

MEANINGS INTERPRETATION IN THE 2010 *DOO-WOPS & HOOLIGANS* BRUNO MARS' SONG ALBUM

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ABSTRACT

Songs could have impacts on the community. When Bruno Mars launched his first album the "Doo-Wops & Hooligans" in 2010, it became famous. It was, therefore, the intention of this piece of writing to find out about his fame from his song lyrics in an album. Compared to most Americans who tend to prefer jazz music to pop, Bruno Mars' style is a mixture of hip-hop and reggae. This study focused on the Bruno Mars' song lyrics that had been written on the album "Doo-Wops & Hooligans". Findings of the study revealed that most of the song lyrics were dominated by hyperbole indicating that the writer used a lot of exaggeration in his lyrics. Conclusions revealed that most of song lyrics describe a man-to-woman romantic relationship.

Keywords: meanings interpretation, Bruno Mars' song lyrics

ABSTRAK

Lagu-lagu bisa berdampak pada komunitas. Ketika Bruno Mars meluncurkan album pertamanya "Doo-Wops & Hooligans" pada 2010, itu menjadi terkenal. Karena itu, maksud dari tulisan ini adalah untuk mencari tahu tentang ketenarannya dari lirik lagunya di sebuah album. Dibandingkan dengan kebanyakan orang Amerika yang cenderung lebih suka musik pop daripada jazz, gaya Bruno Mars adalah campuran antara hip-hop dan reggae. Penelitian ini berfokus pada lirik lagu Bruno Mars yang telah ditulis di album "Doo-Wops & Hooligans". Temuan dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa sebagian besar lirik lagu didominasi oleh hiperbola yang menunjukkan bahwa penulis menggunakan banyak berlebihan dalam liriknya. Kesimpulan mengungkapkan bahwa sebagian besar lirik lagu menggambarkan hubungan romantis pria-wanita.

Kata kunci: interpretasi makna, lirik lagu Bruno Mars

A. INTRODUCTION

When Bruno Mars launched his first album the Doo-Wops & Hooligans in 2010, it became booming. What has made his album become the object of interest of so many people all over the world including Indonesia. A lot of people started to recognize a singer by the name of Bruno Mars and were interested in finding out about the man: who is, where he is from, what debut he has made, how he has started his carrier as a singer and anything related to his album. Compared to most Americans who tend to prefer jazz music to pop, Bruno Mars' style is a mixture between hip-hop and reggae.

People also like the way Bruno Mars presents his song lyrics. These lyrics so unique when they are being expressed in combination with the music. Music becomes lively when it is combined with lyrics and lyrics do not stand by themselves. They do not mean anything without

music. Lyrics are a series of words and phrases that have meanings in a song. Lyrics can make a song interesting and subsequently generate people's interests to listen to it. Meanings in song lyrics play an important role in humans' life. Meanings contained in songs do influence people's perceptions and can stimulate political tension. For example, the song by Iwan Fals 'Bongkar' in the Soeharto's era was banned because of its political message.

Mars has been able to impress people around the world, particularly the young generation. His music style is not jazz, which tends to be favored only by the Americans, and neither is it pop or classical, which is considered a little bit western. It is a combination of different music styles. Combined with lyrics that describe the life of young people, his album has been able to make most youths like his music as well as his lyrics. His lyrics are mostly entertaining. They do not contain political intention to influence people to possibly act against those in power and neither does it contain negative ideas towards particular groups of people.

Song lyrics have a message to convey to their listeners. A song writer would normally have a target to who would be his or her listeners. Song lyrics consist of a series of words composed and sung by a selected singer. A song can become popular because of its singer, its lyrics, its interesting tones or its music. It is very obvious that tones and music fall outside of the literary works. Lyrics, however, contain messages to convey to its listeners. Lyrics can have unique sounds when they are viewed from the segmental and supra-segmental phonemes. They also have structures when they are viewed from syntax. Problems formulated in this study were:

1. What types of figurative language are expressed in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics?
2. What is the most dominant type of figurative language in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics?

