

## Figurative Language Used in the Song Lyrics by Avril Lavingne, Selena Gomes, and Taylor Swift

Putu Gina Arta Pertiwi  
English Department – Faculty of Arts – Udayana University  
[ginaarta07@gmail.com]

### Abstrak

*Studi ini berjudul "Bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam Lirik Lagu Avril Lavingne, Selena Gomes, dan Taylor Swift". Remember When "oleh Avril Lavingne," Kill'em with Kindness "oleh Selena Gomes dan" Safe and Sound" oleh Taylor Swift. "Remember When" dari album Goodbye Lullaby adalah lagu sedih yang menceritakan tentang seseorang yang kehilangan orang lain yang meninggalkannya atau meninggal dan dia seharusnya bertanggung jawab atas dirinya. Sebuah lagu oleh Selena Gomez berjudul " Kill'em with Kindness " pembicaraan tentang orang yang baik dan memiliki teori pesan positif terhadap mereka. Yang terakhir ditulis dan dinyanyikan oleh Taylor Swift yang berjudul "Safe & Sound" sebagai soundtrack untuk film "The Hunger Games". Ini menggambarkan tentang situasi perang bagaimana tampak seperti hidup dalam perang. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa jenis makna yang paling banyak digunakan adalah makna tematik yang berarti jenis makna saling terkait satu sama lain dengan jenis bahasa kiasan dalam menyampaikan makna.*

*Kata kunci: kiasan, lirik, makna.*

### 1. Background of the Study

A song is a short piece of music with words that are sung. The words in a song are called lyrics that may consist of an intro, verses, choruses, bridges, and a coda. Lyric derives from the Greek word for a song sung by the lyre, "lyrikos" and came to be used for the "words of a song" (Douglas, 2012). Analyzing figurative language in song lyrics is important for some reasons. First, singing a song and knowing the meaning of the lyrics is

better than singing without an adequate understanding concerning the lyrics. We can also gain some lesson learning and fruitful information when we understand the non-literal meaning contained in song lyrics. Second, analyzing figurative language provides us more practices to better understand non-literal expressions. Based on the above reasons, it is interesting to analyze the use of figurative language in song lyrics. Avril Lavigne, Taylor Swift, and Selena Gomez, are recognized worldwide as favorite singers,

especially, women singers. Their songs are interesting and compelling. Figurative expressions are also present in their songs. The figurative expressions in their songs were analyzed using the theory or figurative language proposed by K.L Knickerbocker and H.Williard Reninger (1963) and the theory of meaning by Leech (1974) supported by other theories related to this topic.

## **2. Problem of the Study**

2.1 What are the meanings of the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Avril Lavigne, Selena Gomes, and Taylor Swift?

## **3. Aim of the Study**

3.1 To identify the meanings of the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Avril Lavigne, Selena Gomes, and Taylor Swift.

## **4. Research Method**

### **4.1 Data Source**

There are three songs used as data sources in this study. They are: one song by Avril Lavigne entitled "*Remember When*", a sad song which tells about someone who is losing somebody

whether a lover left him/her or death that is responsible for it. A song by Selena Gomes entitled "*Kill 'em with Kindness*" talks about being kind to people and has a positive message of kindly ignoring instead of responding to them. The last one was written and sung by Taylor Swift entitled "*Safe & Sound*" as the soundtrack to *The Hunger Games*, a film in 2012. It describes a war situation known from the line explaining how living in a war was.

### **4.2 Collecting Data**

The technique of collecting data was done through these following steps: firstly, three chosen songs along with the song lyrics were downloaded from the internet. Second, in order to support the analysis of the lyrics, some information related to those songs is searched and gathered as additional data to support the analysis. Finally, while listening to the songs, the figurative language contained in the songs was underlined and noted using note taking technique.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

There are several steps in analyzing the data. First, the song lyrics were thoroughly read and comprehended in order to identify the figurative expressions contained in each song. Next, after classifying the figurative expressions in the song lyrics based on the types, the meanings were analyzed. The biography of the singers and the background information related to the making of the songs served as a helpful source to provide the paraphrase of the song lyrics and to support the analysis of the figurative expressions contained in each song. Finally, the explanations concerning the meaning contained were provided in descriptive sentences.

#### 5.1 Types of Meaning in the Song "*Remember When*"

##### a. Connotative Meaning.

Connotative meaning is the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content. It is not only the physical appearance, but also psychological and social properties. And also it is additional feature of word,

which varies from age, from society to society, according to culture, historical period and the experience of the individual. This is about example of connotative meaning.

*"These feelings are running out the door"* in this analysis, the word "running out" leads on to life that is fully with lose, where it means in this world that there are many expressions and anger, and put the human feelings run to the outside in connotative meaning.

