

**AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN LYRICS OF
ALAN WALKER'S SELECTED SONGS: A FORMALISM STUDY**



A JOURNAL

Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Bachelor Degree in
English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of
Mataram

by

**EGY ADYA FAHREZY
E1D014015**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MATARAM
2018**



**KEMENTERIAN RISET, TEKNOLOGI, DAN
PENDIDIKAN TINGGI
UNIVERSITAS MATARAM
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU
PENDIDIKAN**

Jln. Majapahit No. 62 Telp. (0370)623873 Fax 634918 Mataram 83125

RATIFICATION

This journal entitled “**An Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Lyrics of Alan Walker’s Selected Songs: A Formalism Study**” by Egy Adya Fahrezy (E1D014015) has been accepted by the board of examiners on 30 October 2018.

First Advisor,

Dr. H. Nuriadi, S.S., M.Hum.
NIP. 197609232008011008

**AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN LYRICS OF ALAN
WALKER'S SELECTED SONGS: A FORMALISM STUDY**

EGY ADYA FAHREZY

E1D014015

egyadyafahrezy@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study used to find out the types figurative language and to analyze the contextual meanings of figurative language used in the lyrics of Alan Walker's selected songs. The researcher uses theory from Kennedy to analyze the types of figurative language found in the song lyrics and theory of meaning by Lyons to explain the contextual meanings behind the figurative language. Each lyric is certainly does have a message directed to the listeners. The message is directed with the intention that they get the impression after listening the song. This research uses descriptive qualitative method which concern in understanding the result of data found rather than calculating the result of data. The researcher analyzes the songs by reading them intensively and giving attention for each line. After analyzing the sentences in the song lyrics, the researcher found five kinds of figurative language that are used in the song lyrics, they are hyperbole, metaphor, synecdoche, personification, and paradox. Hyperbole is the type of figurative language that mostly used in the selected song lyrics. After the types of figurative language are found, the researcher analyzes the meanings of the song lyrics. The song lyrics try to tell us about human social life which contained about love, sadness, happiness, and others. The existence of figurative language is not to complicate the understanding of lyrics but to beautify and to clarify the understanding of the lyrics.

Keywords: *Figurative Language, Song Lyrics.*

**ANALISIS BAHASA KIASAN YANG DIGUNAKAN DALAM LIRIK LAGU
PILIHAN ALAN WALKER: MENGGUNAKAN TEORI FORMALISME**

EGY ADYA FAHREZY

E1D014015

egyadyafahrezy@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan dan menganalisis makna kontekstual dari bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu-lagu pilihan Alan Walker. Peneliti menggunakan teori dari Kennedy untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam lirik lagu dan teori makna oleh Lyons untuk menjelaskan makna kontekstual di balik bahasa kiasan tersebut. Setiap lirik pasti memiliki pesan yang ditujukan kepada para pendengarnya. Pesan diarahkan dengan tujuan agar para pendengar mendapatkan kesan dan pesan setelah mendengarkan lagu-lagu tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Analisis dalam penelitian kualitatif lebih berfokus pada memahami hasil data daripada menghitung hasil data yang ditemukan. Peneliti menganalisis lagu dengan membacanya secara intensif dan memperhatikan setiap barisnya. Setelah menganalisa kalimat dalam lirik lagu, peneliti menemukan lima jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik-lirik lagu Alan Walker, mereka adalah hiperbola, metafora, sinekdok, personifikasi, dan paradoks. Hiperbola adalah jenis bahasa kiasan yang paling banyak digunakan dalam lirik lagu-lagu yang dipilih. Setelah jenis bahasa kiasan ditemukan, peneliti menganalisis makna dari lirik lagu. Lirik dari lagu-lagu tersebut mencoba untuk memberitahu kita tentang kehidupan sosial manusia yang berisi tentang cinta, kesedihan, kebahagiaan, dan lain-lain. Keberadaan bahasa kiasan tidaklah untuk mempersulit pemahaman kita akan lirik tetapi memperindah dan memperjelas pemahaman dari lirik tersebut.

