

## A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN ARIANA GRANDE'S SONG LYRICS

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### ABSTRACT

Figurative language is a language where the conveying of implied meaning is more effective than literal meaning because figurative language provides several effects that help readers to understand the meaning easily. This study aims to analyze the figurative language of Ariana Grande's selected songs in the album *Position*. To get more immense understanding on how the lyrics are analyzed, Perrine's theory of figurative language was used. This research used descriptive qualitative research and a stylistic approach. The results showed that nine of twelve types were found such as metaphors, similes, personifications, apostrophes, metonymy, symbols, allegory, paradox and hyperbole. The most frequently type used in the selected song is metaphor. Through the findings mention above, the researcher can conclude that patterns in the selected songs that she always compares herself to luxury objects. This means that the pattern she wants to show in *Position* album to her listeners is that she tries to love and appreciate herself by comparing herself to luxurious objects such as diamond, Givency, and gold.

**Keywords:** Stylistic, Figurative Language, Song Lyrics

### ABSTRAK

*Bahasa kiasan adalah bahasa yang penyampaian makna tersirat lebih efektif daripada makna literal karena bahasa kiasan memberikan beberapa efek yang membantu pembaca untuk memahami makna dengan mudah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bahasa kiasan pada lagu-lagu pilihan Ariana Grande dalam album Position. Untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana lirik dianalisis, teori bahasa kiasan Perrine digunakan. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dan pendekatan stilistika. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sembilan dari dua belas jenis ditemukan seperti metafora, simile, personifikasi, apostrof, metonimi, simbol, alegori, paradoks dan hiperbola. Jenis yang paling sering digunakan dalam lagu yang dipilih adalah metafora. Melalui temuan-temuan tersebut di atas, peneliti dapat menyimpulkan bahwa pola-pola dalam lagu-lagu terpilih Ariana Grande selalu membandingkan dirinya dengan benda-benda mewah. Artinya, pola yang ingin ia tunjukkan dalam album Position kepada pendengarnya adalah ia berusaha mencintai dan menghargai dirinya sendiri dengan membandingkan dirinya dengan benda-benda mewah seperti berlian, Givency, dan emas.*

**Kata kunci:** Stilistika, Bahasa Kiasan, Lirik Lagu

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

A song is a combination of music and lyrics. Music is sound waves composed perfectly to express something or to entertain people. Besides music, lyrics play a role to deliver the feelings, ideas, opinions, or illustrating something the composer wants to convey. It usually uses uncommon language that can be more complicated than everyday language, since lyrics depend on music to make the song sounds pretty and interesting. The language used defines the author's characterization of his or her creativity in mixing words. The uncommon language makes listeners realize that there are many ways to convey something and different perspectives in telling something.

Due to the illustration above, Barry presented the stylistic approach as a discipline of applied linguistics (196). He stated that stylistic is a critical approach that uses the methods and findings of the science of linguistics in the analysis of a literary text. Stylistic approaches focus on the style of language usage in different contexts either linguistic or situational. It means, in the stylistic approach the language style of each author describes certain purposes which are shown by the election of words. In literary works, language interpretation is constantly linked to the aesthetics of the language. It will be a vacuous effort without the aesthetics within the written literary work. As a result, everything the author describes in literary work, especially in songs is interpreted by the reader, who is constantly concerned with language style and aesthetics.

*Position* album written by Ariana Grande as the object of this study. In this research, the researcher chooses seven famous songs by Ariana Grande. Those songs are *Love Language*, *Six Thirty*, *Just Like Magic*, *Motive*, *Shut Up*, *POV*, and *Position*. The choices of the songs are based on the music chart listed by Billboard Hot 100. Among 14 songs in *Position* album, there are seven songs from Ariana Grande which are most likely to listen to.

In the stylistic approach the language style of each author describes certain purposes which are shown by the election of words. A term, sentence, or piece of literature that has various meanings and is intended to produce creative effects for readers or listeners is known as figurative language. The researcher used the theory of stylistic and figurative language to support the analysis. The objective of this research is to identify the types of figurative language in Ariana Grande's song lyrics.

## **B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Song**

According to Ammer, a song is defined as any part of vocal music and the lyrics are the text of the song (29). The song is one of the literary works that are familiar to the listener's ears. Songs can be described as works of art in singing to musical instruments jealous. It can be defined a song as a short rhyme or set verse in music and aims to be sung (Jamalus 5). Based on the explanation above, it can be said that the song is one of the literary works in a form of poetry that is performed by singing and accompanied by musical instruments.

