

THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN LANA DEL REY'S SONGS BASED ON *TROPICO* VIDEO

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ABSTRACT

Figurative language is a form of communication that creates a memorable impact on the listener through a certain context. To create meaningful impacts in communication, people use figurative language in songs. This paper aimed to explore the figurative language used in the 'Tropico' video, which consists of three songs, namely "Body Electric," "Gods and Monsters," and "Bel Air" and to examine the contextual meanings of the three songs. The data were collected from the lyrics of the three songs. The data were analyzed through a qualitative descriptive method. The results showed that the types of figurative language that were used in the three songs were metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles, alliterations, metonymies, oxymorons, allusions, repetitions, symbols, imageries, and apostrophes. The use of figurative language in the songs is relatable to the theme of the whole short music video.

Keywords: figurative language, contextual meaning, song lyric

ABSTRAK

Bahasa kiasan adalah bentuk komunikasi yang menciptakan dampak yang dapat diingat pada pendengarnya melalui konteks tertentu. Untuk menciptakan pengaruh yang berarti dalam komunikasi, orang menggunakan bahasa kiasan dalam lagu. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam video 'Tropico' yang terdiri dari tiga lagu, yaitu "Body Electric", "Gods and Monsters", dan "Bel Air" serta untuk mengkaji makna kontekstual dari ketiga lagu tersebut. Data dikumpulkan dari lirik ketiga lagu tersebut. Analisis data dilakukan dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam ketiga lagu tersebut adalah metafora, simile, personifikasi, hiperbola, aliterasi, metonimi, oksimoron, kiasan, pengulangan, simbol, imageries, dan apostrof. Penggunaan bahasa kiasan dalam lagu-lagu tersebut terkait dengan tema keseluruhan video musik pendek.

Kata kunci: bahasa kiasan, makna kontekstual, lirik lagu

A. INTRODUCTION

Language cannot be separated from humans' life. According to Wardhaugh (2006) "language is what the members of a particular society speak". People need language as a tool for communicating, getting connected to other people, and gaining information. It can be said that a language is a powerful tool for human in conveying thoughts and ideas, expressing emotions or feelings that can be in written or verbal form. The example of the

written form of language can be found in various texts like poems, newspapers, novels, and magazines. While the verbal form of language can be formed in speech, song, preach, and conversation. Thus, as human beings, language will involve people in social communication and meaningful interaction that make us impossible to live without language.

To make the communication memorable humans sometimes do not always provide the literal language either in oral or written form, yet they also utilize the figurative language. That the use of figurative language is different from the basic meaning in literal, the speaker utters something different from the figurative language. Therefore, the study of the meaning of the language is closely related to semantics. Through semantics study, people will find it helpful since it will help them to understand that the ideas or concepts of certain language can be transferred from the speaker to the mind of the hearer as if it is a form of one or another language (Lyons, 1984, p.136).

In figurative language, the words are interpreted differently from the literal language. The most related form of communication that is used figurative language is in newspaper articles, novels, poems, advertisements, song lyrics, for example. To understand the figurative meaning better, one should go beyond, equip herself/himself with a certain background of knowledge and provide imagination in interpreting it. Besides, one can understand the mission of the use of figurative language in a certain form of communication, whether it is for creating imaginative pleasure, providing sensuous literary works, or adding emotional sensitivity (Perrine, 1982: 61).

The song is extremely popular with people since people love to listen to it. Not only to entertain people, but a song can also be useful for teaching and activate students' participation in the class (Apsari, 2012). As looking at the use of figurative language in song lyrics and its functions in human life, the researchers purposely chose one of the American singers that present figurative language in the lyrics. Specifically, the researchers will use Lana Del Rey's songs as a part of this research's object. Since Lana Del Rey is popular with the retro-60s-pop songs which she mostly wrote the lyrics by herself made her authentic and unique. From the albums that she produced since 2011, she ventured into a short music film called 'Tropico' which was released on December 4, 2013. This short music film is based on the Biblical story of sin and redemption that starring Lana Del Rey herself as Eve and Shaun Ross as Adam. The three songs entitled "Body Electric," "Gods and Monsters," and "Bel Air" are a part of this short music film which is taken from the 'Paradise' album. However, figurative language is a useful tool for a singer in writing the lyrics.