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Semantic

Semantic is the study of meaning, changes in meaning and the principles that govern the relationship between sentences or words and their meanings. Leech (2004) states that semantic is the study of meaning, is central to the study of communication, and as communication becomes a more and more crucial factor in social organization, they need to understand that it becomes more and more pressing. Semantic is also the center of the study of human-mind-thought processes; cognition and conceptualizations.

Kreidler (2008) defines Semantic as learning of meanings of certain strings of sound and learning how to combine these meaningful units into large units that also convey meaning. The word '*Semantic*' is commonly used in most terms to denote a problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation. Therefore, Semantic is the study of meaning of words within the context of language use that people use for communication purposes. As human language is complex, meaning refer not only to simple language but also to complex ones. Meaning does not simply refer literal connotation, but also to what is known to indirect speech when connected to pragmatics or language use. Within the poetic context, however, semantic refers to figurative language and connotative-denotative meaning.

2. The Nature of Meaning

Meaning, according to Davis and Gillon (2004: 4) are related to the attribute of expressions, thoughts, actions, gestures, artifacts and even natural objects not connected to humans, such as tree rings or clouds. Expressions, but not natural objects, can be analytic, contradictory, logically true, ambiguous, and anomalous, and they can be homonymous or synonymous and stand in logical relations with other expressions. There is no sense in which nonhuman natural objects have any of these properties, properties that many theorists connect with meaning. It would seem, then, that if expressions and such natural objects have meanings, they do not have meanings in the same way. there is no uniform theory of meaning that applies

toexpressions and to nonhuman natural objects and the other things that are said to have meaning.

It might have been presumed that expression and meaning are connected. In fact, there is not a logical connection between an expression and its meaning. An expression can have a different meaning than the original words it contains. Dog and cow could have the same meaning in the sense that they physically animals. Meanings, however, do not stay the same over time because of historical linguistic factor. The English noun *bird* once meant any small fowl and now means any warm-blooded, feathered, egg-laying vertebrate animal having wings. There was a change from the association of meaning that referred to *bird* in the past and what refers now as *bird*. *Bird* is a flying fowl now, but it meant any *fowl* irrespective it could or it could not fly in sky. This is what linguists have been referring as the absence of connection between an expression and its meaning.

Semantic cannot be associated with physical theories about the world. This is because physical world wears out quite quickly. The solution to this will be to reduce the semantic properties and objects to non-semantic properties and objects. What has often been used to deal with semantic is ontology or existence. It is an approach that is used in semantic. It has been presumed that ontology is the center of semantic due to questions that concern with semantic where most theories are not applicable to semantic. Theoretical work in physics, mathematics, or biology is not determined by ontological concerns. One feels free to do mathematics, for example, without having a theory that shows what numbers really are, and to do biology without having a reduction of biological function to non-biological properties. In general, work in the sciences is not led by ontology. Rather, ontological commitment flows from the existential commitments of the theories. What mathematical and biological objects and properties exist and what their natures are depend on mathematical and biological theories.

3. Figurative Language

In literal language, words carry meanings exactly the same as they define. In figurative language the interpretation of meaning does not apply in the same way. In interpreting the expressions depicted in figurative language, the reader uses the power of imagination to imagine this expression and uses his or her mind to infer the meaning behind it. Imagination is reflected in oral expressions to describe what is inside his or her mind. Figurative language is commonly used in spoken and written forms to express ideas and emotions, and to affect the views and attitudes of others.

Yuri (2013) states that figurative language is used in imaginative rather than literal. It is widely used in daily speech and writing. The daily communication, speech, advertisements and literary works (poems, novels, prose and short stories) frequently use figurative language. The use of figurative language in literary work is intended to show the author's creativity and valuable use of language, that is, more colorful language. The differences between literal and figurative language lie on the meaning uttered. Literal language refers to facts without any exaggerations or alterations of the subject, while figurative language has the implied meaning based on the context. Figurative language is a language which uses figures of speech (a way of saying one thing and meaning another). There should not be mixed up between figures of speech in syntax and the connotation of figures of speech in figurative language.

