

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SONG LYRICS BY SAOSIN BAND, NELLY FURTADO AND BRUNO MARS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan menganalisa makna yang tersirat dalam figuratif yang ditemukan dalam empat lagu antara lain dua lagu oleh Saosin Band, satu lagu Nelly Furtado, dan satu lagu oleh Bruno Mars. Keempat lagu yang digunakan sebagai sumber data memiliki cerita dan genre yang berbeda. Oleh karena itu variasi figuratif yang digunakan sangat menarik untuk diteliti. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif dan menerapkan metode dokumentasi dalam pengumpulan data. Teori terkait jenis figuratif oleh Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) diterapkan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan teori makna oleh Leech (1974) untuk menganalisa makna figuratif yang ditemukan. Data menunjukkan bahwa jenis figuratif yang ditemukan adalah metafor, simile, personifikasi, alusi, sinekdok, simbol dan hiperbola. Metafor adalah jenis yang muncul paling banyak. Makna figuratif tersebut secara umum bersifat konotatif tetapi ada juga yang bersifat afektif.

Kata Kunci: Figuratif, Jenis dan 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.

Saosin, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars are recognized worldwide as favourite singers. Their songs are interesting and compelling. Figurative

expressions are also present in their songs. It is interesting to analyze the figurative language in these song lyrics as they are different from each other. Some figurative expressions contained in those songs require a deep analysis. Each song conveys different message. One is about a spiritual struggle and the rests are about love in different situations. Therefore, their songs were chosen as data source in this study. The figurative expressions in their songs were analyzed by implementing the theory of 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. Problems of the Study

Dealing with the use of figurative language in song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars, followings are two problems which can be formulated based on the background of this study:

1. What are the types of figurative language used in the song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars?
2. What is the meaning conveyed in the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars?

3. Aims and the Significance of the Study

The aims of this study are closely related to the problems formulated above. The aims of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of figurative language used in the song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars.
2. To analyze the meaning conveyed in the figurative language used in the song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars.

Hopefully this study is beneficial to those interested in the analysis of figurative language or those who are interested in the songs of the mentioned singers above.

4. Research Method

This is a qualitative research. There are four songs used as data sources in this study. They are two songs by Saosin Band entitled “Is this Real” from the album “In Search of Solid Ground” (2009) and “Love Maker” taken from the album “The Grey EP” (2008), one song written and sung by Nelly Furtado entitled "I'm Like a Bird" as the first single from her first album *Whoa, Nelly!*, and one song by Bruno Mars entitled "It Will Rain" released on September 27, 2011 and appeared on the soundtrack to the film *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1*.

A documentation method was applied in collecting the data in this study. There are three steps in collecting the data. First, the four 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 was searched and gathered as additional data to support the analysis for example the biography of the singers and the background information related to the making of the songs. Finally, while listening to the songs, the figurative language contained in the songs were underlined and noted using a note taking technique.

There were several steps taken 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 meaning was analyzed. The biography of the singers and the background information related to the making of the songs serve 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 are provided in descriptive sentences.

5. Research Findings and Analysis

5.1 The Types of Figurative Found in the Song Lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars

The types of figurative found in the four songs are summarised in the following table.

No.	Data Source	Figuratives Found
1.	<i>Is This Real</i> by Saosin Band	metaphors, allusion and synecdoche
2.	<i>Love Maker</i> by Saosin Band	Symbols and allusion
3.	<i>I'm Like a Bird</i> by Nelly Furtado	Simile
4.	<i>It Will Rain</i> by Bruno Mars	metaphors, hyperboles, and simile

5.2 The Analysis of the Meaning Implied in the Figurative Found in the Song Lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars

In this article, only two analyses of the meaning found in the figuratives present in the song lyrics by Saosin Band, Nelly Furtado and Bruno Mars are presented.

5.2.1 Allusion in *Is This Real* by Saosin Band

Below are the full lyrics of *Is This Real* performed by Saosin, as copied from <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyrics>. The allusion found is underlined.

Is This Real

Verse 1

Time's runnin' out and I have been betrayed

Gotta cast my stone into the lake
That's all it takes my son then you are safe

When the end comes, everything's okay

Bridge

Take my skin, we're diving in
 It doesn't make a difference if I sink or swim
 There's a line drawn thin or so they tell me

I'll never know the difference if we..sink or swim!

