THE ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGES IN ADELE'S SONG LYRICS

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Abstrak

Karya tulis ini berjudul "The Analysis of Figurative Language in Adele's Song Lyrics" yang memiliki tiga tujuan. Pertama untuk mengetahui tipe-tipe majas yang ditemukan pada lirik-lirik lagu Adele. Kedua untuk menganalisa dan menjabarkan pengertian kontekstual pada majas yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu-lagu Adele. Teori pertama menggunakann teori majas oleh Knickerboker dan Reninger (1963) kemudian teori yang kedua menggunakan teori yang dikemukakan oleh Halliday (1978). Data primer yang digunakan pada analisis ini di antaranya adalah lirik-lirik dari Adele yang berjudul "Make You Feel My Love, Rolling in the Deep, Set Fire to the Rain and Turning Tables" diambil dari album dua album Adele yang berjudul "19" dan "21". Data sekunder diambil dari biografi singkat penyanyi Adele yang bersumber dari internet. Karya tulis ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka dan observasi dalam analisis ini berlangsung. Majas yang ditemukan termasuk personifikasi, metafor, sinekdot, hiperbola, alusi, paradoks, simbol dan metafor (mati). Berdasarkan pengertian kontekstual dari keseluruhan lagu milik Adele menceritakan tentang pengkhianatan dan pertentangan dalam percintaan. Pendekatan konteks kesusastraan dalam hal ini puisi yang berupa lagu sangat membantu mendalami dan memperluas pengetahuan literatur kita.

Kata kunci: kesusastraan, lirik lagu, bahasa figuratif, pengertian kontekstual, biografi.

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1   Background of the study

According to Meyer (1997:1), literature is a term used to describe written texts marked by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, well-turned phrases, elegant syntax, rhyme, alliteration, which are aesthetically read or

intended by the author to be aesthetically read and are deliberately somewhat open in interpretation

There are some similarities between a song and a poem. A song has to be rhythmic and so does a poem. Rhythm is one of the important elements in both songs and poetry. In fact, there is even a form of poetry which is made into music called a lyric poem. They can be used in songs to express the thoughts and feelings of the author. Music without words is poetry, only not in the generalized sense.

These days there were so many good songs with beautiful lyrics sung by new comer singer. One of them is Adele. Adele is an English singer-songwriter and musician whose works have topped music charts worldwide and received appraisal from critics and numerous awards, including the Grammy. *19* is her first album released in early 2008, meanwhile *21* is her second album released in early 2011.

2   Problems of Study

Based on the above background, there are two problems that are formulated, and they are as follows:

1) What types of figurative language are found in the song lyrics by Adele?
2) What are the contextual meaning of the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Adele?

3   Aims of Study

The aims of this study are related to the problems formulated above. They are:

1) To identify the types of figurative language found in the song lyrics by Adele
2) To analyze and describe the contextual meaning of the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Adele

4   Research Method

In order to further analyze the data and solve the problems, the appropriate methodology is greatly required. The methodology in this study covers the data source, the method and technique of collecting data and the method and technique of analyzing data.

4.1 Data Source

The data were taken from some song lyrics from Adele's two albums. One is song entitled, *Make You Feel My Love* from her first album entitled *19* and three are songs entitled *Rolling in the Deep, Set Fire to the Rain,* and *Turning Tables* from her second album entitled *21*. One song entitled, *Make You Feel My Love* from her first album entitled *19,* which was released in early 2008 and three songs entitled *Rolling in the Deep, Set Fire to the Rain,* and *Turning Tables* from her second album entitled *21,* which was released in early 2011.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

This is a library research. First, the lyrics of the songs are copied from http://www.elyrics.net/read/a/adele-lyrics/.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The method applied in this study is the qualitative method. The data is descriptively analyzed. After finding the occurrences of figurative language in the data source and jotting them down, the first step in the analysis is identifying the types of figurative languages found by using the theory of figurative language types by Knikerboker and Reninger (1963). Theory from Halliday (1978) were put to support the understanding of linguistic context from the song lyrics. Each song was separately analyzed and the background information related to the songs was obtained from some reliable sites and presented to support the analyses of the contextual meaning of the figurative languages found.

5. Results and Discussions

1. The Analysis Of Figurative Language and Contextual meaning In Song Lyric Rolling In The Deep

It is important to firstly outline the context of situation. After knowing some information about the song, the *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* are analysed based on Halliday's theory. *Tenor* refers to the relationships between the people involved in the interaction. The relationship here is love relationship between Adele (the author and singer) and her ex-boyfriend. This is indicated by the occurrences of the sentence indicating that the love relationship is over, that is "the scars of your love remind me of us". The word "scars"

indicates a lasting effect left by an unpleasant experience. *Field* refers the subject matter. This song is about the feelings of the singer towards her ex-boyfriend. Adele expresses her love memories and feelings through the combination of literal and figurative language with the most frequent figurative languages used in this study are metaphors, hyperboles and personifications. They are used to beautify the song and convey deeper meaning than that of the literal one. The literal language used supports the analysis of the figurative language used in the song lyrics. The *mode* can be spoken if this song is sung and written only if the lyrics are not sung.

