Figurative Language Used in Ed Sheeran's Song "Give Me Love"

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ABSTRACT

Figurative language is a language intended to create images, associations, or other effects in the minds of readers or listeners that go beyond the literal meaning of words. Although figurative language is often used to enhance the beauty of a song lyrics, not everyone who listens to a song can comprehend the message being sent. Misunderstanding can result from an improper understanding of figurative language. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types and meanings of figurative language in a song entitled "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to collect the data and identify the figurative language contained in the lyrics of "Give Me Love". The data were analyzed using the theory of figurative language by Johnson & Arp (2018) and Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963). The finding of this study shows that "Give Me Love" consists of 7 types of figurative language, namely simile, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy. Based on the analysis of the meaning, it can be concluded that figurative language can be used to convey messages in spoken and written form. Figurative language is very important in song lyrics to enhance the beauty of the song and convey the message to listeners.

Keywords: Figurative language, Give Me Love, lyrics, song

ABSTRAK

Bahasa kiasan adalah bahasa yang digunakan untuk menciptakan kesan, asosiasi, atau efek lain di benak pembaca atau pendengar yang melampaui makna harfiah dari kata-kata. Meskipun bahasa kiasan sering digunakan untuk meningkatkan keindahan lirik lagu, namun tidak semua orang yang mendengarkan lagu tersebut memahami pesan yang disampaikan. Kesalahpahaman dapat terjadi akibat pemahaman bahasa kiasan yang tidak tepat. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis dan makna bahasa kiasan dalam lagu "Give Me Love" karya Ed Sheeran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif untuk mengumpulkan data dan mengidentifikasi bahasa kiasan dalam lirik lagu Ed Sheeran. Data diambil dari lirik lagu "Give Me Love" karya Ed Sheeran. Data dianalisis menggunakan teori bahasa kiasan oleh Johnson & Arp (2018) dan Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963). Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa lirik lagu "Give Me Love" karya Ed Sheeran terdiri dari 7 jenis bahasa kiasan. Bahasa kiasan tersebut antara lain simile, personifikasi, hiperbola, metafora, ironi, sinekdoke, dan metonimi. Berdasarkan analisis makna, dapat disimpulkan bahwa bahasa kiasan dapat

digunakan untuk menyampaikan pesan dalam bentuk lisan dan tulisan. Bahasa kiasan sangat penting dalam lirik lagu untuk meningkatkan keindahan lagu dan menyampaikan pesan kepada pendengarnya.

Kata kunci: Bahasa kiasan, Give Me Love, lirik, lagu

INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary means of communication, which can be expressed orally, visually, or ortographically (Fitria, 2018). Language has many variations, which include a writing system that allows for sounds or other signs to be represented in it. According to Chaer (2014), language is a set of arbitrary sound symbols that members of social groups use to cooperate, communicate, and make early identifications. Language serves as a primary tool for communication between people. The communication process does not only involve each set of human actors, but also between objects which convey something—whether visually or otherwise—and people who act as the observer. The interplay of communication in such condition does not constantly occur in a clear and direct way. It might also happen in a more implicit manner through the utilization of figurative expression or figurative language.

According to Johnson & Arp (2018), figurative language is a language intended to create images, associations, or other effects in the minds of readers or listeners that go beyond the literal meaning of words. In other words, figurative language is used to convey a meaning that is not expressed directly and can also be used to express thoughts and ideas (Griffiths, 2006). Figurative language is often used in literary works (novels, films, proses, poems, songs, etc.) as an artistic tool which intensifies a work's aesthetic quality. Even though literature is commonly viewed as an aestheticized mirror of life (Putri, Molla, & Jamaludin, 2022), thus bearing a didactic or a realism, it is still laden with indirect language expression. This indirectness that figurative language brings can also be interpreted as a way to exercise thoughts and to cultivate a critical outlook on life (Danziger, 2020; Thibodeau, Matlock, & Flusberg, 2019).