Chorus

Is it real, the choices that we make
 The smiles that we fake
 I know it hurts but is it real
 The choices that we make
 The smiles that we fake for my own sake
 I know it hurts but is it...

Verse 2

I can't help feelin' like I've been betrayed
 Shoulda cast that stone into the lake

Chased in the wrong direction, led
astray
And I know you don't believe a
single word you say

Bridge

Take my skin, we're diving in
It doesn't make a difference if I sink
or swim
There's a line drawn thin or so they
tell me
I'll never know the difference if
we..sink or swim!

Repeat Chorus

Is it real, the choices that we make
The smiles that we fake
I know it hurts but is it real
The choices that we make
The smiles that we fake for my own
sake

Coda

I don't want to buy into the lie
Stare up at the sky but is it real?
Show me something real.
I don't want to buy into your lies
Stare up at the sky and say "I
surrender myself for this"
I'll take the blame
I surrender myself for this, I'll take
the blame
For peace or war, for rich or poor
For loss, for gain, for everything
that I loved
I see, I feel, I've become one with
words not real to me
So I'll stare in silence
Forward, backwards
Just to realize we all fall down

Is This Real is a song about a spiritual struggle of the writer in which he questions his belief and life in general. We can sense a tone of loss of hope and disappointment in each line of the lyrics. It seems that the writer is no longer able to distinguish what is true and what is false, what is real and what is unreal. These results from an event in his life where the principles he thought were absolute proved to be mere lies. This causes in him a great spiritual battle where his beliefs are conflicting with reality. Therefore, the relationship here is reflective; the people involved in the lyrics are the writer and his self. This song is about a spiritual battle where the writer questions his own beliefs. Here, the writer expresses his doubt and disappointment through the combination of literal and figurative language. The figuratives used give pictures of the spiritual state of the writer and convey deeper meaning than that of the literal one.

An allusion appears in the first verse of the lyrics, which makes a reference to a basic doctrine in the Bible. The personnel of Saosin band grew up in a Mormon family and therefore were raised with Mormon principles. Mormon is one of the religious sects in Christianity. Therefore, they often make a reference to the teaching and verses in the Bible. The allusion is presented and analysed below:

Verse 1

That's all it takes my son then you are safe

When the end comes, everything's okay

Analysis

As stated previously, the lyrics in its entirety is about someone who has come to question his own belief (religiously). The last two lines of Verse 1 seem to suggest the belief that the writer is questioning. Here, the writer seems to be recalling what someone said to him years ago (probably his spiritual guru). They refer to a Christian belief that is commonly known, that only by believing in God can humankind be saved. This is extracted from the Bible, from the book of John 3:16, which says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

After knowing some information about the figurative language used in Verse 1, we can now analyze the meaning. These figurative lines in the lyrics also contain connotative meaning. They have values above their purely conceptual content. For example, to understand what is meant by ‘safe’ and ‘the end’, we need to have certain knowledge and experience, especially about religions and beliefs. Those words, conceptually, don’t excite in our hearts any sentiment, but in the lyrics, the writer is using the word ‘safe’ to suggest a condition of being saved from eternal punishment, and the word ‘the end’ to suggest the end of time, the end of the world, the end of everything.

5.2.2 Methapor in *It Will Rain* by Bruno Mars

The following are the full lyrics of *It Will Rain* written and sung by Bruno Mars, as copied from <http://www.lyrics.net/read/b/bruno-mars-lyrics/it-will-rain-lyrics.html>.

It Will Rain

Verse 1

If you ever leave me, baby,
Leave some morphine at my door

Cause it would take a whole lot of
medication
To realize what we used to have,
We don't have it anymore.

Bridge

There's no religion that could save me
No matter how long my knees are on the floor, oh
So keep in mind all the sacrifices I'm making
To keep you by my side
And keep you from walking out the door.

Chorus

Cause there'll be no sunlight if I lose you, baby
There'll be no clear skies if I lose you, baby
Just like the clouds, my eyes will do the same if you walk away
Everyday, it will rain, rain, rain

Verse 2

I'll never be your mother's favorite
Your daddy can't even look me in the eye
Oooh if I were in their shoes, I'd be doing the same thing
Saying there goes my little girl walking with that troublesome guy

Bridge

But they're just afraid of something they can't understand
Oooh well little darling watch me change their minds

Yeah for you I'll try, I'll try, I'll try, I'll try
I'll pick up these broken pieces 'til I'm bleeding
If that'll make it right

Repeat Chorus

Cause there'll be no sunlight if I lose you, baby
There'll be no clear skies if I lose you, baby
Just like the clouds, my eyes will do the same if you walk away
Every day, it will rain, rain, rain

Bridge

Oooh Don't just say goodbye, don't just say, goodbye
I'll pick up these broken pieces 'til I'm bleeding
If that'll make it right

Repeat Chorus

Cause there'll be no sunlight if I lose you, baby
There'll be no clear skies if I lose you, baby
Just like the clouds, my eyes will do the same if you walk away
Every day, it will rain, rain, rain...