1.1 Personification in *Rolling in the Deep*

Personification, like other types of figurative languages plays an important role to beautify the lyrics. From the *Rolling in the Deep*, there are some personifications found in the first verse and the bridge of the lyrics.

Personifications appear in the *chorus*:

The scars of your love remind me of us
They keep me thinking that we almost had it all
The scars of your love, they leave me breathless
(*Chorus)*

From those lines, we can see that *love* is treated like a human being. Love is something abstract, which we feel with heart. It is clear that the above underlined lines belong to personification because *love*, an abstract idea, inanimate object, is described as if it were human.

1.2 Symbols in *Rolling in the Deep*

From the *Rolling in the Deep*, there are some symbols found and they are presented as follows:

There's a fire starting in my heart
Reaching a fever pitch
And it's bringing me out the dark

(*Verse 1 and bridge*)

Fire is identified as a symbol because the word 'fire' is used to represent another thing. Here, 'fire' represents the singer's anger that is starting in her heart because of her ex-boyfriend. As explained in the previous analysis that for her ex-boyfriend played with her heart and she finally knew it, this can support the interpretation that "fire" in this line is a symbol of anger. Fire is often used as the symbol of anger because it can easily destroy things, so can anger.

In the line, "It's bringing me out <u>the dark</u>", the dark here doesn't literally mean the situation when there is no light. Instead, it represents the situation when we know nothing or haven't known anything about the truth. The author finally gets out of the dark because she finally knows who her ex-boyfriend is.

1.3 Hyperboles in *Rolling in the Deep*

The use of exaggeration is quite common in literary works. Many songs use exaggeration to elevate and stir feelings. From the *Rolling in the Deep* lyrics, there are some hyperboles found and they are presented as follows:

You had my heart inside your hand

(chorus)

This line is identified as a hyperbole because we cannot really have a heart inside of our hands. This line literally means that she really loved him, that her love was only for him.

2 The Analysis of Figurative Language in the Song Lyrics *Make you Feel My Love*

After knowing some information about the song, the context of situation, the *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* based on Halliday's theory need to be determined. *Tenor* refers to the relationships between the people involved in the interaction. The relationship here is a relationship between a woman and a man. The woman loves the man deeply. This is indicated by the occurrences of many hyperbolic sentences indicating that she would do anything to make him be her love. This is clearly indicated through the title of the song, Make You Feel My Love. *Field* refers the subject matter. This song is about the feelings of the woman towards the man that she loves. The *mode* can be spoken if this song is sung and written only if the lyrics are not sung.

2.1 Metaphors in *Make You Feel My Love*

      Metaphor is the type of figurative language which is mainly found in the *Make You Feel My Love* lyrics. The first and the second ones used in the first verse are underlined and presented as follows:

      <u>When the rain is blowing in your face</u>

      <u>And the whole world is on your case</u>

      I could offer you a warm embrace

      To make you feel my love

      (*Verse 1*)

The "rain" in this line does not literally mean "rain". It represents the hardship. This interpretation is supported by the lines following this metaphor. The next line, "And the whole world is on your case" also contain metaphorical meaning. When we say "someone is on my case", it means that "someone is meddling with my affairs". Therefore, in this case, "the whole world is on your case" is a metaphor that means "the whole world is looking at you, judging you, and meddling with your everyday life. In this context, the author would with all her heart embraces and support her love. This is indicated by the line following this metaphor "I could offer you a warm embrace".

2.2 Hyperboles in *Make You Feel My Love*

      Hyperbole is the second most frequent type of figurative used in *Make You Feel My Love* lyrics and they are presented along with the analysis below:

      When the evening shadows and the stars appear

      And there is no one there to dry your tears

      <u>I could hold you for a million years</u>

      To make you feel my love

      (Verse 2)

This is clearly a hyperbole. No one can really live that long. Humans in general can only live for 70-80 years. Therefore, it can be said that 'a million years' here means 'as long as the author lives'. The use of hyperboles in the lyrics along with the use of metaphors creates a special effect. The listeners would be blown through the use of the suitable exaggeration.

3 Analysis Of Figurative Languages In "Set Fire To The Rain"

Based on information about the background of the writing of the song, the *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* based on Halliday's are determined. *Field* refers to the subject matter. This song is about the conflicting elements in a love relationship. *Tenor* refers to the relationships between the people involved in the interaction. The relationship here is a **love** relationship between Adele (the singer) and her ex-boyfriend. The *mode* is spoken if the song is sung and written if the lyrics are not sung.

