

The Analysis of Idioms in Katy Perry's "Prism" Songs Lyrics

Kamila Saleh Sanad

English Department Faculty of Arts – Udayana University
[milasanad@gmail.com]

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mencari tipe-tipe idiom dan menganalisis makna dari idiom pada lirik lagu di album Katy Perry yang berjudul Prism. Teori yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data adalah teori dari McCarthy dan O'dell (2010) tentang tipe-tipe idiom. Selain teori tersebut, teori dari Leech (1981) tentang tipe-tipe makna juga digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisa menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Ada 6 tipe idiom yang ditemukan pada lirik lagu di album Prism, yaitu simile, binomial, euphemism, cliché, fixed statement, dan idioms from other languages. Berdasarkan tipe-tipe idiom yang ditemukan pada data tersebut ditemukan dua tipe makna, yaitu connotative meaning and reflected meaning.

Kata kunci: Idioms, Types, Meanings, Song, Lyrics

1. Background of the Study

Idioms are words, phrases, and expressions that cannot be translated literally. In other words, they have different meanings from the basics ones in a dictionary. According to McCarthy and O'dell (2010), idioms are fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word. It means that idioms cannot be understood by defining separate words. The use of idioms in the song lyrics has become a common thing in order to express the message of the song. The idioms have its role in enriching the meaning of the language with their beautiful words that they created. In the same time, their beautiful words also often confuse people.

When we learn about idioms, we also have to learn the meaning of idiom in order to understand it. Meaning is the thing or idea that a sound, word, sign,

etc. represents (Hornby, 2015). In addition, Palmer (1976:34) states that meaning is notion in semantics which studies sense relations through which assumptions can be either true or false. It is very useful to find out and understanding the meaning of idioms rather than listen without knowing or understanding their meaning in the song lyrics. Therefore, the message in the song lyrics can be delivered to the listeners well.

2. Problems of the Study

- a. What types of idioms are found in Katy Perry's *Prism* album?
- b. What are the meaning of idioms found in Katy Perry's *Prism* album?

3. Aims of the Study

- a. To find out the types of idioms found in Katy Perry's *Prism* album.
- b. To analyze the meaning of idioms found in Katy Perry's *Prism* album.

4. Research Method

4.1 Data Source

The data in this study were taken directly from Katy Perry: *Prism* (2013) album. This album consists of sixteen songs but only ten songs that contain idioms are used as data source.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

In this study, the data were collected using the documentation method. Documentation method is a research conducted by documenting the data related to the taken topic. The process of collecting data was done by browsing the lyrics of songs, listening to the songs and reading the lyrics repeatedly and carefully in order to understand the meaning behind it, and taking notes of every word or phrase which is considered to be idiom then writing it on a separated paper to be analyzed further.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The data were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive method based on the theories. The idioms were categorized according to their types based on the theory proposed by McCarthy and O'dell (2010) and the

meanings of the idioms were analyzed based on the theory proposed by Leech (1981).

4.4 Method and Technique of Presenting Analysis

There are two methods of presenting data according to Sudaryanto (1993) which are formal and informal. In formal method, the data are presented using symbols, tables, or graphs which are aimed to describe the data more easily. On the other hand, in informal method the analysis is descriptively presented in the forms of words and sentences. Since this study applied qualitative method, the data analysis was presented informally in descriptive sentences.

5. Result and Discussion

The data were analyzed based on the theories of Felicity O'dell and Michael McCarthy; and Geoffrey Leech. McCarthy and O'dell's theory are applied in order to find out what type of idioms found in the song lyrics. Then, Leech's theory of meaning is used to find out the meaning of idioms found.

5.1 Types of Idioms in in Katy Perry's "Prism" Album

a. Simile

1. "Now I'm floating like a butterfly stinging like a bee I earned my stripes"
2. "Keep my heart beating like a drum"
3. "Cause I'm coming at you like a dark horse"
4. "...you levitate like a bird like a bird without a cage"

5. "Slow cooking pancakes for my boy, still up, still **fresh as a Daisy**"
6. "When the truth was like **swallowing sand**"
7. "Flying **high as a kite** on your love"

b. Binomial

1. "So **hot and heavy** 'til dawn"
2. "Playing ping pong all night long, everything's all **neon and hazy**"

c. Euphemism

1. "So let me get you **in your birthday suit**"

d. Cliché

1. "I used to **bite my tongue** and **hold my breath**"
2. "Scared to **rock the boat** and make a mess"
3. "I went **from zero, to my own hero**"
4. "All the **dirty laundry** never made me blink one time"
5. "It's **in the palm of your hand** now baby"
6. "Do you ever think that we're just **chasing our tails**?"

e. Fixed Statement

1. "But **down to earth**"
2. "I thank my sister for **keeping my head above the water**"

f. Other Languages

1. "She's got that, **je ne sais quoi**, you know it"

5.2 Meaning Analysis in Katy Perry's "Prism" Album

a. Connotative Meaning

Analysis 1:

*Now I'm floating like a butterfly
Stinging like a bee I earned my*

stripes

I went from zero, to my own hero

The idioms *floating like a butterfly stinging like a bee* and *from zero, to my own hero* have **connotative meanings** (Leech, 1981), as they cannot be translated by looking up the literal meaning in the dictionary.