Some metaphors were found throughout the lyrics to the song *It Will Rain*.

Below are the data followed by an analysis for each figurative:

Verse 1

If you ever leave me, baby,

Leave some morphine at my door

Cause it would take a whole lot of medication

To realize what we used to have,

We don't have it anymore.

Analysis:

Verse 1 of the lyrics shows how afraid the man (Edward, if related to the movie *Breaking Dawn*) is of losing his lover (Bella). The first two lines are related to the last three lines. The lines ‘If you ever leave me, baby’ and ‘Leave some morphine at my door’ describe how painful his feeling is if his lover ever leaves him. Morphine is a powerful and addictive drug used for stopping pain and making people calmer. However, the morphine in this line should not be interpreted literally; instead there is a connotative meaning within this line. This line implies that if the man loses his girl, he will feel great sadness. The writer of this song (Bruno Mars) makes a comparison of a thing to another that has something in common. This style is called a metaphor. The next three lines make the meaning of the metaphor in the first two lines clearer. The lines ‘Cause it would take a whole lot of medication’, ‘To realize what we used to have’, and ‘We don’t have it anymore’ tell the listeners that the man (Edward) would need a lot of efforts and time to heal the pain if the woman (Bella) leaves him. The morphine represents the idea that the great sadness will take much effort to relieve it. The phrase *a whole lot of medication* in the third line of the Verse 1 may refer to much time and efforts (not literally means medicine).

According to the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1974), these lyrics contain connotative meaning. Connotation is the real-world value a speaker associates with an expression. We can take the word ‘morphine’ from the song lyrics as an example. When we analyze word meanings, we should distinguish two separate concepts called denotative and connotative meaning. The word “morphine” denotes a drug used for stopping pain but it also connotes a sense of delusion, which is a false belief about ourselves or the situation we are in. In the lyrics, it connotes much time and effort. It is implied that the singer needs much time and effort to forget his lover if she leaves him because every memory they have will always reminds him of her.

6. Conclusions

Based on the formulated problems in this study and the result of the analysis, there are two conclusions drawn. First, the figurative types found in the four songs are various with *metaphor* as the most frequent type found. *Is This Real* by Saosin Band is a song about a spiritual struggle of the writer in which he questions his belief and life in general. There are several types of figuratives found in this song; they are several metaphors, one allusion and one synecdoche. Meanwhile, another song by Saosin Band entitled *Love Maker* is a song about a failed relationship because one party in the relationship fails to give the other a meaningful relationship. There are some symbols found and one allusion, which makes a reference to the principles in the Bible. Nelly Furtado in her song *I'm Like a Bird* describes the complexity of her love relationship, in which there is the impossibility of her making a commitment in the relationship due to her nature, like a bird, free from any bound of relationship. She mainly uses literal expression and there is one simile that is effectively employed in the chorus part of the song lyrics. This is a good technique in giving emphasis on the meaning of the lyrics. Meanwhile, Bruno Mars employs several metaphors, hyperboles, and one simile in his song entitled *It Will Rain*.

Second, the meaning of the figuratives found is mainly connotative meaning, for example one metaphor in *Is This Real* by Saosin Band, 'cast my stone in the lake' that cannot be interpreted literally. It does not mean that the writer casts a stone into the lake in a literal sense. According to the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1974), the figurative line in the lyrics contains connotative meaning, as it has values above its purely conceptual content. The meaning is metaphorical; what he means is that he has got to take an action concerning his doubt in his own belief. As is known, casting a stone into the lake will cause a ripple effect and the ripples will get back to the person who has cast the stone. Before he experienced the doubt, he had a still life; everything was peaceful and quiet. Then, some events led him to question his belief and he feels that it is now the time to seek the truth and 'break the silence'. This is what is referred to by the line 'gotta cast a stone into the lake'

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