

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SONGS: AN ANALYSIS STUDY

Chaliq Hidayat¹, Dewi Murni², Gatot Subroto³
Chaliqhidayat22@gmail.com

Program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan,
Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look the types of figurative language found in The Script's song lyric "it's not right for you and superheroes". There are two research objectives; the first is to identify the types of figurative language used in the song and the second is to identify the type of figurative language that is most commonly used in the song. The research method used in this study was qualitative descriptive document research. The researcher and the documentation sheet are the tools used to collect research data. The researcher employs Davis(2016) and Lakoff & Johnson (2003) theories to analyze the data. The researcher employs the study document method to collect the data. After gathering data, the researcher began the process of identification. First, the researcher organized the data by gathering the data, classifying, and analyzing the data. After that, the researcher will explain each type of figurative language used in the song lyrics "it's not right for you and superheroes" by The Script and the most common type of figurative language used in those songs. The researcher discovered five types of figurative language in The Script's song lyrics "it's not right for you" and "superheroes" namely hyperbole, meiosis, simile, idiom, and personification. The most common type of figurative language used in the song lyrics is hyperbole.

Keywords: Figurative Language, Songs, Analysis

I. Introduction

Wardaugh (2006) stated that language is a system or a way for people to communicate and interact in speech and writing, which are used by people all over the world. Language is a communication system that consist of a set of sound and written symbols as a tool of communication people all over the nation.

Figurative language is the use of words in a way that differs their traditional meaning in order to convey a complicated meaning. Heller (2011) defines figure of speech as a group of words that exaggerate the unusual meanings of the words. It employs a sentence to allude to something without directly state it. The lyrics used by the song writer to convey the meaning of the song, and understanding what is meant in his song is not always easy. This is due to the fact that, when writing a beautiful song, he tends to use figurative language to convey or cover literal meaning in a variety of ways. Figurative language is a sentence that has hidden meaning behind it. Figurative languages are divided into several kinds. According to Davis(2016) and George Lakoff & Johnson

(2003), there are: irony, hyperbole, meiosis, litotes, metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, simile, idiom, and personification.

The goal of this study are to discover what types of figurative are used in the song lyrics “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes” by The Script, as well as to describe the types of figurative language that are mostly used in the song lyrics “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes” by The Script. The researcher chooses this research because many people who do not understand figure of speech in everyday life, especially in English language. it is very difficult for us to interpret the figure of speech, especially when listening to music and there is a figure of speech in the lyrics and people cannot know the meaning of the lyrics. Many researchers have conducted studies on the type of figurative language used in the song, Listiani (2015) uses an album “speak now” from Taylor Swift to research. Her research aims to determine the types of figurative language used in the album. She gathered and analysed data using descriptive qualitative research and content analysis. In those albums, she discovered seven types of figurative language: hyperbole, simile, personification, metaphor, symbol, synecdoche, and oxymoron. Nisa (2020), She uses Maher Zain’s song Insha’Allah, For the rest of my life, and Hold my hand to be researched. She used the descriptive research method to collect and analyze data. Personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, irony, alliteration, parallelism, synecdoche, and litotes were the nine types of figurative language she discovered. In the song “Insha’Allah”, euphemism and alliteration are frequently used. And hyperbole are frequently employed in the song “for the rest of my life”. While the song “hold my hand” makes extensive use of personification. The difference between previous research and this research is the study’s object and theory. The goal of the research is to determine what types of figurative language are used in those song lyrics and which types of figurative language are most commonly used in those song lyrics.

II. Method

This study is a qualitative document analysis that focuses on the text’s contextual meaning. The document analysis method was used in this study because the researcher wanted to examine the figurative language used in The Script’s song lyrics “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes”. O’Leary (2017) states that document analysis include more than just a paper but also include photograph, works of art and program in television.

In this study, two instruments are used. First, it was the researcher himself because Creswell (2012) affirms that the human is the instrument for gathering and analyzing the data and qualitative researchers are the ones who collect the data by examine documents, observe behavior, or interviewing something. The second, documentation sheet to collect the data.

