

Figurative Language in The Song Lyrics of Passenger's Album "All the Little Lights"

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Abstract

Figurative language can appear in various types and the meaning may not be determined by its components. This study aims to identify and analyze the meaning of figurative language found in the song lyrics "Passenger's album all the little lights". There are two theories used in this study. The first is the theory of figurative language proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger, and the second is the theory of meaning by Leech as the supporting theory. The data in this study were directly taken from Passenger's fourth album. The album consists of twelve songs. They were collected by documentation method and note taking technique. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and descriptive method. This study applied informal method to present the analysis. The result of this study shows that there are nine types of figurative language found in song lyrics. They were allusion, simile, metaphor, irony, personification, hyperbole, dead metaphor, metonymy, and paradox. Most of the figurative expressions found in those songs were similes. Four out of seven types of meaning used in those lyrics in order to understand the figurative meaning in the song lyrics; they were connotative meaning, conceptual meaning, affective meaning, and collocative meaning. All the songs which are analyzed have the main theme about life and love.

Keyword: *Passenger, figurative language, meaning*

Abstrak

Bahasa figuratif bisa muncul dalam berbagai jenis dan artinya mungkin tidak ditentukan oleh komponennya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis makna bahasa kiasan yang terdapat pada lirik lagu "album Passenger semua cahaya kecil". Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Yang pertama adalah teori bahasa figuratif yang diajukan oleh Knickerbocker dan Reninger, dan yang kedua adalah teori makna oleh Leech sebagai teori pendukungnya. Data dalam penelitian ini langsung diambil dari album keempat Passsenger. Album ini terdiri dari dua belas lagu. Lagu-lagu tersebut dikumpulkan dengan metode dokumentasi dan teknik mencatat. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan deskriptif. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode informal untuk dipresentasikan analisisnya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada sembilan jenis bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan pada lirik lagu. Jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan tersebut adalah kiasan, simile, metafora, ironi, personifikasi, hiperbola, metafora mati, Metonymy, dan paradoks. Sebagian besar bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam lagu-lagu tersebut tergolong dalam simile. Empat dari tujuh jenis makna yang digunakan dalam lirik tersebut untuk memahami makna figuratif dalam lirik lagu; makna-makna

tersebut adalah makna konotatif, makna konseptual, makna afektif, dan makna kolektif. Semua lagu yang dianalisis memiliki tema utama tentang kehidupan dan cinta.

Kata kunci: *Passenger, bahasa figuratif, makna*

1. Background

Language is very important for communication in society. We cannot communicate in a genuine sense without language. Language is art because through language we can share everything which is related especially to literal work that is usually used in the art of language or usually called figurative language. It is applied in any communication forms such as in conversation, article, novel, song lyric, poem, newspaper and so on. According to (Knickerbocker, 1963: 637), figurative language is also called metaphorical language or simply metaphor because it means to carry the meaning from literal meaning to the figurative level. Many authors use this kind of language style for transferring their impression of something to give special effects in understanding every sentence of their works.

There are plenty of ways to express our feeling through language such as writing a song. A song is one of the media used to express the feeling which is sung by the human voice, it is interesting to be analyzed because many varieties of words can be found in the song lyrics. Some lyrics are similar to the poem because some words in the lyrics are composed of figurative languages similar to poetries. The beautiful voice is not the only factor that can be adored by the audience, of course, beautiful words are needed to make the song more interesting to be heard. In a song, we can also get knowledge by interpreting the languages in the song lyric while we use listening and exploring the deepest meaning of those lyrics.

The study is focused on the analysis of the song album "all the little lights" it is the fourth studio album by English singer-song writer Passenger and was released on 24 February 2012. The album contains 12 tracks of the song, including the hits taken as the sample in this research, besides the beautiful voice of the singer, the lyric of the song also contains beautiful words that catching attention to the audience and drugging their imagination into what is explained by the figurative language in the song lyrics. Those beautiful lyrics or those figurative languages would be useless if the listeners or audience could not fully understand what the true meaning behind those the song lyrics is. In order to understand the meaning, it is important to learn how to interpret figurative language. Therefore, it is very interesting to analyze the figurative language found within the song lyric more deeply.

Figurative language provides so many variants of styles to say something of different styles. Figure of speech has a very important role in the song lyrics or any other literally work. The figurative language also includes terms like simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony, paradox, and so on. By using figurative language, writers can create emotion and imagination from their writing; so, figurative language makes expressing meaning through writing easier and more relatable to the reader.