Kata kunci: *Bahasa Kiasan, Lirik Lagu.*

INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a part of literature. It is a literary device which is used to create a special effect or feeling by making some type of interesting or creative comparison. Figurative language is a form of language used to convey words that go beyond their literal meaning. Heller (2011:62) states that figurative language refers to group of words that exaggerate or alter the usual meanings of the component words. It requires the readers to use their imagination to figure out the author's meaning. It makes figurative meaning is difficult to understand because we cannot find the meaning of the figurative language in dictionary just like the other vocabulary words that we usually use in our daily conversation. To understand the meaning of figurative language we need to use our imagination to imagine what the words are said or what the words refer to.

Song is a short poem or number of verses set of music intended to be sung by the singer. It consists of musical notes and words that people know as lyrics. Lyrics have massive power in the songs because they deliver messages and give the images of songs. Song writers express their feelings by using a play of words and languages to create attractiveness to the song lyrics. Based on the statement above, the lyrics of song are categorized into poetry. Song is not only to entertain, but also can inspire people with the music and the lyric. Every song usually uses figurative language in order that people who listen to the song will be interested and also understand what the author's imagination is. The use of figurative language typically attracts the listeners in listening to the songs. If the listeners understand

the meaning of the songs, they are able to get greater pleasure and obtained messages which are contained within the songs.

The researcher was inspired to conduct a study of analyzing the figurative language in the lyric of Alan Walker's songs since many people like singing the songs just for fun without knowing the meaning behind it. The lyrics in Alan Walker's songs contain lot of figurative meanings. It is important for us to know the meaning of the figurative language found in a song so we can imagine what messages are contained in the lyrics of the song.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Song Lyrics

Lyric is an expression of author's thinking or feelings. The word lyric is derived from the Greek word *lyrikos*. It has meaning "singing to the lyre". Myers and Simms (1989:27) explain that lyric is used to expresses system of thought, statements of moral, states of mind, deeply felt emotion and ethical or philosophical values. Nowadays, the term is often used by many speakers in expressing their thought and mind.

Song Lyrics is a kind of literary works which use written language with beautiful rhythm of diction and also use language style and figurative language as like the poetry. In short, song lyric can be said has the same structure as the poetry in written forms because it has simple structure and expressing simple thing as well. In this case, the lyrics of song are categorized as poetry. It means that when we are

listening to the song, we enjoy literature. Thus, it can be said that song is a kind of poetry and poetry belongs to literature.

Kinds of Figurative Language

Figurative language is language that uses figures of speech. A figure of speech is a way of saying something other than the literal meaning of the word. Figure of speech may be said to occur whenever a speaker or writer, for the sake of freshness or emphasis, departs from the usual denotations of words (Kennedy, 1979: 187). There are many types of figurative language. Each type of figurative language is presented as follows:

1. Metaphor: a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another.
2. Paradox: a figurative language or a statement which is so surprisingly self-contradictory as to provoke us into seeking another sense or context in which it would be true (Nuriadi, 2016:16).
3. Personification: a figure of speech in which a thing, an animal, or an abstract term (truth or nature) is made human (Kennedy, 1979:495).
4. Hyperbole: a figure of speech which emphasizing a point with statement containing exaggeration (Kennedy, 1979:496).
5. Synecdoche: the use of part a thing to stand for the whole of it or vice versa (Kennedy, 1979: 479). Pars pro toto in synecdoche mentions the part but means the whole, whereas, totem pro parte mentions the whole but means

only a part. In other words, a synecdoche is a figurative language in which a part is used for the whole or the opposite.

Concept of Meaning in Figurative Language

Meaning is oriented to what the speaker's mean. Meaning is always fused in the speech of the word and sentence. Lyons (1984:17) states that the meaning can be distinguished by the technique of substituting other words in the same context and enquiry whether the resulting sentences are equivalent.