According to Perrine (2007:565) figurative language is the language that cannot be taken literally (or should not be taken literally) and it expresses a concept beyond the ordinary ways or it states one thing that intends another. Beekman and Callow (2014:94) add that figurative senses are based on associative relations with the primary sense. Figurative language is often used in the daily communication, literary works (novel, poems, poetry, and short story), speech, and in advertisement.

4. Previous Studies

Logan et al (2014) investigated semantic analysis of song lyrics by exploring the use of song lyrics for automatic indexing of music. Using lyrics mined from the Web, they applied a standard text processing technique to characterize their semantic content, then determined artist similarity in this space. They found that lyrics can be used to discover natural genre clusters. Experiments on a publicly available set of 399 artists showed that determining artist similarity using lyrics is better than random but inferior to a state-of-the-art acoustic similarity technique. However, the approaches made different errors, suggesting they could be profitably.

Boulle (2011) investigated songs versus lyrics with a domestic violence theme. Although some songs contain anti-social and pro-social nature of the lyrics, societal topics such as domestic violence are still popular. Music and lyrics have the power to communicate and are processed by the human brain at a complex and detailed level.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Design of this study was a mixture of qualitative and quantitative. Figurative language in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics was interpreted based on semantic nature. This was done using the qualitative approach. It was not possible to interpret meanings using quantitative approach. In finding out about the figurative language in this research, the writer used qualitative approach, too. He needed to identify which one should be classified a particular figurative language. Having classified the figurative language in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics, the writer needed to classify it into a table. This was quantitative approach..

The qualitative research design of this research was classified descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative by definition is all inquiry entails description, and all description entails interpretation. Knowing any phenomenon (or event or experience) requires, at the very least, knowing the "facts" about that phenomenon. Yet there are no "facts" outside the particular context that gives those facts meaning. Descriptions always depend on the perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities, and sensibilities of the describer (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Giorgi, 1992; Wolcott, 1994) in Sandelowski (2000: 335). This would mean that the design interprets the research object, which in this case, the song lyrics by describing them accordingly. Lyrics should be interpreted based on meanings contained in them. Instrument of this study qualitatively was the writer himself. The quantitative instrument, however, was descriptive statistics.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Bruno Mars' song lyrics that made its debut was compiled and sold in an album. This album was named '*Doo-Wops & Hooligans*'. This collection of songs was taken from the whole album of 2010 Bruno Mars. To make it easy for meaning interpretation, the lyrics have been arranged in the following columns consisting of expression, meaning, and figurative classification. Findings of this study show that most of the lyrics in the Bruno Mars' song album contains figurative language. Most of the figurative language found in this album is metonymy.

1. Metaphor

In lyric Grenade is a replacement to describe the girl's character that does not care about the man's kindness for her. In the last lyrics of this song, the phrase '*black, black, black and blue*' represents metaphor. It does not literally mean colours of the skin, but a condition of being messed up completely having being beaten by someone else

2. Hyperbole

The song entitled 'Liquor Store Blues' of this album consists many hyperbole type of figurative language. Starting with '*standing at this liquor store, whiskey come through my pores, feeling like I run this whole bloke*'. The writer exaggerates alcohol with liquor and swaps over whiskey with being sweat to express how he has got drunk. The title of this song also shows hyperbole '*liquor store blues*', which is a mixture of music and alcohol to denote that someone gets drunk.

3. Metonymy

In all songs in the Bruno Mars' album contain metonymy. 'The lazy song' is the song that consists of many metonymy. The lyrics '*today I don't feel like doing anything, I just wanna lay in my bed, don't feel like picking up my phone, so leave a message on the tone, cause today I swear I'm not doing anything*' are expressed to indicate a condition of being lazy. All these expressions refer to the fact that the writer is being lazy. He does not want to do anything. He is not interested in doing all his routine activities.