### **2. Lyrics**

According to Dallin, "Print lyrics as a form of communication between writers and readers." Most of the time, they carry the message intending to inspire, at least, for his thinking such a goal and a form of communication that is rooted in the cultural context of the community, according to show their music preferences (62). The lyrics in a song are

similar to poetry in that they both share the same characteristics, as song lyrics and poetry use the same techniques as rhyme; and repetition, and they play with sound to produce rhythm. They are written in lines or verses and are also divided into stanzas. Usually, a song lyric is categorized in a lyric.

### **3. Stylistics**

In stylistics, a written literary text is the preferred object of study over the spoken form. Since the text can show how language serves a particular artistic function, the analysis can be more specific. According to Leech and Short, the different characteristics of each language in texts will reveal the various styles of writers the concept of style refers to how language is used in a given context, by a given person, and for a given purpose. The purpose of stylistics is to explore the relationship between language patterns and interpretation (9). First of all, it needs to identify the word, form, and structure of a particular language and then understand the carried meaning to explain the relationship between language and artistic function. Stylistic categories are used to identify how the author plays the words in their works. The analysis is more difficult and complex since the way of conveying ideas in every text is unique (61). In this term, there are four general headings in stylistic categories: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figurative language, and cohesion and context.

### **4. Figurative Language**

Figurative language is a language that cannot be interpreted. It gives a different meaning than what is said or written. According to Perrine, figures of speech are any means of stating anything other than the usual way, and he divides them into three groups: comparison, association, and contrast (65).

#### **a. Figurative Language by Comparison**

In this category, the comparison is used to compare one thing to another through words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. They are different but still have the same taste. There are four types of figurative language by comparison such as metaphor (to convey from one location to another), simile (A simile is a figure of speech that compares two items by using connector words to make the connection easier to grasp for the reader), personification (happens when human attributes are transferred to non-human things through a word or phrase), and apostrophe (occurs when a speaker invests the addressee with voice, life, and human capabilities).

#### **b. Figurative Language by Association**

This category is used to associate a word or phrase with another that is closely related in meaning. By association, there are four different sorts of figures of speech such as synecdoche (the use of parts of something to represent the whole or called a shift in meaning, using lexemes or long expressions in a part-whole relationship), symbol (described as something which has a meaning more than the symbol itself), allegory (a description in a narrative that has another meaning under the meaning which shows up on the surface. Most of the surface narrative has its interest in the meaning itself), and metonymy (uses a part for a whole or a whole for a part whereas, metonymy occurs when the referent name is replaced by another related name of a thing).

#### **c. Figurative Language by Contrast**

This category is used to emphasize the meaning by contrasting the word or phrase with another one. The implicit meaning is usually the opposite of literal words. There are four types of figurative language by contrast such as paradox (occurs when a statement shows a self-contradiction which makes it seem unlikely), irony (the opposite of what

is being said), hyperbole (an overstatement or an exaggeration that provides truth), and litotes (utilizes a negative phrase when a positive one would be more emphatic and straightforward).

## 5. Concept of Contextual Meaning

According to Requejo, contextual meaning is whatever a linguistic expression cannot be straightforwardly interpreted, we turn to the context to find some extra cues to get the right meaning (171). Context is a situation that occurs depending on whether a phrase or sentence appears. A contextual can be defined also a definition in which the term is used by embedding it in a larger expression containing its explanation.

## 6. Selected Songs of Ariana Grande

*Position* is the sixth album released on October 30, 2020, through Republic Records. Grande's *Positions* album became her fifth No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 according to Billboard. The whole songs of the album are about love devotion, fondness, and her journey of finding love for herself. In *Position* album, there are 14 songs such as *Shut Up, 34+35, Motive, Just Like Magic, Off The Table, Six Thirty, Safety Net, My Hair, Nasty, West Side, Love Language, Position, Obvious, and POV*. In this research, the researcher only selects seven songs from *Position* album. Those songs are *Love Language, Six Thirty, Just Like Magic, Motive, Shut Up, POV, and Position*.

## C. RESEACH METHOD

### 1. Research Design

Qualitative research is naturalistic and an interpretative method that focuses on understanding the meanings of what people want to convey related to the phenomena (Ritchie and Lewis 3). In analyzing language phenomena, qualitative research has the purpose to describe and provide a richer and more detailed understanding of the finding under study (Vanderstoep and Johnston 8). Therefore, the descriptive qualitative method is appropriate to use in this research to describe the phenomena by interpreting the data collected. The researcher applied the stylistic approach because it aims to explore the linguistic features that support meaning-making in a literary work. This study only focuses on the types of figurative language used in song lyrics, so that figurative language phenomena are described and explained in a narrative or descriptive form.

