



Analysis of Figurative Language, and Meaning in the Four Album by One Direction

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the figurative meaning of One Direction's song lyrics, especially in the album "Four." In this study, qualitative methods were used to carry out a well-organized description of the identified problems. The theme contained in the album "Four" is conveyed using the theory of McCarthy (1999). Theory from Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963) used to find the kinds of figurative language in song lyrics and to analyze the meaning of the figurative language used theory from Leech (1985). A singer, in expressing ideas or conveying feelings that are felt, is poured in song lyrics so the message of the implied meaning can be conveyed to the audience. In this study, seven figurative languages can be found, 3 of which are the most dominant or often used in hyperbole, personification, and simile in song lyrics. In this study, the meaning of each lyric contained in the song can be explained by the meaning contained in the album, which is about a man who is in love with a woman. Nonetheless, his love is not reciprocated, and he is also looking for lost love and wants to return to the way it used to be. In conclusion, the use of figurative language in song lyrics makes the song more interesting and has its meaning in adding messages contained in each figurative language itself.

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1. Introduction

Expressing feelings in literary work that can be felt by other people and sung to convey the message contained in it is literary work in the form of a song. Understanding the meaning of the lyrics is necessary in order to express feelings in songs. The form delivery in the song is presented in the form of a sentence or lyric that used a lot of figurative languages (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007). Figurative language becomes significant in song verses since lyricists can pass on messages that show the magnificence and

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uniqueness of the tune to individuals who hear or understand it (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Due to the figurative language in the song, it will have an alternate; however, it has special importance whenever deciphered, and audience members are more intrigued to tune in or read the lyrics. Thus, with the figurative language in a song, the audience feels curious and finds out about the meaning contained in the figurative language (Ritchie, 2013; Kövecses, 2010).

In order to convey the significant meaning of the figurative language contained in this album, it is necessary to know about the themes used in the album. According to McCarthy (1999), the theme is the main idea about life and has a message to convey in a literary work. In the album “Four” by One Direction, most of the songs on the album are about love where someone is in love and willing to do anything to get what they want but one-sided love, and some of the themes are about love with an ex-lover who wants come back again. The album contains lyrics containing figurative language that the singer conveys to the lover.

Figurative language is a word or sentence that is usually found in literary works and has its message or meaning to be conveyed (Gibbs, 2023). Figurative language is defined as the use of words or expressions with multiple meanings and multiple contexts (see Garmendia, 2023). The most common figurative language found in literary works is poetry and song (Dewi, 2020). According to Leech (1985), meaning is a word that is interconnected and becomes complex. The importance of figurative language in the song can increase the ability to understand the meaning of the figurative in the lyrics. It is used to express an idea or feeling that is felt in a song accompanied by music (Keraf, 2006). However, the figurative language found in songs can cause mistaken assumptions in the audience. Furthermore, this misconception can cause the importance or message of the song not to be passed as expected by the audience. This research can increase the listener’s interest and insight into figurative language, particularly those utilized in songs, with the goal that the audience can partake in the song and also figure out the importance anticipated by the singer. Analyzing the figurative language of song lyrics in “Four” albums by One Direction is interesting because researchers want to know the figurative and the message conveyed in the lyrics to the audience in “Four” albums by One Direction, has a lot of figurative language in the lyrics.

2. Literature Review

There are many studies related to figurative language. Figurative language is a fascinating topic in the field of pragmatics, which is often studied not only at the linguistic level but also in interdisciplinary sciences, for example, concerning communication problems (see Athanasiadou, 2024; Buehler et al., 2024; Falkum & Köder, 2020; Giang & Inho, 2015; Ibáñez & Cervel, 2023; Peel et al., 2023). Besides that, figurative language analysis is not only carried out on song lyrics but also on brands, logos, and even symbols (see Brdar-Szabó & Brdar, 2023; Colston, 2020; Gómez-Moreno, 2014; Lencastre et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the following research focused on examining lyrics—first, a research conducted by Dewi (2020), which uses song lyrics as source data. As a result, hyperbole is the dominant figurative language found. Second, research done by Yunitasari (2017) used song lyrics as primary data. This research focused on analyzing the message implied in the figurative language. Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2019) found that the figurative language inside the tune is overwhelmed by redundancy, which implies that the vocalist wanted to underline and solidify the importance and feeling of the singer in the music

lyrics. Each expression and line with figurative language has similarities that imply denotative and connotative meanings, which implies that it offers stylish qualities and shades that are significant to the song.