4. Personification

A lyric found in this song was '*the whole world stops and stares for a while*'. The writer assumes that the dead world behaves like a human being. It becomes alive that it can look at things like what human beings can do. In another title '*runaway baby*' there was a lyrics that represents personification '*that I am a wolf in sheep's clothing*'. This is an assumption that describes a character like in fairy story where a wolf can suddenly turn into a sheep and can behave like a human being trying to ambush the sheep's cubs.

5. Irony

In the Bruno Mars' song album, irony was found quite a lot in a song entitled '*marry you*' such as '*we are looking for something dump*'. This does not mean that the writer is looking for something stupid. He has replaced a positive connotative word with a negative one with an intention to conceal such a word.

6. Simile

According to Perrine (1977) simile is comparing two things that are essential unlike by using connecting words such as similar to, like, the same as, etc. Not many simile was found in the Bruno Mars' song album. In a song '*talking to the moon*', an expression '*I am feeling like I'm famous*' to describe his feeling that he has become a famous person. The title describes interacting with a dead thing '*the moon*'. The writer considers '*the moon*' as being alive he can talk to like common human beings.

Having collected all the data such as shown on the table, the figurative language were then collected into a table of frequency distribution table as shown in the following table.

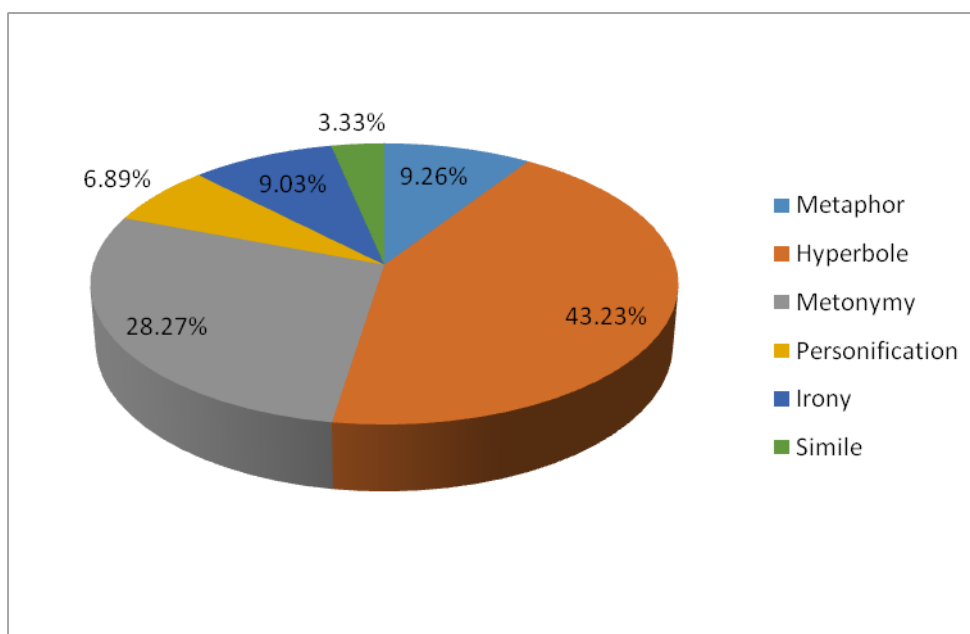
Table 1. Frequency of Figurative Language

No	Type of Figurative	Frequency
1	Metaphor	43
2	Hyperbole	181
3	Metonymy	119
4	Personification	26
5	Irony	38
6	Simile	14

Further analysis was done by computing the frequency distribution by percentage as shown in the following table