Figurative language is often found in an object form which becomes the focus of this study, that is, a song. Song is counted as a literary work. A song is created to express the ideas of the songwriters and convey messages—personal, social, cultural, or even ideological—to the listeners (Damayanti & Agung, 2022). In establishing a communication to its listeners, figurative language plays a prominent role within the lyrics of a song. The songwriters put ideas into song lyrics by using figurative language to give an interesting impression to the listeners. Figurative language can also function as a way to "beautify" or improve the aesthetic

quality of a song (Hanisfi, Lestari, & Wageyono, 2022). This employment of figurative language bears not only an aesthetic purpose, but also cultural and sociological codes (Brand, Acerbi, & Mesoudi, 2019). Furthermore, the use of figurative language in songs is often met with misunderstanding and miscomprehension from listeners. Misunderstanding can result from an improper understanding of figurative language (Tiarawati & Ningsih, 2019).

In responding to the correlation between figurative language and songs, this study aims to find out the types of figurative language and analyze the meaning of figurative language found in a song entitled "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran. This song is chosen as an object due to its popularity as well as Ed Sheeran's known lyrical quality which is often met with misinterpretation (Astuti, 2020; Van Thao, 2021).

There are several related studies which base this research. The first study was written by Ramadhan (2022). This study analyzed the use of figurative language in *Maybelline's New York* video advertisements. The result of the study found that the tagline used in the advertisements enhanced the appeal of the product. Figurative language used creatively in a commercial can result in compelling, engaging, and memorable messages. The figure of speech will stick in the minds of the customers as a reminder that the product helps them achieve their wishes or desires. The connection between enticement and figurative language is a key idea which this current research considers as a pivotal idea.

The next study related to figurative language was conducted by Teovila et al. (2022). This study analyzed the use of figurative language in dialogues within a novel entitled *Rainbow Troops*. The result of the study showed that there were several types of figurative language used in the novel, namely hyperbole, metaphor, metonymy, simile, and personification. The language styles were used to strengthen the moral values of the story. Another study regarding figurative language in this novel was also conducted by Melly & Hilman (2022). The findings indicate that the sentences in the novel use several types of figurative language, including 34% simile, 25% hyperbole, 21% metaphor, 8% personification, and 2% idiom.

An analysis of figurative language in news headlines was conducted by Kasma et al. (2021). This study examined the types and meanings of figurative language used in CNN news headlines. Based on the result of the study, it was found that several types of figurative language were used in CNN news headlines, namely metonymy, simile, hyperbole, and metaphor. Furthermore, there were three types of meaning found, that is conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, and social meaning.

The previous studies are relevant to the current study due to the similar topic being analyzed regarding figurative language. However, the four previous studies analyzed figurative language in advertisements, novels, and news headlines, while the current study analyzed

figurative language in song lyrics. It is hoped, through analyzing figurative language within the chosen object in this study, a further understanding upon the forms and significances of figurative language in any kind of object can be grasped.

METHOD

This study applied qualitative method to analyze the data since it involved descriptive sentences in the analysis. Sugiyono (2015) states that this type of research method is a scientific way to gather data for particular uses and objectives. The primary data was "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran. The song was released in 2011 and told the story of a relationship that fell apart. The data was collected through several steps: (1) listening to the song and identifying the figurative words of the song, (2) downloading the song lyrics from the internet, (3) reading the song lyrics to understand the thoughts and ideas expressed, (4) highlighting the figurative language contained in the lyrics and classifying it into types the figurative language. After the data collection was finished, the data were analyzed using the theory of figurative language by Johnson & Arp (2018) and Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963). Furthermore, the meaning of figurative language was analyzed using the theory by Hurford (2007).

FINDINGS

This section discussed the findings regarding the types and meanings of figurative language in the song "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran. This study found seven types of figurative language in the song lyrics. They are simile, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy. Table 1 shows the result of the analysis.