The data analysis from this study is based on the data from the document, which is the lyrics. According to Listiani(2015), the following procedures were used by the researcher during the analysis; identification, classification, and data analysis

III. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The researcher conducted research in order to obtain data from the song lyric. The Script’s song lyrics “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes” were chosen. In this study two instrument were

used: the researcher and data documentation sheet to gather the data from the song lyric. The researcher examined the lyric and divided the results into two types. First, the types of figurative language used in the song. Next, the types of figurative language mostly used lyric “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes” by The Script.

Table 2. Types of Figurative Language in the song lyric *superheroes* and *it’s not right for you*

NO	LYRIC	SONG TITLE	FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE										
			Ir	H	Mei	L	My	Sy	Mr	Si	Id	P	
1	<i>They took away the prophet dream</i>	Superheroes		✓									✓
2	<i>Every day, every hour</i>	Superheroes		✓									
3	<i>Turn the pain into power</i>	Superheroes		✓									
4	<i>You’ve been working every day and night</i>	Superheroes		✓									✓
5	<i>For a profit on the street</i>	Superheroes											✓
6	<i>A heart of steel start to grow</i>	Superheroes											✓
7	<i>He’ll be nothing when he’s old</i>	Superheroes				✓							
8	<i>My head, my head is full of things that I should’ve done</i>	It’s not right for you		✓									
9	<i>My heart, my heart is heavy, and it sinks like a stone</i>	It’s not right for you		✓							✓		✓
10	<i>She said, it’s hard enough trying to live your life</i>	It’s not right for you		✓									
11	<i>But not following your dreams makes you dead inside</i>	It’s not right for you		✓									
12	<i>My hands, my hands are scarred by things I shouldn’t have done</i>	It’s not right for you		✓									✓
11	<i>My feet, my feet are weary from all the miles that I’ve run</i>	It’s not right for you		✓									

NO	LYRIC	SONG TITLE	FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE										
			Ir	H	Mei	L	My	Sy	Mr	Si	Id	P	
12	<i>If we stay here too long then we'll, we'll never grow old</i>	It's not right for you			✓								
13	<i>So before it's too late and it's killing you</i>	It's not right for you		✓									✓

In the table above there are five types of figurative language in the lyrics of the song “superheroes” and “it’s not right for you”. There are twenty one lines contains figurative language, there are: four hyperbolic, one meiosis, two idiom, and two personifications in “superheroes” song and seven hyperboles, one meiosis, one simile, and three personifications in “it’s not right for you”. The data was gathered by observing and analyzing the lyrics from The Script’s song “superheroes” and “it’s not right for you”. According to the data analysis, the most common types of figurative language used in The Script’s songs “it’s not right for you” and “superheroes” is hyperbole.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings of the analysis, there are five types of figurative language found in the lyrics, there are hyperbole, meiosis, simile, idiom, personification.

A. Types of Figurative language used in the song *it's not right for you* and *superheroes*

1. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is emphasizing a point with statement containing exaggeration. It is used by the poet in the portrayal of objects, ideas, and others to give weight to excessive pressure to obtain intense effects. Hyperbole also known as an overstatement. It can be humorous or grave, fanciful or restrained, convincing or unconvincing.

There are 7 lines consisting hyperbolic expression in song “it’s not right for you” and 4 lines consisting hyperbolic expression in song “superheroes”. The first is *my head, my head is full of things that I should've done* (it’s not right for you, line 1). Based on the lyrics the songwriter exaggerate man’s head is in very bad condition thinking about something. His head is full to thinking about the things that he wants to do. A head is a part of human that cannot full of something. Thus, it means that man has enough things that he has not done yet and it disturbs his mind because he has not done what he should have done. The second is *my heart, my heart is heavy, and it sinks like a stone* (it’s not right for you line 2). The song writer exaggerate man’s heart is in the bad condition. His heart is breaking off because he is going though his hard situations so that he feels his heart has enough hurt. His heart is a part that cannot break off.

The third is ..., *it's hard enough trying to live your life (it's not right for you, line 6)*. Based on the context, the woman wants to tell that the man's life is amazing and hard to live because it has its hard challenges that only the man can deal with it. It is hyperbole because the songwriter exaggerates that only this man can deal with the live that he life and no one else can. The fourth is *but not following your dreams makes you dead inside (it's not right for you, line 7)* has a hyperbolic meaning. It is hyperbole because how can if someone does not following his dream can makes someone dead inside. The meaning of that line is the women want to say that the man has follow his dreams and make it happen so that he will not regret it later if he actually can fight for it.