2. Problem of the Study

- a) What types of figurative language are used in the song lyrics of passenger's album "all the little lights"?
- b) What kinds of meanings are found in the song lyrics of

passenger's album "all the little lights"?

3. Aims of the Study

- a) To find as well as to identify the types of figurative language in the song lyrics.
- b) To reveal the meaning of figurative language within the song.

4. Research method

The research method is the way to solve the problem or the procedure for understanding the object under study. In conducting research, there are several methods applied in the process of finding, collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting data. The research method of this paper are divided into three sections, namely data source, method and technique of collecting data, method and technique of analyzing data, and method and technique of presenting data.

4.1 Data source

The data source of this study used primary data because the data were taken from passenger's album "all the little lights", it is the fourth studio album by English singer-songwriter Passenger and was released on 24 February 2012. The album contains 12 tracks of the song including the hits. From the album, there are five songs that contain figurative language chosen. The five songs are: things that stop you dreaming, let her go, all the little lights, staring at the star, and lives for the living, which were taken as the sample in this research. All these songs were chosen because these songs are the most well-known songs in the whole of Passenger's album and one of the songs in this album, "Let Her Go," broke through as a hit in Europe. By the end of the year, the single has reached No. 1 in 16 countries, including Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Italy, and Belgium.

4.2 Method and technique of collecting data

The method of collecting data used in this study was documentation method. Documentation method was used to obtain the data from Passenger's fourth album. Note taking technique was applied in order to mark down the relevant data for the study.

There are several stages used to collect the data. Firstly, the song was chosen by downloading the song and the lyrics from the internet. Secondly, the songs that had been downloaded were carefully listened to in order to find out the types of figurative language. Thirdly, the song lyrics on the print out was marked and the figurative Languages and their meanings were noted down in order to make them easier to be analyzed. The data were analyzed based on the theories adopted in this study.

4.3 Method and technique of analyzing data

The data of the study were qualitatively analyzed. Qualitative means that the data are analyzed using deep explanation or description and not involving measurement or statistics.

First, the data that had been marked were classified using the theory of figurative language proposed by KL. Knickerbocker and H. Williard Reninger (1963), After that, the meaning of the data was described using the theory of meaning developed by Leech (1974).

4.4 Method and technique of presenting analysis

The analysis of this study was presented informally. In the informal method, each problem in this study was presented narratively in order to make the analysis understood easily.

5. Results and discussions

There are several types of figurative language and their meaning found on song lyrics of Passenger's album "All the Little Lights". The types of figurative language were categorized according to the theory of figurative language and theory of meaning. The analysis of figurative language in the song lyrics are explained as follows:

5.1 Figurative Language

Figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language or simply metaphor because its Greek ancestor "Metaphereien" means to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning (meta = beyond = pherein = to bring – i.e to bring beyond, it has basic function to carry the meaning from literal meaning to the figurative level. There are several types of figurative language found in the song lyrics as presented below:

a. Simile

[5-1] A heart that beats *like* a tap that leaks (song 1, line 4)

[5-2] My word is true *like* the sky is blue (song 1, line 22)

From the data observed, there are two types of similes found in the song lyric. First one a simile was found in line four. Simile is state of comparison of two dissimilar things introduced by the words "like" or "as". The word "like" in the fourth line is to compare between heartbeats and tap leaks. Next, in line fifteen the word *my word is true like the sky is blue* is one of an example from simile since there are keywords for simile found; which is like. It is comparison of word and blue sky.

b. Metaphor

[5-3] Little lights in my heart (song 3, line 4)

[5-4] Well grey clouds wrapped around the town like elastic (song 5, line 1)

First one a metaphor was found in line four. Metaphor is a process of comparing two things as if they are one. Passenger as the composer used *Little lights* to make the situation more poetic. The lights in the song are the purity of heart and emotions, these lights are saying that as the life progresses these lights will eventually go out, and the lights which made the person the joyful, pure and loving one.