Table 1. The types and meanings of figurative
language in the song "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran

Types of Figurative Language	Figurative Language in the Song Lyrics	Explanation
Simile	"Give me love like her"	The use of 'like' to compare love to a woman.
Personification	"After my blood is drowning in alcohol"	Using 'blood' as an object as if it can perform actions like human beings.
Hyperbole	"Cause lately I've been craving more"	Using the word 'craving' to exaggerate.
Metaphor	"Give a little time to me or burn this out"	The use of the word 'time' as a warning or an ultimatum.

Irony	"Paint splattered teardrops on my shirt"	The incongruity between expectation and reality.
Synecdoche	"We'll play hide and seek to turn this around"	A part of something is used to represent a whole.
Metonymy	"And that I'll fight my corner"	Using the word 'corner' to represent an object or a concept

SIMILE

According to Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963), simile is a figure of speech that compares two ideas in an imaginative and descriptive way. In everyday speech, similes typically reflect straightforward comparisons based on the natural world or familiar items. Comparison words such as 'like' and 'as' are commonly used in similes.

"Give me love like her"

In this sentence, the word 'like' is used to compare the concept of love to a woman. Love is a strong positive feeling that is felt by a person. But in the song lyrics, the author compares it to his former lover in the past. The meaning of the sentence refers to a previous partner the singer once had and still could not forget her love. He is still there and crying for her but knows that the girl he now loves and wants to try to move on with. Through this use of simile, it is interpreted that the song conjures up a sense of never-to-be-forgotten feeling as well as regret. Thus, it is similar to other studies of songs which find that simile is often utilized to evoke such senses (Hulu, Sembiring, & Tarigan, 2021; Pangestu, Buansari, & Alifiah, 2022).

PERSONIFICATION

According to Johnson & Arp (2018), personification is a figurative language used the describe inanimate objects that are lifeless, as if the inanimate object has properties and characteristics like humans.

"After my blood is drowning in alcohol"

The lyrics of the songs use an object 'blood' as if it has the characteristics of human beings. This sentence uses the action verb 'drowning' and refers to the word 'blood' that performs the action. The verb 'drowning' is an action that can be done by humans. The meaning in the sentence is sadness over separation, so the singer drinks alcohol to hide his sadness or to relieve his sadness. The word 'blood' can also be interpreted as a way for the personage in the song to

71

express the level of hardship that he is facing. This is in line to the general association of blood to trouble and even brutality (Aman, Pratiwi, & Suastini, 2022).

HYPERBOLE

According to Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963), hyperbole is a type of figurative language used to arouse strong emotions or leave a lasting impression.

*"Cause **lately** I've been **craving** more"*

The lyric of the song is classified as hyperbole because there is the word 'craving' that shows strong feelings. The meaning of the lyric is that the singer asks the girl he loves to give him some level of affection that he strongly needs. He does not show it to her, referring to his past lover, who gave him the affection he craved. The proof of his lack of affection is that he is never there for her when she needs him. This part corroborates the previous figurative expression of personification.

METAPHOR

According to Johnson & Arp (2018), a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses analogies to describe something in the form of a comparison.

"Give a little time to me or burn this out"

The song lyric is classified as a metaphor because there is the word 'time'. The intended meaning of this figurative language in the song lyrics is about ultimatums. Ultimatums are warnings or final demands by giving them a time limit to solve a problem.

IRONY

According to Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963), irony is a figure of speech that contains allusions to something that is different between what is expressed and reality.

"Paint-splattered teardrops on my shirt"

This part is classified as ironic because of the expression 'paint splattered in tears on my shirt'. This is different from appearance and reality. In short, the man was really hurt, so tears splattered and ran down his shirt. He cried and never forgot his sadness. The meaning in the lyrics of this song refers to his former lover that he still loves. The paint-splattered tears

symbolize something he cannot get rid of like stains. He cries for asking but this one he can never erase or forget. However, this part offers a different evocation compared to the previous gloom signs through its use of 'paint-splattered'. It gives a colorful sense rather than darkness. Thus, it contradicts and intensifies the irony of the song (Simatupang & Supri, 2022).