The fifth is *my hands, my hands are scarred by things I shouldn't have done (it's not right for you, line 14)*. Based on the context, the man wants tell to the women that he's tired of doing pointless things that he shouldn't have done so that he doesn't have the passion to reach or doing what he wants. It is hyperbole because not all the things that the man did in his life are pointless. The sixth *my feet, my feet are weary from all the miles that I've run (it's not right for you, line 15)*. The line means He passes through his long life and he is already tired of it.

The song writer exaggerates the line because he is tired in his life and afraid to fail in pursuing what he has not done yet. The seventh is *so before it's too late and it's killing you (it's not right for you, line 29)*. Based on the context, the woman wants to motivate him to start doing things that his like before it's late. The song writer exaggerate if he does not doing what he likes it will kill himself. It is hyperbole because how can someone get killed because he does not doing what his like.

The eighth is *they took away the prophet dream (superheroes, line 3)*. Based on the context, "they" refers to the meaner side and it can give bad impacts to someone lives. The songwriter exaggerate the meaner side can took away the good things from someone life. It is hyperbole because someone can maintain their life to accept the good and bad thing for their life. The ninth is *every day, every hour, turn the pain in to power (Superheroes, lines 16)*. The lines means every time they make themselves strong and ready to fight for the better life. It is hyperbole because the songwriter exaggerates the lines, not everyone can change the pain that they feel into spirit for them to make their life better. The last is *you've been working every day and night (Superheroes, line 18)*. Based on the context, the songwriter exaggerates the lines because someone can't actually work every day and night because some need eat some food or take a rest. Thus, it's mean that they work all the times without considering time.

2. Meiosis

Meiosis is kind of understatement. Meiosis implicates the meaning of a sentence, describing things as being greater or higher in a certain respect than as it is uttered to deemphasize very great things in that respect. The intention of the speaker using meiosis is to make things humbler.

There is 1 line consisting meiosis expression in song “it’s not right for you” and 1 line consisting meiosis expression in song “superheroes”. The first is *if we stay here too long then we’ll, we’ll never grow old* (it’s not right for you, line 28). Its meiosis because it is impossible to not grow old because growing old is all human destinies. Then, it is like to understate that the man will not grow or even improve himself. The second is *he’ll be nothing when he’s old*(superheroes, line 8). It is meiosis because in the future, old people will not be nothing because they pass a lot of processes with all ups and downs of life and at least they do something in the past whatever it is, whether it is for their family or even for anybody else and it counted as something in the future.

3. Simile

Simile is kind of metaphor using a comparative sentence. Simile is direct comparisons in which one thing is like another different thing. The indication of simile is the usage of the word *like* or *as*. There is 1 line consisting simile in song “it’s not right for you”. It is *my heart is heavy and it sinks like a stone* (it’s not right for you, line 2). It is simile because the songwriter compares between two things that are totally different which is between the man’s heart and a stone. The songwriters explicitly want to say that the man’s heart is heavy since it full of burdens and problems.

4. Idiom

Idiom is conventionalized expressions that have figurative meanings that cannot be derived from literal meaning of the phrase. The phrases are not translated word by word based on the dictionary because they have different meanings from the words in the dictionary.

There are 2 lines consisting idiom in song “superheroes”. The first is *for a profit on the street*(superheroes, line 4). The “on the street” means widely known. The second is *you’ve been working every day and night*(superheroes, line 18). “Working every day and night” does not literally mean working at day and night. The lines mean that the man work all the times without considering time.

5. Personification

Personification is where the physical object is further specified as being person. The things which are nonhuman can be seen as human by giving them motivations, characteristic, and activities of human.