The fourth study is an article; it was carried out by Yunanda et al. (2021) entitled “The Analysis of Figurative Language in Song Lyric by Idina Menzel.” The purpose of this study was to conclude the kind of figurative language utilized and the meaning displayed with the guide of the figurative language inside the three songs of Idina Menzel. Conveying meaning can be useful for increasing knowledge of figurative languages, such as increasing student’s proficiency in inspiration, particularly in figurative language perception, and understudies turning out to be more imaginative and basic. This observation uses a descriptive qualitative technique. The difference from Fahri’s research is that the research explains the meaning or message conveyed without using theory from experts, while this study used theory by Leech (1985).

The last study is an article that was carried out by Palguna et al. (2021) entitled “The Analysis of Figurative Language on Passenger Song Lyric in Runaway Album.” This research is planned to figure out the type of figurative language, as well as the importance of using figurative language in Passenger’s songs. There are six kinds of figurative language in the Passenger song in the Runaway album, namely personification, metaphor, symbol, simile, imagery, and overstatement. The similarity with this study is the theory used to analyze the meaning of figurative language, which Leech (1985) developed. The study used a different method, which is the descriptive method.

The five kinds of research referred to above show the various information sources utilized in the review. It can be concluded that every study has an identical item to research figurative language; however, the distinction is the research data and the theory used by each study. Based on the explanation of the previous research, this current research aims to analyze the themes contained in the song, analyze the dominant figurative language, and understand the message conveyed in the song lyrics.

3. Method

The One Direction album “Four,” which was produced by Columbia Records, became the source of research data. The group from London wrote and sang the songs contained in the album, which was released on November 14, 2014; heartbreak, feelings of falling in love, and despair are the themes contained in the songs. The album “Four” is examined to find messages from figurative language conveyed through lyrics. In the album “Four,” there are 12 songs analyzed in this study: *Steal My Girl*, *Where Do Broken Home*, *Ready to Run*, *18*, *Fools Golds*, *Night Changes*, *Girls Almighty*, *Spaces*, *Fireproof*, *No Control*, *Clods*, *Stockholm Syndrome*. The main method used in this study is the qualitative method to obtain the data.

There are three steps carried out in the study. First, listening to the songs in the album repeatedly to understand the theme of the song. Take note of the lyrics that contain figurative language and classify them according to the type of figurative language (Gay et al., 2012). The qualitative method is the method of choice for this study, with the aim of knowing how the song lyrics are analyzed. This study explains the themes contained in the song proposed by McCarthy (1999). However, the focus is to find the dominant figurative language used in the song lyrics on the album “Four” by using the theory of Knickerbocker and Reningger (1963) to find the type and analyze the meaning used theory by Leech (1985). At present, the results are formal and informal. The formal presentation used the form of a desk to reveal the results and percentages of research

within the type of figurative language. The informal presentation used method descriptive paragraphs to explain and analyze the type of classification and its meaning from the lyrics.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Figurative meaning in the song lyrics of *One Direction*

The album “Four” of One Direction contains seven types of figurative language: hyperbole, personification, simile, metaphor, irony, allusion, and paradox.

Table 1. The Occurrence of Referential Function

Types of Figurative Language	Occurrence	Percentage
Hyperbole	6	30%
Personification	5	25%
Simile	4	20%
Metaphor	2	10%
Irony	1	5%
Allusion	1	5%
Paradox	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Based on the data in Table 1, the dominant figurative language used is hyperbole, with 6 data or 30%; personification, with 5 data or 25%; and simile, with 4 data or 20%. These are the most dominant figurative language within the lyrics of the album “Four” by One Direction. Meanwhile, figurative language has at least 1 data or 5%.

1) Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an unreal exaggeration to emphasize the real situation used for special effects in the sentence (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963).

Data 1: There’s a devil in your smile, it’s chasing me
(Ready to Run, line 5)

The lyrics above are included in the hyperbole category because, in the lyrics, there is an emphasis that gives the lyrics an exaggerated effect. The word devil in your smile is included in a hyperbole category; in reality, there is no smile similar to the devil. As mentioned by Leech (1985), connotative means is the conversation cost of an expression over and above its basic conceptual content. The lyrics above are covered within the category of connotative, which means. The word devil inside the lyric conveys an explanation of a thing that is very difficult or awkward to do or deal with. In using the devil in your smile in the song, the singer wants to convey this to the ex-lover. According to the theme theory by McCarthy (1997), the role of a theme is very important in a literary work to find out the main idea contained in this song, which tells about love, namely a man who likes a woman and wants to be a partner but the woman does not know about the feelings.

The meaning of the lyrics explained is that the singer has a dark past with a woman once liked because the woman did not reciprocate the feelings, so every time the singer sees that woman, it feels like seeing the devil. Then usually, the devil

always haunts humans everywhere, so in the lyrics, it is explained that when someone smiles and has the impression of a devil-like devil, the singer feels haunted by a devil's smile like a former lover.

2) Personification

Personification is figurative language which offers human traits to items, animals, or an abstract concept (Knickerbocker & Reninnger, 1963).

Data 2: Mind is running in circles of you and me
(Where do Broken Heart Go, line 18)

The lyrics above are included in the personification, where the lyrics describe the existence of human nature in something. In the lyrics, it says thoughts are spinning which does not make sense because only humans and animals can do activities such as walking and running.

The lyrics above are included in the category of connotative meaning; the word mind can be conveyed as a thought according to the dictionary. The theme of this song is about a man who is looking for an ex-lover who has been disappointed, searches in various ways, and hopes that the ex-lover can come back again. The idea from the mind running in the lyric is that the singer imagines the thought running around them when the singer actually only has a lot to think of at that moment.

3) Simile

According to Knickerbocker and Reninnger (1963) is a state of comparison, introduced by the words "like" or "as" called a simile.

Data 3: I'm like a boat on the water
(Fool's Gold, line 3)

The expression above is included in the simile category because in the lyrics above, the word "like" is used to compare it with the word "boat." The singer describes him as a boat. The lyrics above are included in the category of connotative meaning. A simile state of comparison of two things by the words "like" or "as." In the lyrics, the singer explained how the singer describes a boat. The lyrics "I'm like a boat on the water" means he is like a boat and is on the water. The theme contained in this song tells of a person who is in love and is willing to do anything to get love, even though it will not be real. The meaning conveyed by the singer is that the singer describes the boat or vehicle that will be used, while the word on the water indicates that the boat will wade through the water as if it will pass every moment that is in front of it. With that, the singer wanted to wade through the water already to pass the moment in front of him like a boat sailing on the water.

5. Conclusion

From the analysis that has been carried out and the results of the data obtained, this researcher makes conclusions to complete the objectives of this study. In the album "Four," One Direction found seven types of figurative language in the song lyrics, namely hyperbole, personification, simile, metaphor, irony, allusion, and paradox. Of the seven types, three of them are the most dominant used in each song in the album: hyperbole,

personification, and simile, because, with figurative language, these types are the easiest to convey the message to be conveyed to the audience.

Nowadays, one of the most popular literary works used in learning is a song accompanied by music with interesting lyrics. Figurative language is an essential position of song lyrics (see Nuessel, 2006; Reyes et al., 2012). The use of figurative language in song lyrics makes the song more interesting and has its meaning in adding messages contained in each figurative language itself.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

Author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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