Analysis 2:

*Take me down to the river
Underneath the blood-orange sun
Say my name like a scripture
Keep my heart beating like a drum*

From Leech's point of view (1981), the simile *my heart beating like a drum* found in this song is classified as a **connotative meaning**, since the idiom cannot be justified from the meaning of each words.

Analysis 3:

*So you wanna lay with magic
Boy, you should know what
you're falling for
Baby do you dare to do this?
Cause I'm coming at you like a dark horse*

The idiom "I'm coming at you like a dark horse" can be classified as having **connotative meaning** since the meaning of the simile cannot be translated by looking up the dictionary (Leech, 1981).

Analysis 4:

*Mark my words
This love will make you levitate
Like a bird
Like a bird without a cage
But down to earth
If you choose to walk away, don't
walk away
It's in the palm of your hand now
baby
This love will make you levitate
like a bird like a bird without a cage,*

in the palm of your hand and *down to earth* are classified having **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981) since their meaning cannot be translated by looking up the meaning of each word in the dictionary.

Analysis 5:

Pop your confetti
Pop your Pérignon
So hot and heavy

The idiom **hot and heavy** can be classified as having **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981), as its meaning cannot be justified by looking up the meaning of each word in the dictionary.

Analysis 6:

I used to bite my tongue and hold my breath
Scared to rock the boat and make a mess

The idioms **bite my tongue, hold my breath** and **rock the boat** are classified as having **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981) since their meaning cannot be justified by looking up the meaning of each word in the dictionary.

Analysis 7:

Oh no, did I get too close?
Oh, did I almost see what's really on the inside?
All your insecurities
All the dirty laundry
Never made me blink one time

The idiom **dirty laundry** can be classified as having the **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981), since its meaning cannot be translated literally by looking up the meaning of each word in the dictionary.

Analysis 8:

Do you ever think that we're just chasing our tails?

The idiom **chasing our tails** can be classified into **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981), since its meaning cannot be translated literally by looking up the meaning of each word in the dictionary.

Analysis 9:

I thank my sister for keeping my head above the water

The idiom **keeping my head above the water** can be classified as having the **connotative meaning** (Leech, 1981), since the meaning of each word cannot be translated literally by looking up in the dictionary.

Analysis 10:

She's got that, je ne sais quoi, you know it

From Leech's point of view (1981), the idiom **je ne sais quoi** is classified as having the **connotative meaning**, since its meaning cannot be translated literally by looking up its meaning in the dictionary.

b. Reflected Meaning

Analysis 1:

Slow cooking pancakes for my boy, still up, still fresh as a Daisy
Playing ping pong all night long, everything's all neon and hazy

The simile **fresh as a Daisy** and the binomial **neon and hazy** are classified as having **reflected meaning** (Leech, 1981) as their meanings occur in cases of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense. The song writer chose the expression **fresh as a Daisy** rather than the expression 'full of energy' or 'really enjoying' and chose **neon and hazy** rather than the word

'drink' or 'smoking' to give softer sense to his lyrics.

Analysis 2:

*So let me get you **in your birthday suit***

Based on the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1981), the idiom **in your birthday suit** was classified as having **reflected meaning** since its meaning occurs in cases of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense. The songwriter chose the expression **in your birthday suit** rather than the word 'naked' or 'bare' to give softer sense to his lyric.

Analysis 3:

*I thank my sister for keeping my head above the water
When **the truth was like swallowing sand***

From Leech's point of view (1981), the simile **the truth was like swallowing sand** is classified into **reflected meaning**, since its meaning occurs in cases of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense. The writer used words **swallowing sand** rather than the words 'hard to accept' or 'hard to do' to give dramatic effect to his lyric.

Analysis 4:

*Flying **high as a kite** on your love*

The idiom **high as a kite** can be classified as having **reflected meaning**, as its meaning occurs in case of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense (Leech, 1981). The songwriter chose the simile **high as a kite** rather than the word 'drunk' to give softer sense to his lyric.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that there are six types of idioms found in the Katy Perry's *Prism* song lyrics; they are: simile, binomial, euphemism, cliché, fixed statement, and idiom from other language. In the song lyrics as data source, there are seven similes, two binomials, one euphemism, six clichés, two fixed statement, and one idiom from other language found. Added together, there are nineteen idioms that found.

From seven there are only two types of meaning found in the Katy Perry's *Prism* song lyrics. They are, connotative meaning and reflected meaning. These two types of meaning found in the song lyrics because they use words that cannot be translated by looking up the literal meaning in the dictionary and they also use referred words to give dramatic effect or to give softer sense to the lyrics.

7. Bibliography

- Hornby, A.S. 2015. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 9th Edition. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Leech, G. 1974. Semantics (online). England: Penguin Books. Available on https://yanjianghk.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/geoffrey_leech_semantics_the_study_of_meaning.pdf
- O'dell, F. & McCarthy, M. 2010. English Idioms in Use Advanced (online). United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Available on <https://psv4.vk.me/c537219/u30>

[207984/docs/e319f53b5e64/english-idioms-in-use-advanced.pdf](#)

Sudaryanto. (1993). *Metode dan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa: Pengantar Penelitian Wahana Kebudayaan secara Linguistik*. Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana University Press.