*"The emptiness in the bottom drawer"* in this analysis, the word "*bottom drawer*" refers to expression, where it means hopeless; end of human patience.

##### b. Conceptual Meaning

This lyric below contains conceptual meaning or the sense that the listeners have in their mind for the first time is also the song writer expects. *"It's getting harder to pretend"*; every word is denotative the writer uses this word without referring to any other meaning. In the lyric the writer brings idea which, according to her, was very frustrated about her live, she cannot stand up again with her love.

### **c. Thematic Meaning**

Thematic meaning in the song lyric by Avril Lavigne entitled Remember When, the writer wants to convey about how her feeling when she was losing her boyfriend; her strength with the sentences such as “these feelings I can shake no more”. She had been deeply unhappy and was frustrated. Avril asks the reader when loving someone, we know how to pretend it. Shortly thematic meaning contains the expression of feeling which is too shared with the readers and the writer here.

### **5.2 Types of Meaning in “Kill ‘em with Kindness”**

#### **a. Collocative Meaning**

Collocative meaning consists of the association of a word acquired on account of the meaning of words, which tend to occur in its environment. The following is the example of the connotative meaning: “*The world can be a nasty place*” (L1). The analysis of the word “*nasty*” in this lyric refers to being horrible or bad, in this case, filled with people that is so mean with their attitude or words. The author puts that word caused by her experience in real life, by facing so many

haters in social media. Social media would explain the word “*world*” inside this lyric.

#### **b. Thematic meaning**

Thematic meaning in the song entitled “Kill ‘em with Kindness” is the expression of feeling that she felt the audience through the song she sang to say that she is very disturbed with mean people, and she said, she needs to turn her cheek the other way when people start to bring her down by judging her by themselves. The lyric said “*Kill ‘em with kindness, kill ‘em with kindness*”. She added, when someone gives her their worst, she gives them her best, and that is all she can do. She says “*And no war and anger was ever won*”. Shortly thematic meaning contains the expression of the primary feeling which is to be shared with the listener and the writer here notices that everything we do with furious heart will end with fail or lose. It also means that if we fight back the one who does not like us will bring only damage to our soul by keep thinking about it and bit by bit will finally bring us down.

### 5.3 Types of Meaning in “*Safe and Sound*”

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#### a. Connotative Meaning

There are several connotative meanings found in the song. They are described as follows: “*When all those shadows almost killed your light*” (L2); what is actually meant by “*shadows*” is beyond darkness, lack of light, or else but also mean unpleasant situation, unhappiness or sadness. And what is actually meant by “*light*” is the opposite of the meaning of “*shadow*” itself; it describes happiness, pleasant or joy.

“*Hold onto this lullaby even when the music’s gone, gone*” (L10)

The author used “*lullaby*” as it means to keep in faith or tell the others not to stop believing even when the “*music*” is gone which expresses the situation of no “*hopes*” at all. It is like reassuring someone when you know that it is his/her last day but you still give them spirit to go by it.

“*Come morning light, you and I’ll be safe and sound*” (L7,

The connotative meaning of “*morning light*” is paradise or heaven. This song, as mentioned before, is for the dying who will not survive the war. The encouragement or reassurance is to keep them calm and believe that they will go to paradise after all when they die. They will find themselves “*safe and sound*” which has known that heaven is a place of happiness and there is no bad or sad thing at all.

#### b. Thematic Meaning

Thematic meaning is communicated by the way in which the speaker organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. Thematic meaning is mainly a matter of choice between alternative grammatical constructions. This song is meant to tell the untold stories of the rebels who died long before the events of the Hunger Games film as the soundtrack, whose stories were sorely lacking in the film itself. Amusingly enough, the song seems to be organized in a chronological order, from the rebellion's first shots to its last breaths.

## 6. Conclusion

At the end of this study, it comes with general understanding which is a combination of similar ideas in general. Based on the analysis above, there are several conclusions regarding the topic which has been analyzed. The conclusions are described as follows: the conclusion for types of meaning used by three singers as research data are:

- a. “Remember When” :  
Connotative, Conceptual, and Thematic
- b. “Kill ‘em with Kindness” :  
Collocative, Thematic
- c. “Safe and Sound” :  
Connotative, Thematic

From the result above it can be said that, in every genre, the type of meaning that is most frequently used by Avril Lavigne, Selena Gomez, and Taylor Swift is the thematic meaning which means that those types of meaning are related to each other with the types of figurative language in conveying meanings. It is beyond literal and how the message is organized. It can be seen how the author organized the message, in terms of order, center and stress.

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