Second one a metaphor was found in line one. Metaphor is a process of comparing two things as if they are one. Passenger as the composer used *grey clouds* to make the situation more poetic.

c. Personification

[5-5] These hearts are sad and eyes are tired (song 4, line 5)

[5-6] The evening pulled the moon out (song 5, line 14)

[5-7] My Heart is Honest (song, song 1, line 20)

There are two types of personifications found in the song lyrics. *Hearts are sad and eyes are tired* is a personification because the word *sad* and *tired* are human characteristics, so the writer gives human characteristics through the word to express his feeling. *The evening pulled the moon out* is a personification because it gives the human characteristic to an abstract idea. *My heart is honest* is a personification because it gives the human characteristic to an object.

d. Metonymy

[5-10] Staring at the bottom of your glass (song 2, line 8)

There is one type of Metonymy found in the song lyrics. The first one is

metonymy found in line eight, the word *glass* is directly into reflection. Staring at the bottom of your glass is a term of drinking and depression where the writer feels depressed when his beloved one most likely gone.

e. Hyperbole

[5-8] Everything you touch surely dies (song 2, line 13)

Everything you touch surely dies is a hyperbole. Hyperbole is an exaggeration of the important word or event, while understatement refers to downplaying the importance. It is a hyperbole since the writer exaggerates the mistake he has made in his life. He always thought and dreamed about her but in reality, it did not bring her back to him.

f. Irony

[5-9] You learn to need the things that stop you dreaming (song 1, line 33)

Line thirty-three shown in the data above is irony. The sentence *You learn to need the things that stop you dreaming* is an irony because no one wanted to learn the things that stop a dream, but we must learn the thing that made the dream come true through an effort and perseverance.

g. Dead Metaphor

[5-10] I stumbled down to the stomach of the town (song 5, line 20)

Type of figurative language found in this song is Dead Metaphor. Based on the table above, in line twenty *the stomach of the town* shows the specific part of the town, which becomes the central part of the topic

h. Paradox

[5-11] We're born with millions of little lights shining in the dark (song 3, line 10)

We're born with millions of little lights shining in the dark is one of an example from paradox, and is illogical because in general, we were born by the medical team, not by the millions of little lights.

i Allusion

[5-12] Only miss the sun when it starts to snow (song 2, line 2)

There is one type of Figurative Language found in the second song lyric. *Only miss the sun when it starts to snow* as shown in the data above is an allusion of a reference to warmth. The use of allusion is a reference to some well-known place, event, or person.

5.2 Types of Meaning

Leech (1974:10-23), the meaning of these words is complex; it has components such as an idea, quality, personal feeling, and relationship. There are several types of figurative language found in the song lyrics as presented below:

a Connotative Meaning

[5-1] Little lights in my heart (song 3, line 4)

Little lights as is shown in the data above is metaphor which has an innocence and the purity of heart and emotions, the song which symbolized these lights said that as the life progresses these lights will eventually go out, and the lights which make the person joyful, pure and loving person, will change.

b. Conceptual Meaning

[5-2] As we try desperately to sleep (song 4, line 4)

As we try desperately to sleep, this is hyperbole where the writer exaggerated the thing that can be made easily. This figurative expression can be known with the theory of conceptual meaning which means someone who is tried of his hardest, but expects things to happen right away and quit. It keeps him in a position that he cannot realize his dreams of bettering his life, so it's kind of a sad lyric about his regrets in life. Or at least the regret of the person's point of view that writer was writing from.

c. Affective Meaning

[5-3] Everything you touch surely dies (song 2, line 13)

The hyperbole words can be understood based on the Leech's theory of affective meaning in line thirteen. Affective meaning can often be called explicitly through the conceptual or connotative meaning of the word used. In this line, *it is shown* means that he has made other mistakes in his life, maybe it's not his first heartbreak, so now he views himself as a repeated failure. It represents the idea that maybe he's not good for anyone or anything.

d. Collocative Meaning

[5-4] Staring at the bottom of your glass (song 1, line 8)

The analysis in line eight, the word *glass* shows us metonymy which does not refer to usual glass. And by using collocative meaning the word glass can be collocated as a symbol of drinking and depression. She's in your mind and you pray that she'll come back but the reality is she's most likely gone.

6. Conclusions

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following points can be drawn as conclusions:

There are nine types of figurative language found in song lyrics. They were *allusion, simile, metaphor, irony, personification, hyperbole, dead metaphor, metonymy, and paradox*. All the songs which are analysed have the same main theme in which they are about life and love. Most of the figurative languages found in those songs were classified as similes.

Moreover, there were four types of meaning found in the song lyrics. They were *connotative meaning, conceptual meaning, affective meaning, and collocative meaning*. Most types of meaning found in those songs were classified in connotative meaning, such as in all little lights song, the lyric Little lights in line four as is shown in the data above is the metaphor which has an innocence and the purity of heart and emotions, the song symbolized these lights said that as the life progresses these lights will eventually go out, and the lights which makes the person joyful, pure and loving person, will change.

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