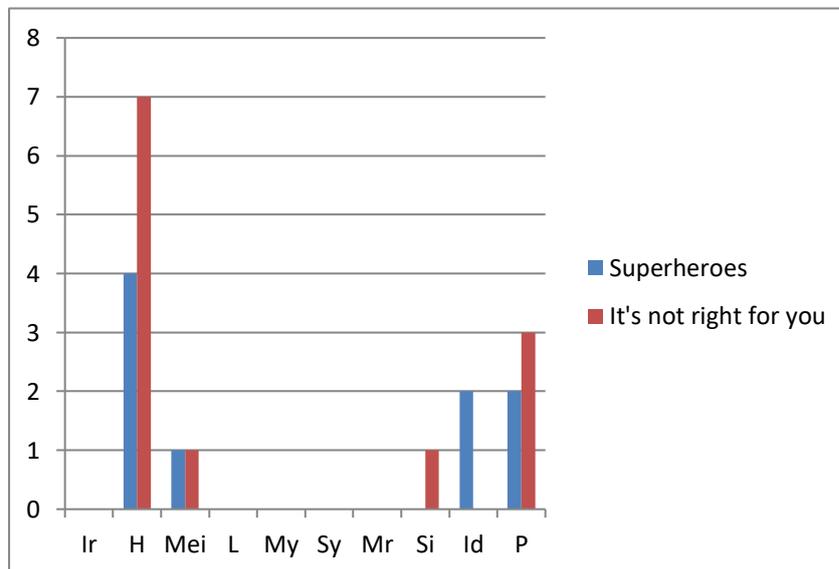
There are 3 lines consisting personification in song “it’s not right for you” and 2 lines consisting personification in song “superheroes”. The first is *my heart, my heart is heavy and it sinks like a stone* (it’s not right for you, line 2). “it” refers to the man’s heart, so that its personification because the man’s heart is given characteristic which can sink. In the real life, it is impossible to see a heart sinking. The second is *my hands, my hands are scarred by things I shouldn’t have done*(it’s not right for you, line 14). “The things” are inanimate but they can hurt his hand. It means that he feel

annoyed since he does not do thing that he should have done. He might skip chances that came to him so that he feels hurt. The third is *so before it's too late and it's killing you*(it's not right for you, line 29). Based on the context, “it” refers to a condition where the man does not do anything and he does not improve himself. It is given a human’s characteristic which can kill someone.

The fourth is *they took away the prophet dream* (superheroes, line 3). It is personification because “they” refers to all the meaner which means that it is not an animate thing, but the songwriter makes it can take away the prophet’s dream. The last is *a heart of steel starts to grow* (superheroes, line 6). Starting to grow is an ability that owned by living things like human or animal, but in the lyrics the songwriter make “a heart of steel” which is an animate thing can grow.

B. Types of figurative language mostly used in the song *it's not right for you* and *superheroes*

There are many kinds of figurative languages, such as irony, hyperbole, meiosis, litotes, metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, simile, idiom, and personification. The songs “it’s not right for you” and “Superheroes” by The Script uses figurative language to make the lyrics more interesting. In the songs “it’s not right for you” and “Superheroes” by The Script does not use all kinds of figurative language. the researcher just found 5 types of figurative languages that is used in the songs “it’s not right for you” and “Superheroes” by The Script, they are hyperbole, meiosis, simile, idiom, and personification. There are 11 hyperboles, 2 meiosis, 1 simile, 2 idioms, and 5 personifications. Totally, the figurative languages that are used in the songs “it’s not right for you” and “Superheroes” by The Script are 21



Based on diagram above, the researcher found the most types of figurative languages that are used in the songs “it’s not right for you” and “Superheroes” by The Script is hyperbole.

IV. References

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research : Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Davis, W. A. (2016). *Irregular Negatives , Implicatures, and Idioms*. Springer.
- Heller, D. (2011). Figurative speech as a representation of meaning. *World Literature Studies*, 3(3), 62–71.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Listiani, H. (2015). An Analysis of Figurative Language Found on The Song Lyric by Taylor Swift’s “Speak Now” Album. *State Institute for Islamic Studies Salatiga*, 144. <http://e-repository.perpus.iainsalatiga.ac.id>
- Nisa, K. (2020). *An Analysis of Figurative language in The Maher Zain’s Song Lyric*.
- O’Leary, Z. (2017). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. Sage Publications.
- Wardaugh, R. (2006). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. In *The British Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 38, Issue 3). Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.2307/590702>