Table 2. Percentage Composition of Figurative Language

No	Type of Figurative	Frequency.	Computation	Percentage
1	Metaphor	43	$43/421 \times 100$	9.26%
2	Hyperbole	181	$181/421 \times 100$	43.23%
3	Metonymy	119	$119/421 \times 100$	28.27%
4	Personification	26	$26/421 \times 100$	6.89%
5	Irony	38	$38/421 \times 100$	9.03%
6	Simile	14	$14/421 \times 100$	3.33%
Total		421		100.00%



Graph 1. Types of Figurative Language in Percentage

A few expression listed on the table consist more than one type of figurative language such as the word '*baby*'. In everyday life, people never express '*baby*' to call his or her partner. '*Honey*' would normally be used instead of '*baby*'. The word '*baby*', however, is very common in songs. It has been used a lot as an irony. To call someone by '*baby*' means to denote that they

are partners or lovers. The word *'baby'* does not have a physical meaning as toddler or very little kid. It is a figurative language that has the opposite meaning, *'honey'*. This is definitely part of the figurative language. In fact, *'baby'* is much more popular than *'honey'* when it is being used in songs. It is not commonly used in everyday life, but *'honey'* is.

Related to the first research problems formulated in chapter I of this thesis, what types of figurative language are expressed in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics? It can be described that there were 6 (six) different types of figurative language used in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics. These types are: hyperbole, metonymy, metaphor, irony, personification and simile. Apparently hyperbole is the most frequent type of figurative language used in the song album. Hyperbole has a lot to do with compliments. A man or a woman who falls in love with someone else tends to give compliments to his or her partner. This is commonly found in man-to-woman relationship. Compliments are used to please and to impress his or her partner. In the Bruno Mars' song lyrics, all these compliments were intended to please one's partner.

This kind of description could be a reflection in a real life. In reality things happen the same way with lovers who are in love one another. There is always this romanticism expressed in forms of compliments. Compliments tend to show this exaggerated romantic relationship. This relationship is then expressed in form of hyperbolic figurative language. There is a trend to impress his or her partner in such a romantic relationship.

Related to research problem number 2, what is the most dominant type of figurative language in the Bruno Mars' song lyrics? The answer to this research question is that hyperbole is the most dominant figurative language that is mostly used in the Bruno Mars' song album the *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*. When compared with the other types of figurative language, hyperbole is the most frequently used one. In terms of meaning, hyperbole refers to exaggeration. When one is using hyperbole, he is trying to show anyone that he or she adores something. In the case of the Bruno Mars' song album, the adoration, of course, is always intended to the lover's partner, as most lyrics describe romantic relationship between the two lovers.

The other types of figurative language found in the album such as metonym, is intended to say things in different ways. Metaphor is a comparison of two subjects. Irony is saying things the opposite way, it is used to offend someone that something has not been used the way it should be. Personification describes an object as if it was alive resembling a human being. Last is simile, which is an explicit comparison which directly denotes that one thing has the same implication as the other one.

The meanings expressed in a type of figurative language, has its own intention to describe. There is a message contained in each type of figurative language. In the song *'talking to the moon'* in this album, Bruno tried to describe that he has nobody to share with that the only one he could talk to was the moon. This certainly represents the absence of his girlfriend he could share things with. He describes himself as somebody in confusion. He feels like crazy being away from his girlfriend who is at distance. It is impossible to associate a man talking to the moon. It is hyperbolic. The interesting thing about this figurative language is that it is nice to hear expressions uttered in different types of figurative language, particularly when those expressions are uttered with music in the songs. It is this figurative language that makes humans to have a lively life coloring the world they have been created by god to live in.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Bruno Mars song album consists figurative language in most of its song lyrics. In the figurative language used in the album is dominated by hyperbole, followed by most frequent to the less frequent, followed by metonym, irony, personification, metaphor and simile and most of songs by Bruno Mars describe man-to-woman relationship. In other side most of songs describe a couple who has fallen in love with each other and most of song describe romance that most young people in the world have in their young or youth age, an attraction power

towards those that are sexually different from themselves. The reason why young people like Bruno Mars' songs is because it describes conditions mostly experienced by young people.

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