Contextual Meaning

Lyons (1984:27) states that contextual meaning is the meaning of words according to the situations in which they are used. Different situations give different meaning. On the other hand, in the particular situations the sentences will be equal in meaning. Contextual meaning is also defined as the information signaled about the kind of use a linguistic unit has in its social context. It involves the function of word in sentence formation since different arrangement of the same word can convey different context. So, we can conclude that the contextual meaning is the meaning of the words according to the situation in which they are used.

Theory of Formalism

This study uses formalism theory as theoretical framework. This theory focuses on the text of literary works itself. The study concerns on the analysis of song lyrics which contain figurative language. In order to understand text of literature, we need to analyze the relation between each element on the text. The main concept is focused on the uses of the language. The researcher decided to use

formalism approach to find the types of figurative language and meanings of the Alan Walker's selected song lyrics. The formalism approach is the most suitable approach that leads the researcher to find the figurative language in Alan Walker's selected songs. Tyson (2011:39) explains that when we use formalism approach, our mind will start to ask some questions like "What does the text mean?". The text became the only place where we can find its meaning when we apply this kind of approach. By applying this approach, we can start to learn to identify the differences between figurative and literal meaning in the text.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses descriptive qualitative method. The analysis in qualitative research concern in understanding the result of data found rather than calculating the result of data. The researcher applied formalism approach to find out the figurative language in the song lyrics. The researcher gained the song lyrics used in this study from the official websites of Alan Walker on YouTube and www.azlyrics.com. After finding the occurrences of figurative language in the song lyrics, the first step in the analysis is identifying the types of figurative languages found by using the theory of figurative language by Kennedy (1979). After identifying the figurative language found in the song, the researcher classified it based on the theory that has been mentioned previously. The last step in the analysis is explaining the figurative language within the lyrics by using the theory of meaning by Lyons (1984).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the eye of formalism, the literary works in this research which is the song lyrics are presented by language. The song lyrics are carefully analyzed by giving attention to the uses of language. The researcher found five types of figurative language in Alan Walker's selected songs, they are; metaphor, hyperbole, personification, synecdoche, and paradox. The types of figurative language that has the highest frequency is hyperbole. These figurative languages were listed and classified based on Kennedy's theory about the types of figurative language.

Hyperbole

The researcher discovers nine sentences that contain hyperbole used in Alan Walker's song lyrics, they are:

Song Title: Faded

Another start

You fade away (Line 3-4)

It is said as hyperbole because in the underlined line the word "you" uses the word "fade" as a verb where the verb is not supposed to be used on subjects such as living thing. The word *fade* which should be used on dead objects such as light or something that shines but in this lyric the word *fade* is used to describe someone who went away.

Song Title: Faded

Where are you now

Another dream

The monsters running wild inside of me (Line 18-20)

It is said as hyperbole because the use of the underlined sentence “*monster running wild inside of me*” which sounds very exaggerated. It shows the exaggeration because it is impossible to monster or something running wild literally in someone's body. The word “*monster*” illustrates the excessive worries and negative thoughts felt by the singer.

Song Title: Faded

I'm faded

So lost (Line 22-23)

In the underlined line, the living subject that is the word “*I*” uses the word “*Faded*” as a verb where the verb should not be pinned on a living subject. The word *faded* should be used on inanimate objects such as light or something that shines.

Song Title: Faded

You set my heart on fire

Where are you now (Line 39-40)

Hyperbole appears in the underlined sentence. The singer feels very happy as if her heart felt like a burning fire.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

Wait a second, let me catch my breath

Remind me how it feels to hear your voice (Line 1-2)

The phrase “*catch my breath*” is considered as hyperbole because the sentence cannot be interpreted literally because it will result an incorrect

interpretation. Normally people will understand the phrase *take a breath* rather than *catch my breath* which contained in the lyrics of this song.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

A *song in every breath* (Line 10)