### 2. Data and Source of Data

The researcher used the object of the seven selected songs in the *Position* album, which was retrieved from [www.azlyrics.com/a/arianagrande.html](http://www.azlyrics.com/a/arianagrande.html). as a source of data for this research. The seven selected songs were *Love Language, Six Thirty, Just Like Magic, Motive, Shut Up, POV, and Position*. Those are the famous songs of Ariana Grande from *Position* album, the indication of famous for those songs since those songs are listed on Billboard 100 famous songs. Then, the researcher retrieved the data in the form of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs, which contain figurative language by comparison, association, and contrast.

### 3. Research Instrument

As stated by Burns, the role of researchers in qualitative research is an instrument (295). The main instrument of this research was the researcher herself because the researcher was a planner, data collector and reporter of the results of her analysis. The ability of researchers on stylistics was the most important tool in this research that helped researchers in analyzing data.

#### **4. Data Collection**

To answer the research question and to collect the data, the researcher should do some steps. First, the researcher listened to all songs on the album and checked the accuracy of the lyrics. Second, the researcher read the song lyrics and identify the data of the song lyrics that contain the types of figurative language. Third, the researcher selected relevant data based on the theory of figurative language by Perrine. Last, The researcher put the data into the datasheets.

#### **5. Data Analysis**

In this research, the researcher used the data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman to analyze the data such are; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing verification (10-11). In data reduction step, the researcher focuses to find parts of figurative language in Ariana Grande's selected song lyrics through the words, phrases, and sentences. Meanwhile in data display, the researcher relates the data to Perrine's figurative language and other related explanations for other works. Last, the researcher concludes the result of the research problem and the figurative language theory that is used in Ariana Grande's selected songs.

### **D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher presents the findings of types of figurative language used in selected songs of Ariana Grande's *Position* album.

#### **1. Figurative Language by Comparison**

##### **a. Metaphor**

According to Perrine, the term "metaphors" means anything complicated or difficult to answer, similar to a riddle. The term "metaphors" has been replaced with a puzzle by the researcher (187). A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things without the usage of connection or indirect meaning, so knowing the literal meaning is not enough to reveal. This was the example of metaphores found in Ariana Grane's songs:

(1) *Love Language*, Line 80s

I ain't tryna sign no lease, I'm just gon' make him home

In this line, the writer compares her partner to "home", as she feels comfortable and safe whenever she is with him. The meaning of the lyric is signing a lease means that living space will only be rented for a limited amount of time before the tenant moves. However, the writer would rather invest in a long-term relationship with her partner, such as that buying a home. This sentence is a possible reference to her wants a long-term relationship, she uses "home" and not "rented place".

(2) *Six Thirty*, Line 30

I'm the release, you the dopamine

In this line, the writer compares her partner to dopamine, as she feels good whenever she is with him. The writer also uses "dopamine" to represent her partner as the healing from trauma and depression. Actually, when people are depressed, they do not experience as many releases of dopamine.

(3) *POV*, Line 5

You got more than 20/20, babe  
Made of glass the way you see through me

In the data found in the song entitled *POV* here, the character is compared to glass. As a figurative term, the word *made of glass* means her partner sees the speaker for who she is. The speaker links herself to glass to further highlight how her partner “sees” through her, or rather understands her nature. Also, in the previous line, the speaker mentioned about *You got more than 20/20*. 20/20 is refers to vision as the highest clarity of vision, it means that one can see normally. *POV* is a powerful self-love song about being loved so much you wish you could love yourself in that same way. Also, this song is an expressive track that brings the protagonist back to a place where she doubts herself in finding love because of her insecurities.

The songwriter presents an uncommon definition such as *home*, *dopamine*, and *glass*. Comparing the speaker with glass and calling her partner had the highest clarity of vision is one of the metaphors showing the reason why the speaker can fall in love with her partner.

### b. Simile

As Perrine said before, simile shows explicit meaning using word connectors such as *like*, *as*, *than*, *similar to*, *resembles*, and *seems*. The function of those connectors is to easier to recognize and people can understand the meaning quickly (15). This was the example of similes that the researcher has found:

(4) *Love Language*, Line 50

Treat it like a Givenchy

This lyric is called a simile because this line using a connector “like”. Givenchy is a well-known French luxury brand. In this glance, the speaker equates that the speakers wants to be treated as special as the fashion label.