3.1 Metaphors in *Set Fire to the Rain*

Four metaphors are found throughout the lyrics to the song *Set Fire to the Rain*. Below are the data followed by an analysis for each figurative.

I let it fall, my heart,
And as it fell you rose to claim it
It was dark and I was over
Until you kissed my lips and you saved me
(*Verse 1*)

Verse 1 of the lyrics describes an event in which the writer felt alive again with the presence of a lover. The first two lines are parallel in meaning with the last two lines. First, the writer felt dead inside, which is expressed by the lines "I let it fall, my heart" and "It was dark and I was over". Suddenly, someone came and he brought her back to life again, which is expressed by the lines "And as it fell you rose to claim it" and "Until you kissed my lips and you saved me." Here, the writer is comparing a dead, meaningless life to letting her heart fall and being in the dark and further still, the "death" was made clearer by the statement "I was over". She was not really dead of course, but she was comparing her life with that of a dead person (i.e. having no feeling and being in the dark). Next, the lover saved her from such life by rising to claim her heart, which means he made her able to feel again. Of course all the actions in this verse did not happen literally.

3.2. Personification in *Set Fire to the Rain*

The writer also uses personifications in the lyrics of *Set Fire to the Rain*. Followings are the data followed by an analysis for each personification:

That heart you caught must be waiting for you
(Coda)

Whenever an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities, a personification occurs. In the coda in the second line, the writer gives an abstract object (her heart) the ability to perform an action (to wait for someone, that is, her ex-lover).

3.3. Synecdoche in *Set Fire to the Rain*

As explained in the earlier chapter, a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa is called a synecdoche. Synecdoche is also employed by the writer as a means of expression in her lyrics.

That heart you caught must be waiting for you
(Coda)

When the writer wrote "the heart you caught must be waiting for you", it could not be in a literal sense. What she meant is that she herself is waiting, which is represented by her "heart". Here, a part is made to represent the whole and therefore this is a synecdoche.

4 The Analysis of Figurative Languages in the Song Lyric of *Turning Tables*

After knowing some information about the song, the *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* based on Halliday's theory need to be determined. *Field* refers to the subject matter. This song is about the breakdown of a relationship. *Tenor* refers to the role relationships between the people involved in the interaction. The relationship here is love relationship between a woman (Adele, the author) and her ex-boyfriend.

4.1 Personification in *Turning Tables*

A personification occurs in the first line of the coda.

When the thunder calls for me,
(Coda)

Here, the thunder, which is an inanimate object, is given human qualities or an ability that is the ability to call for someone. Therefore, this is called a personification. In

relation to the contexts of situation, the line "the thunder calls for me" would be best interpreted as representing the writer's courage and readiness to end her relationship with her boyfriend.

4.2 Hyperbole in *Turning Tables*

Hyperbole quite frequently occurs in the lyrics of *Turning Tables*. The whole Verse 1 is full of hyperbolic statement, and so are the third and fourth lines of Verse 2.

Close enough to start <u>a war</u>
<u>All that I have</u> is on the floor
<u>God only</u> knows what we're fighting for
All that I say, <u>you always say more</u>
(Verse 1)

Hyperboles are scattered throughout the entire verse. Firstly, it occurs in the use of the word 'war'. This word is hyperbolically used to mean merely a fight. Then, there is the expression that all that the writer has is on the floor. While it is true that during the fight which involves a party turning the tables things would fall onto the floor, but obviously they are not "all" that the writer has. The line "God only knows what we're fighting for" gives emphasis that both parties are no longer sure what the cause of their problem is. Finally, there is the statement "All that I say, you always say more" which serves to explain that the quarrel has become very intense and seemingly endless.

4.4 Dead Metaphor in *Turning Tables*

Adele is found to use at least two metaphors that are already known and established in the society, whose meanings are agreed upon. They are as follows.

<u>Under your thumb I can't breathe</u>
(Bridge)

The phrase "under one's thumb" is widely used in English when someone wants to convey that he or she is under the control of someone else.

6. CONCLUSION

There are eight kinds of figurative languages found in four songs of Adele such as: personification, metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, allusion, paradox, symbols and dead metaphor. These kinds of figurative languages are used by the writer in order to make her creation in this case the songs look alive so we can feel the condition that the

writer tries to show in that song. The use of the contextual meaning in this study also opens up all the meanings and the purposes from four song lyrics by Adele. The words that firstly look complicated can be elaborated in the contextual meaning so that they can be better understood. So, by using the figurative languages and their contextual meaning, the writer wants to attract our attention and slowly leads us to the theme.

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