Some previous studies by Arifah (2016), Fitria. N (2018), and Dewi (2020) discussed a similar topic on the use of figurative language in song lyrics and some songs from the singers. Meanwhile, the researchers are interested to discuss not only the types of figurative language but also the contextual meaning that related to the three songs in 'Tropico' film. Based on Nursalihah & Karevati in Ardhyanti & Supriyatningsih (2020), the contextual meaning is the meaning of the words that can be interpreted in a certain context. In other words, contextual meaning represents the meaning that can be different based on the situation in a certain context. This research is expected to give people a better understanding of the three songs "Body Electric," "Gods and Monsters," and "Bel Air" which includes in 'Tropico' short music film. Since the researchers believe that when we understand the lyrics better, more people can appreciate the works of an artist.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Yule (2019), “semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. In semantics analysis, there is always attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might think they mean, or want them to mean, on a particular occasion.” The part of a study in linguistics that focused on the meaning in language is semantics. The meaning that is being interpreted in semantics is based on the context that can convey effectively and based on what the speaker says.

In a semantic study, meaning can be one of the valuable elements to study since it is related to communication. Through certain meanings that can be conveyed, the communication will become more powerful. In response to that, meaning in a certain context can be interpreted as nonliteral words since they have figures of speech or figurative language. Based on Syafitri & Marliton cited in Perrine and Thomas (1983, p.81), figurative language can be used as persuasive language. It is believed that figurative language adds an extra dimension to the language that can captivate the reader's attention. The figurative language also functions to beautify the words and highlight meanings in a certain context. For those reasons, figurative language can be a valuable aspect in building the atmosphere for readers.

Types of Figurative Language

According to Abrams (1981, p. 63), “figurative language (figurative language) is a distortion of language use by speakers of understanding the language used every day (ordinary), deviations from the standard language, or distortion sense of the word, a deviation of a series of words to obtain some special meaning”. The use of figurative language is different from the daily language and sometimes it allows the speaker to violate the standards to create a meaningful message. Features in figurative language are often considered as poetic features that are functioned in a certain context which builds a dramatic effect and a lively atmosphere (1999, p. 96). In creating the mental images and sense impressions towards the words, phrases, symbols, and ideas, the figurative language can be found in the poem, novel, or song lyrics. However, the figurative language found in a certain form of text has some varieties which are:

a. Metaphor

The word *metaphor* is taken from the Greek word “meta” means over and “pherein” means to carry, which provides an analogy, similarity, and relation between two things. According to Abrams (1999, p.97), “in a metaphor, a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison.” To compare between two unlike things, in a statement the form unites them as if they are one unit. What makes metaphor different from another figurative language, is because the statement with metaphor does not include a connective word, such as ‘like’, ‘as’, and ‘than’ which indicates the implicit comparison between two objects. For example, *he is the apple of my eye*.

b. Simile

Simile comes from Latin word means like. Different from metaphor, in simile, to compare between two things is done explicitly through the use of the word “like” and “as”. As Abrams states “in a simile, a comparison between two distinctly different things is explicitly indicated by the word ‘like’ or ‘as’.” For example, *she is like a goddess*.

c. Personification

In personification, the expression is used to give attributes of a human being to an animate object. The word personification is derived from a Latin word that means "persona" or person or actor and "fix" means make. According to Abrams (1999:99), "personification is in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings." For example, *the fire eats the building alive*.

d. Apostrophe

Apostrophe is used to address someone's absence or something non-human as if they are alive and have human characteristics (Perine, p.67). Apostrophe is also a form of personification that express the directly address the animate things as it were human. For example, *this is my letter to the world*.

e. Hyperbole

According to Abrams (1999:120), in hyperbole, there is an overstatement or an exaggeration of the truth. The use of hyperbole depends on the context, it can be used in a formal context or a casual one in order to make an ironic or comic effect. In short, hyperbole can be said as an extravagant statement that evokes a great impression which indicates strong feelings over a statement. For example, *this bag weighs a ton*.

f. Allusion

According to Peter (2002), an allusion is an expression of referring a thing to a particular figure, event, place, or anything that can be said as a reference. In other words, an allusion is a word reference that the speaker wants the reader to be familiar with. For example, *I'm going to call myself an old McDonald*.

g. Repetition

Repetition refers to words that purposely are being repeated in the text and the form in repetition itself formulates certain tense. According to Reaske (1966:39), repetition is a way of emphasizing meaning through words, phrases, or sentences. For example, *some are old, some are new*.

h. Alliteration

Alliteration refers to a repetition that happened in the first consonant sounds at the beginning of the word which followed by another two or more words afterward. This feature is closely related to some format in advertising, tongue twist idioms, or poems (Fitria, 2018). For example, *she sells seashells by the seashore*.