The underlined line is said as hyperbole. It can be seen from the use of some words that seem so striking. The singer positioned the word “*song*” as something that is present in “*every breath*” of the singer. The intention of the singer here is to represent the memory of someone who is very difficult to forget by the singer where this memory seems to be present all the times whenever the singer breathing.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

Remember me now, time cannot erase

I can *hear your whispers in my mind* (Line 15-16)

The underlined sentence is considered as hyperbole. The singer can hear the voice of her lover whispering into her mind where in fact that the voice and whisper should only be heard in the ears. This sentence means that even though the singer had been separated from her lover, the memory of the time that they spent together still revolved in her mind.

Song Title: Tired

I see those tears in your eyes

I *feel so helpless inside* (Line 1-2)

Hyperbole is really felt on the first and the underlined line of this song. The first line describes the singer who sees a person whom he loves crying. He was able to see her sadness through tears dripping from her eyes. In the second line, the

singer feels very sad, it can be seen from the use of the phrase “*feel so helpless inside*” which is an exaggeration to illustrate that the singer feels very desperate.

Song Title: The Spectre

Hello, hello

Do you need me, before I fade away (Line 3-4)

The underlined line is identified as a hyperbole because someone will not be able to fading as light does. It means that the singer really loves her where his love was only for her.

Metaphor

The researcher discovers four sentences that contain metaphor used in Alan Walker’s song lyrics, they are:

Song Title: Faded

You were the shadow to my light

Did you feel us (Line 1-2)

The singer compares two things in the underlined sentence, they are the word “*you*” and the word “*shadow*”. The singer illustrates someone as a *shadow* by directly comparing it to the use of the word *you*. *Shadow* implies someone whom she loves.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

Our memory will be my lullaby

Sing me to sleep now (Line 18-19)

The singer uses metaphor in the underlined sentence to compare two ideas. It can be seen from the use of the word “*memory*” where it is compared with the word “*lullaby*”. The line *our memories will be my lullaby* illustrates that the singer will make their memories when they were together to be her lullaby (along with the next line *sing me to sleep now*).

Song Title: Tired

And you whisper, I'm alright

But I see through your white lies (Line 25-26)

In this sentence, the metaphor can be seen from the use of the underlined words “*white lies*”. Literally, lies do not have any shape or color. The word “*lies*” means incorrect words or bad deeds while the word “*white*” has a role in determining the nature of the lie. Usually, we interpret *white* as something clean so in this sentence *white lies* means that lies that appear cannot be hidden.

Song Title: The Spectre

Hello, hello

Nice to meet you, voice inside my head (Line 13-14)

The singer compares two things in the underlined sentence, they are the word “*you*” and the word “*voice*”. Here, the singer indirectly tries to say “*you are the voice*” which is seen from the original sentence in the underlined line “*nice to meet you*” which is separated by a comma and then connected by pointing to the word “*you*” as the *voice* in his head.

Synecdoche

The researcher discovers four sentences that contain synecdoche used in Alan Walker's song lyrics, they are:

Song Title: Faded

Where are you now

Atlantis (Line 14-15)

The word "Atlantis" in this sentence implies the use of synecdoche. *Atlantis* refers to the rich continent/kingdom which was lost under the sea. Generally, it is common for some people to interpret the term *Atlantis* as something or a pleasant place where that something or place is very difficult to find. In the lyrics, it represents the loss of her man whom she realizes was very valuable to her.

Song Title: Tired

Love there's no need to hide (Line 3)

In this line, synecdoche is found on the underlined word "love". The word "love" refers to the word *darling*. It means that *love* is oriented to the meaning of someone whom we love and share our affection to.

Song Title: Tired

If your *ghost* pulls you up high

And it feels like you've lost who you are (Line 17-18)

The word "ghost" refers to the word *horror and haunted thing*. In the sentence, the word *ghost* means some memories of the past where these memories haunted the singer's lover and make her hesitates to leave the condition that makes her sad at the moment.