SYNECDOCHE

According to Johnson & Arp (2018), synecdoche is a type of figurative language in which a part of something is used to represent a whole.

*"We'll **play hide** and **seek** to turn this around"*

The lyric of this song is classified as a synecdoche because there is an expression "play hide and seek". Hide and seek is a game about hiding and being found. The meaning of the lyrics of this song is that they avoid each other until they find each other.

METONYMY

According to Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963), metonymy is a figure of speech that uses phrases with other things that are closely linked to something to describe it.

"And that I'll fight my corner"

The song lyrics can be classified as metonymy due to the use of the word 'corner'. A corner is where two walls in a room meet. So the meaning of the lyrics of this song is about a lover who refuses to be with him until he stops drinking, but he is deeply in love with her, but she wants him to fight his corner or fight his desire to drink.

DISCUSSION

Ed Sheeran's song "Give Me Love" is a captivating composition that not only showcases his exceptional songwriting skills but also highlights the profound significance of figurative language. By employing vivid imagery, metaphors, and similes throughout the song, Sheeran crafts a powerful narrative that resonates with listeners on a deep emotional level. In this essay, we will explore the various ways in which figurative language enhances the lyrical content and amplifies the overall impact of "Give Me Love."

One of the key aspects of figurative language in "Give Me Love" is its ability to evoke strong emotions. Sheeran employs metaphors like "paint splattered teardrops" and "a bleeding heart," creating powerful visual images that convey the intensity of pain and longing. This

figurative language invites listeners to empathize with the protagonist's emotional journey, establishing a profound connection between the song and its audience.

Figurative language also plays a crucial role in emphasizing the theme of love and its transformative power. Through phrases like "give me love like never before," Sheeran employs metaphors to portray love as a force capable of healing and changing lives. This figurative language emphasizes the significance of love in the song, underscoring its transformative and redemptive qualities. In addition to its emotional impact, figurative language in "Give Me Love" contributes to the song's lyrical beauty. The use of metaphors and similes creates a rich tapestry of imagery that captures the imagination. This strengthens the association of figurative language to love in Sheeran's other songs which becomes his distinctive style (Sinaga, Siburian, & Silaban, 2021; Yansyah, Arifin, & Setyowati, 2022).

Furthermore, figurative language serves as a storytelling device in "Give Me Love." By utilizing metaphors and similes, Sheeran weaves a narrative that unfolds through the song's lyrics. This figurative language allows the listener to become an active participant in the story, as they navigate the protagonist's emotions and experiences. Figurative language also adds depth and complexity to the song's thematic exploration of longing and yearning. Through lines like "give me love, my mind is heavy" and "give me love, my heart's got a hole," Sheeran conveys a sense of profound longing, making the listener acutely aware of the protagonist's emotional state.

Moreover, figurative language in "Give Me Love" is found to contain a sense of universaility. By employing metaphors and similes that tap into fundamental human experiences, the song conveys an affective state which resonates to all kinds of listeners. The vivid imagery created through figurative language transcends personal boundaries, making the song relatable and accessible to a diverse audience. The utilization of figurative language in the chosen object also emphasizes contradiction that the persona of the song feels. This latter idea supports Prandi's (2017) notion of figurative language as a tool to valorize contradiction.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the researchers conclude that the lyrics of the song "Give Me Love" by Ed Sheeran consist of 7 types of figurative language. They are simile, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy. Based on the analysis of the meaning, it can be concluded that figurative language can be used to convey implied messages that are aesthetic and contradictory. Figurative language is very important in song lyrics to enhance the beauty of the song and convey the message to the listeners. This research may serve as a reference for other researchers in conducting future studies. This study is limited to the analysis of figurative language in song lyrics. The researchers recommended that future researchers

broaden the scope of their work by exploring other areas of figurative language in other forms of literary work and by employing a wider range of linguistic methodologies.

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