i. Symbolism

Symbolism is one kind of figure of speech that presents symbols for certain objects such as animals, plants, or things to substitute something. Symbolism is created as a personal reference towards a certain experience (Alm-Arvius, 2003). For example, a *rose* is a symbol of *love*.

j. Imagery

Imagery is presented as a sensory experience through language. Perrine (1969, p.54) states there are seven types of imagery which are visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, organic, kinesthetics, and gustatory. Visual describes what our eyes can catch, "the bird flies high." Auditory describes the experience that the ears can have, "the birds were chirping." Olfactory describes the experience that the nose can have, "this is a warm-scented beach." Tactile describes the experience in form of hardness, wetness, warmth, and cold. Organic describes the internal sensation that a body can have. Kinesthetics describes the movement. The last is gustatory which describes taste.

k. Oxymoron

Oxymoron is one kind of figure speech that form represents a contrast expression between things. Dennis (1966: p. 66) states that oxymoron is a joint statement that contradicts each other. It is almost the same as the antithesis yet it has a lower idea than the antithesis. For example, "*the higher and lower class has some similarities.*"

C. RESEARCH METHOD

To conduct this research, the researchers used descriptive with a qualitative approach and mainly focused on the song lyrics as the source of the data. The descriptive method will help the researchers to describe the situation, events that accumulate by the basic data then continue by the analysis and reasons. Qualitative research is procedures that help to produce descriptive data in the form of written words or oral words from the object that is being observed. This descriptive research is using a literal expression in describing the events in the text (Fitria as cited in Azwar 2010; Harsono 2000:115). In this research, the researchers discussed the figurative language expressed in Lana Del Rey's lyrics of songs by identifying the contextual meaning between the three songs. This study used a qualitative approach to describe the type of figurative language based on the occurrence presented in the three songs entitled "*Body Electric*," "*Gods and Monsters*," and "*Bel Air*". The data of this research include the phrase found in the three songs. Data sources are information and evidence gathered through experimentation that can be analyzed. By applying the theories that related to the focus of the research, the researchers formulated some steps, which are:

1. Reading the whole song lyrics and selecting the parts of them which contain figurative language.
2. Classifying the findings from the lyrics according to the types of figurative language.
3. Forming the number of occurrences from each kind of figurative meaning.
4. Examining the dominant figurative language in the data.
5. Interpreting the data by focusing on the contextual meaning of the three songs.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the three song lyrics entitled "*Body Electric*," "*Gods and Monsters*," and "*Bel Air*", the researchers made the coding of the title; SL 1 (Song Lyrics 1) is "*Body Electric*"; SL 2 (Song Lyrics 2) is "*Gods and Monsters*" and the researchers used letter (SL) stands for a song lyric, symbol Σ (Sigma) is the referent for a total of findings. There are some types of figurative language found in the three songs, which are: metaphor, simile,

personification, hyperbole, alliteration, metonymy, oxymoron, allusion, repetition, symbol, imagery, and apostrophe.

In song lyrics entitled "*Body Electric*", the researchers found 6 allusions, 1 imagery, 1 metaphor, 6 repetitions, and 1 personification. In "*Gods and Monsters*", there were 1 symbol, 3 metaphors, 1 alliteration, 5 similes, 1 hyperbole, 2 allusions, and 1 metonymy. In the third song lyric entitled "*Bel Air*", 1 apostrophe, 1 simile, 1 oxymoron, 1 metaphor, 1 personification, 1 alliteration, and 2 hyperbole. The total of the findings was 43 sentences that contain figurative language. The most figurative language that is found in the three lyrics is an allusion, simile, and metaphor.