(5) *Motive*, Line 45

You treat me like a gold, baby

This lyric is called a simile. Gold is known as a luxury item. In this glance, the speaker equates that the speaker wants to be treated as special as gold.

In this case, both of the data use simile with “like” as the connector word. From the data above, the speaker compares herself to Givenchy and gold which is a luxury thing. Also, this data mention a fashion brand named Givenchy. Givenchy is a famous and well-known French luxury brand. In this glance, the writer equates that the speaker wants to be treated as special as the fashion label item. According to the title of the song in this data, namely *Love Language*, the author wants to be treated special like an “expensive” item as a partner because it is her love language. according to the title of the song in this data, namely *Love Language*, the author wants to be treated special like an “expensive” item as a partner because it is his love language. So, because the speaker’s love language is “service”, the author wants to convey to her partner that if he wants to get her love then he must treat it like a Givenchy and gold.

### c. Personification

According to Perrine, personification happens when human attributes are transferred to non-human things through a word or phrase (65). This was the example of personification found in Ariana Grande selected song lyrics:

(6) *Position*, Line 5

Heaven sent you to me

In this line the speaker wants to show the listener that she got her soulmate from “heaven” because she uses the concept of a lover being “sent from above” to express her gratitude.

In this line, the speaker personifies the word heaven to have the ability to send the speaker a lover as a human does. Logically, heaven is a non-human being that is impossible to send a thing. However, it is given a human attribute to emphasize an implied meaning the speaker wants to convey. The speaker wants to show the listener that she got her soulmate from “heaven” because she uses the concept of a lover being “sent from above” to express her gratitude.

#### **d. Apostrophe**

According to Perrine, apostrophe occurs when a speaker invests the addressee with voice, life, and human capabilities. It is a figure of speech that addresses someone who is not there, is deceased, or isn't human as if they were present and could respond (67). Apostrophe is a type of figurative language, that is the direct address to an absent person, object, or abstract idea. The apostrophe in Ariana Grande' song lyrics can be seen as follow:

(7) *POV*, Line 30 and Line 55

You love my lips 'cause they say the things we've always been afraid of

And if my eyes deceive me won't let them stray too far away

In this line, the speaker speaks to something inanimate, abstract, or absent that is “if my eyes deceive me” to the listener as if the "eyes" can deceive the speaker as a human being. Also in line 30, the speaker speak to something inanimate, abstract, or absent that is “my lips” to the listener as if the "lips" here are a human being. in “my lips 'cause they say the things we've always been afraid of” the writers use “they” for her lips as if the writer with her lips is a different person also the lips can not do a human activity such as that the writer always been afraid about what her lips said.

## **2. Figurative Language by Association**

### **a. Metonymy**

According to Perrine metonymy occurs when the referent name is replaced by another related name of a thing (67). Metonymy is a type of figurative language in which an object or concept is referred to not by its name, but instead by the name of something closely associated with it. The metonymy in Ariana Grande's song lyrics can be seen as follow:

(8) *Shut Up*, Line 5

Diamonds good for my appetite

In this line, the speaker may be alluding to her shopping for a luxury item as a way to deal with tough times. In this line, the substitution is made because of some preexisting relationships between the two things. In the former, the word “diamonds” is substituted for luxury items in general. Also, the speaker alludes to her shopping for luxury items as a way to deal with tough times.

### **b. Symbol**

According to Perrine, the symbol may have roughly been defined as something that means more than what it is. The symbols used in this speech figure are usually easy to understand and already familiar to the listener or reader, such as symbols of animals, objects, plants and models (74). These are the symbol that the researcher has found:

(9) *Motive*, Line 60

No need to sugarcoat a lie

The speaker plays on the term “sugarcoat,” which means to make something seem more positive than it is. That her partner has ill intentions or is lying about their relationship status.

(10) *Position*, Line 5

I’m just hopin’ I don’t repeat history

In this line, through the word “history” the writer is trying to explain that she does not want to repeat what happened in her past relationships with her ex-partner. The speaker is trying not to repeat what happened in that relationship or her other relationships with her ex-partner. She is trying to change her history with her boyfriend, doing new things in this one. In her past relationships, she has been involved in a bunch of public romances and unfortunately, a bunch of her relationships have split over the years. She tries to change her future with her new partner, she hopes that her relationship with her partner will be the last relationship for the rest of her life.

