdoche is a figurative language used as a way to substitute a whole with a part of the whole or vice versa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2009). A Glossary of Literary Terms. In *College Composition and Communication* (Ninth, Vol. 8, Issue 4). Wadsworth Cengage Learning. <https://doi.org/10.2307/354930>
- Aljadaan, N. (2018). Understanding Hyperbole. *Arab World English Journal*, October, 1–31.
- Ardhyanti, S. V., & Supriyatiningih, S. (2020). FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS IN CELINE DION'S SONG LYRICS FALLING INTO YOU ALBUM. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v3i1.p11-19>
- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>
- Dancygier, B. (2017). The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language. *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language*, 28–41. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672953>
- Intani, N. (2011). *Using Song Lyrics to Improve Students' Understanding on Simple Future Tense*.
- Khadijah, A. (2016). *Figurative Language Analysis in Five John Legend's Songs* [Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang]. <https://doi.org/10.5151/cidi2017-060>
- Leech, Geoffrey, and Short, M.H (2007). "Style in Fiction." *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose.*, Second Edi, Pearson Education Limited. doi:10.4324/9781315835525.
- Leech, G. (1969) *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* London: Longman.
- Montgomery, M., Durant, A., Fabb, N., Furniss, T., & Mills, S. (2007). Ways of Reading: Advanced Reading Skills for Students of English Literature. In *Law and Literature* (3rd ed., Vol. 22, Issue 3). Taylor & Francis e-Library. <https://doi.org/10.1525/lal.2010.22.3.491>
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistic: A Resource Book for Students* (P. Stockwell (ed.)). Taylor & Francis e-Library.