Table 1. Types of figurative language

Figurative Language	Lyric	Founds in Song Lyrics	Σ
Metaphor	"Mary prays the rosary <i>for my broken mind</i> ", " <i>I'm on fire</i> ", " <i>Life imitates art</i> ", "I was <i>an angel</i> living <i>in the garden of evil</i> ", " <i>You're divine</i> "	SL 1, SL 2, SL 3	6
Simile	"Shining <i>like</i> a fiery beacon", "I'm living <i>like</i> Jim Morrison", " <i>Like</i> a groupie incognito, posing as a real singer", and "So I run, <i>like</i> I'm mad, to heaven's door".	SL 2, SL 3	7
Personification	" <i>Monaco's</i> my mother", " <i>Diamonds</i> are my bestest friend", " <i>Heaven</i> is my baby", and " <i>Roses, Bel Air</i> , take me there".	SL 1, SL 3	4
Hyperbole	"No one's gonna <i>take my soul away</i> ", "Lead me to war with <i>your brilliant direction</i> ", and "Walk in the way of <i>my soft resurrection</i> ".	SL 2, SL 3	4
Alliteration	" <i>Screwed up, scared</i> , doing anything that I needed", " <i>Idol</i> of roses, <i>iconic</i> soul"	SL 2, SL 3	2
Metonymy	"You tell me <i>life isn't that hard</i> "	SL 2	1
Oxymoron	"For <i>the violentest kind of love</i> anywhere out there"	SL 3	1
Allusion	" <i>Elvis</i> is my daddy", " <i>Marilyn's</i> my mother", " <i>Jesus</i> is my bestest friend", " <i>Whitman</i> is my daddy", and " <i>Grand Ole Opry</i> ", " <i>It's innocent lost</i> "	SL 1	9
Repetition	"I sing the body electric, I sing the body electric...", "Sing that body electric, Sing that body electric...".	SL 1	6
Symbol	"In the <i>land of gods and monsters</i> "	SL 2	1
Imagery	" <i>Dancing and grinding</i> in the pale moonlight",	SL 1	1
Apostrophe	" <i>Gargoyles</i> standing at the front of your gate"	SL3	1

The three songs in the short music video “*Tropico*” which are “*Body Electric*,” “*Gods and Monsters*,” and “*Bel Air*”, are premiered at the Cinerama Dome in Hollywood, California on December 4, 2013. These three songs are taken from the “*Paradise*” album which was also nominated for Grammy Awards in 2014. The main theme of these three songs is "the Biblical story of sin and redemption." Through some elements in figurative language and the contextual meaning, the researchers described the relation between the three songs.

Body Electric

Body Electric is the first song that appeared in the “*Tropico*.” This lyric was written by Lana Del Rey and Rick Nowels. The song was released in 2012 by EMI music publishing. The song consists of 54 lines which are divided into 9 stanzas.

*“Elvis is my daddy, Marilyn's my mother
Jesus is my bestest friend
We don't need nobody, 'cause we got each other
Or at least I pretend”*

*“We get down every Friday night
Dancin' and grindin' in the pale moonlight
Grand Ole Opry, feelin' alright
Mary prays the rosary for my broken mind”*

*“I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric, baby
I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
I'm on fire
I sing the body electric”*

*“Whitman is my daddy, Monaco's my mother
Diamonds are my bestest friend
Heaven is my baby, suicide's her father
Opulence is the end”*

*“We get down every Friday night
Dancin' and grindin' in the pale moonlight
Grand Ole Opry, feelin' alright
Mary prays the rosary for my broken mind”*

*“I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric, baby
I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
I'm on fire
I sing the body electric”*

“My clothes still smell like you

And all the photographs say you're still young
I pretend I'm not hurt
And go about the world like I'm havin' fun"

"We get crazy every Friday night
Drop it like it's hot in the pale moonlight
Grand Ole Opry, feelin' alright
Mary swain' softly, to her heart's delight"

"I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric, baby
I sing the body electric
I sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
Sing the body electric
I'm on fire
Sing the body electric"

"*Body Electric*" lyric describes the first phase of the speaker's life. The first line uses allusion, to mention the speaker's relation to family and friends. The speaker uses *Marilyn*, *Elvis*, and *Jesus* to refer to the speaker's favorite person to live with. In the third stanza, the speaker also refers to some names which are considered as the name of a person and non-animated name that the speaker considered has characteristics as human. The speaker mentions *Whitman* as the speaker uses an allusion and *Monaco*, *Diamonds*, *Heaven*, and *Suicide* as an expression of personification. The speaker keeps mentioning some figures to emphasize which she was in heaven as she were with some dead people (*Elvis*, *Marilyn*, *Whitman*) that she considered as her parents and a figure that adhered to certain religion who is *Jesus* as her friend. In this state of life, she also describes her life toward *Whitman's* poem since she keeps mentioning "*I sing the body electric*" which describes the relationship between her body and her soul. The speaker also expresses her feeling through the activity that she does "*Dancing and grinding in the pale moonlight.*" In short, this phase represents her happy life when she was with her family and friends and how she grateful for the good place she came from.