### c. **Allegory**

Bradford says that allegory involves the equivalent of a narrative and a subtext that embodies reality (27). A story, poem, or picture can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. This was the example of allegory that the researcher has found:

(11) *Love Language*, Line 30

Leave my baggage at the door, I'll claim you mine

(12) *POV*, Line 55

All my baggage fadin' safely (My baggage fadin')

In this line, “Baggage” is a term used to describe the emotional trauma that burdens an individual, often-times after a relationship. This line suggests that she is been able to move past this to start a new, by working on herself and receiving encouragement from her partner. These line is a term used to describe the emotional trauma that burdens an individual, oftentimes after a relationship. The speaker similarly expressed letting go of her emotional trauma and strengthening her new relationship on the album. The writer contrasts the struggles she faced in the past by assuring her partner that she is moving on from her difficult past into a safer and happier mindset.

### 3. **Figurative Language by Contrast**

#### a. **Paradox**

As Perrine said above, a paradox is when a statement shows a contradiction so that the statement is difficult to understand (19). Perrine explains that paradox occurs when a statement shows a self-contradiction which makes it seem unlikely (101). These was the example of paradox that the researcher has found:

(13) *Motive*, Line 30

Might have to curve you if you just can't talk straight (Just say)

In this line, the speaker plays on the words “curve” and “straight,” which by definition are opposites. The speaker claims that she will “curve” her love interest, meaning she will

dodge or ignore them if they cannot “talk straight,” meaning to be honest or upfront with her.

(14) *POV*, Line 25

I’ma love you even though I’m scared

Paradox is when a statement shows a contradiction. In this line, the speaker plays on the words “love” and “scared,” which by definition are opposites.

## **b. Hyperbole**

As Perrine said above, a paradox is when a statement shows a contradiction so that the statement is difficult to understand (19). Hyperbole is generally a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis. This was the example of hyperbole that the researcher has found:

(15) *Just Like Magic*, Line 15

Take my pen and write some love letters to heaven

In this line, the writer exaggerates an expression “Take my pen and write some love letters to heaven”. The meaning of this expression is incorrect because humans can send a letter wherever they want as long as the address is still on earth but not by sending it to heaven. Heaven is a place that humans cannot visit while they are still alive. Often traditionally depicted as being above the sky. So, if humans write and send a letter to heaven it is very impossible. This line can also be a reference to the scripting law of attraction, which involves writing wishes and sending them out into the universe.

(16) *Motive*, Line 25

I could call bullshit out from a mile away

This line uses hyperbolic expression. The speaker does not mean for her statements to be taken literally, she is exaggerating the facts for effect. As a result, Ariana Grande preferred to use all types of figurative language by comparison. In figurative language by association Ariana Grande preferred to use three types of four types of it. The last, Ariana Grande preferred to use two types of four types of figurative language by contrast. It can be concluded that the use of those types of figurative language in Ariana Grande’s selected song lyrics was in line with the theory of figurative language by Perrine (1977).

As found, the types of figurative language used in the mentioned were a metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, and hyperbole. Meanwhile, there types of figurative languages (comparison, association, and contrast) were not found in this research such as synecdoche, irony, and litotes. It was because those types of figurative language may not fit with the idea of the seven-song of ariana grande or can be said those types of figurative language were not in line with the motives that ariana grande want to convey in her song lyrics.

In consequence, it could be concluded that Ariana Grande uses several types of figurative language in her song lyrics. Through the type of figurative language found by researchers, Ariana always compares herself to luxurious objects. This means that the pattern she wants to show in *Position* album is that she tries to love herself by comparing herself to luxurious objects such as diamond, *Givency*, and gold.

## E. CONCLUSION

The results of the research showed that from figurative language by comparison all types were found such as metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe. While in figurative language by association the researcher found that three of four types of figurative language by association such as metonymy, symbol, and allegory. In figurative language by contrast, the researcher found that two of four types were found such as paradox and hyperbole. The frequently used type is a metaphor. Otherwise, synecdoche, irony, and litotes were not found in the selected songs of Ariana Grande, because those types of figurative language were not in line with the motives that Ariana Grande wanted to convey in her song lyrics. In this case, Ariana Grande uses simile in the two of seven selected songs that are being analyzed by the researcher. Through the type of figurative language found by researchers, Ariana always compares herself to luxurious objects. This means that the pattern she wants to show in *Position* album is that she tries to love herself by comparing herself to luxurious objects such as diamond, *Givency*, and gold.

Besides, there are types of figurative languages (comparison, association, and contrast) that were not found in this research such as synecdoche, irony, and litotes. It was because those types of figurative language may not fit with the idea of the selected songs by Ariana Grande or can be said those types of figurative language did not in line with the motives that Ariana Grande want to convey in her song lyrics.

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