"*In the land of Gods and Monsters*
I was an angel
Livin' in the garden of evil
Screwed up, scared, doing anything that I needed
Shinin' like a fiery beacon"

"You got that medicine I need
Fame, liquor, love, give it to me slowly
Put your hands on my waist, do it softly
Me and God, we don't get along
So now I sing"

"No one's gonna *take my soul away*
I'm living like Jim Morrison
Headed towards a fucked up holiday
Motel sprees, sprees and I'm singing
"Fuck yeah, give it to me"

"This is Heaven, what I truly want"
It's innocence lost
Innocence lost"

"In the land of Gods and Monsters
 I was an angel
 Looking to get fucked hard
Like a groupie incognito, posing as a real singer
Life imitates art"
 "You got that medicine I need
 Dope, shoot it up, straight to the heart, please
 I don't really wanna know what's good for me
 God's dead, I said, "Baby, that's alright with me"

"No one's gonna take my soul away
 I'm living like Jim Morrison
 Headed towards a fucked-up holiday
 Motel sprees, sprees and I'm singing
 "Fuck yeah, give it to me"
 "This is Heaven, what I truly want"
 It's innocence lost
 Innocence lost"

"When you talk, it's like a movie
 And you're making me crazy
 'Cause life imitates art
 If I get a little prettier, can I be your baby?
 You tell me, "Life isn't that hard"

"No one's gonna take my soul away
 I'm living like Jim Morrison
 Headed towards a fucked-up holiday
 Motel sprees, sprees and I'm singing
 "Fuck yeah, give it to me"
 "This is Heaven, what I truly want"
 It's innocence lost
 Innocence lost"

In the second lyric which was entitled "*Gods and Monsters*," the speaker describes her relation is no longer close to God since she uses "*In the land of Gods and Monsters, I was an angel*" as the symbol of her past. In this second phase, she emphasizes more on how she wants to seek happiness in the world. She expresses her life like a famous figure named *James Morrison* who can live a life that she wants with this phrase "*Headed towards a fucked-up holiday*." She also expresses her daily activity that she thinks ideal to give her happiness by using simile toward this phrase also "*Like a groupie incognito, posing as a real singer*." The life that the speaker chooses is referred to as "*innocence lost*" as an allusion in biblical context from Genesis 3:7-11 which is related to sin that can destroy innocence. In short, this second phase of life represents the speaker's exploration of the worldly life that people have.

"Gargoyles standing at the front of your gate
Trying to tell me to wait

But I can't wait to see you”

“So I run, like I'm mad, to heaven's door
I don't wanna be bad
I won't cheat you no more”
“Roses, Bel Air, take me there
I've been waiting to meet you
Palm trees, in the light, I can see, late at night
Darling I'm waiting to greet you
Come to me baby”

“Spotlight, bad baby, you've got a flair
For the violentest kind of love anywhere out there”

“Mon amour, sweet child of mine
You're divine
Didn't anyone ever tell you
It's okay to shine?”

“Roses, Bel Air, take me there
I've been waiting to meet you
Palm trees in the light
I can see, late at night
Darling I'm waiting to greet you
Come to me, baby”

“Don't be afraid of me
Don't be ashamed
Walk in the way of my soft resurrection
Idol of roses, iconic soul
I know your name
Lead me to war with your brilliant direction”

“Roses, Bel Air, take me there
I've been waiting to meet you
Palm trees in the light
I can see, late at night
Darling I'm waiting to greet you
Come to me baby”

“Roses, Bel Air, take me there
I've been waiting to meet you
Grenadine sunshine, and it fades sublime
Darling I'm waiting to greet you
Come to me baby”

In this third song lyric entitled “Bel Air”, the speaker tries to wait for someone to take her to another place. The first line in the first stanza represents her process in waiting for someone that takes her to meet a *Gargoyles* which become a guard of a place and evidence of apostrophe in the lyrics. The *Gargoyles* is a part of a statue that is usually placed in front of the church. But here, the *Gargoyles* has a human characteristic, even it can ask the speaker to wait. Like the previous phase of life, she has done too many sinful

acts, in this phase of life, the speaker wants someone to lead her to the light. “*Lead me to war with your brilliant direction*”, toward this phrase, the speaker believes in the person that will lead her to the light which she wants forgiveness towards her previous phase of life. To conclude, the third phase is the final phase when the speaker seeks enlightenment by wishing for the redemption of her sin.

E. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed a short music film that is taken from Lana Del Rey's Paradise album. From the three songs entitled “*Body Electric*,” “*Gods and Monsters*,” and “*Bel Air*”, the researchers found 43 sentences that contain figurative language which were categorized into 12 types, which are: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, metonymy, oxymoron, allusion, repetition, symbol, imagery, and apostrophe. However, from the 12 types of figurative language, the allusion is the most frequent type used by the author of the songs. From this short music film, the researchers can also conclude that the three songs have a connection and represent the phase of human life that is based on a biblical context. After all, it is hoped that this research would help to create a better understanding of the short music film entitled “*Tropico*”.

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