Song Title: The Spectre

Deep in the dark I don't need the light

There's a ghost inside me (Line 9-10)

The word “ghost” refers to the word *horror and haunted thing*. In the sentence the word “ghost” is identified as memories of the singer's past which often haunts his mind.

Personification

The researcher discovers five sentences that contain personification used in Alan Walker’s song lyrics, they are:

Song Title: Faded

These shallow waters never met

What I needed (Line 28-29)

The underlined sentence can be said as a sentence that uses personification. The words “shallow waters” are given attributes like human being. The words *shallow waters* mean the singer’s narrow thought. Her narrow thought is not capable to understand the true feelings that exist within her soul.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

Yesterday got away

Melodies stuck inside your head (Line 8-9)

This underlined sentence is considered as personification. The word “yesterday” is given human attribute because yesterday is likened to something that lives and goes away.

Song Title: Sing Me to Sleep

Anytime

I would do

Time Away (Line 23-25)

This underlined line is considered as personification. It can be seen from the word “*time*” where it is illustrated as the time can go away like human being. We should say *the time has passed* instead of *the time has away* because it sounds like that time has a limb that allows it to go anywhere.

Song Title: Tired

Just let me love you when your heart is tired (Line 4)

Whenever an inanimate object or abstract idea is given human qualities or abilities, a personification occurs. In the underlined sentence, the singer gives an inanimate object to the word “*heart*” the ability to perform an action like a human where it can feel tired and exhausted.

Song Title: Tired

But these walls don't talk

And if they could, they'd say (Line 27-28)

It is clear that the underlined line above belongs to personification because inanimate objects are described as if it were human. This part means the singer's lover wound is too big to hide and she found it hardly to forget what happened on her.

Paradox

The researcher discovers only one sentence that contains paradox used in Alan Walker's song lyrics, the sentence is:

Song Title: Faded

Under the bright

But faded lights (Line 37-38)

The underlined words can be said as paradox because in this line there are words that have the opposite meanings with the other words. The word "*bright*" which has a meaning of something that shine and the word "*faded*" which means fading, sounds very different from one to another when paired to form a sentence.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

In this study, formalism is applied in analyzing the figurative languages. Based on the findings, there are five kinds of figurative language in the four song lyrics. The composition of figurative languages found in the four song lyrics are nine hyperboles, five personifications, four synecdoches, four metaphors, and only one paradox. There are twenty-three sentences which contained figurative language in total. The most dominant figurative language used in the four song lyrics is hyperbole. The hyperbole is used to exaggerate the truth or point to place more emphasis on the sentences in the song lyrics. Alan Walker used many hyperbolic sentences to develop contrasts.

The meaning being interpreted in the discussion session mostly contained of social life. These meanings are intended to make the listeners feel the thoughts, feelings, and experience of the singer himself/herself. Not only using the song as the medium to convey the singer's thought and opinion but also used to give the listeners lesson of life and how to live this life. The researcher assumed that the use of the contextual meaning in this study also opens up all the meanings and the purposes from four selected song lyrics. The words that firstly look complicated can be elaborated in the contextual meaning, so that they can be better understood.

Suggestions

Based on the results of the findings, the researcher proposes some suggestions for the reader and the other researcher who are interested in analyzing literary works especially about song lyric. It is suggested to understand the whole content of the song. Understanding the figurative language will make the other researcher easier to find out the meaning of the song. Pertaining with the significance of the present research, the researcher encourages the further researcher to follow these following suggestions:

1. In analyzing the figurative language and interpreting the figurative meanings, the next researcher should understand the content of the song. So that, it will be easier to conduct the analysis about figurative language.
2. The researcher also suggests that there are still many aspects in the songs that can be analyzed by other researchers, i.e. moral values, character, plot and etc.

The researcher expects that the result of this research can be beneficial for further research which is concerned with figurative language and figurative meaning. Besides, this thesis is also expected to enrich the references for the English Department students. Therefore, the researcher hopes that there will be another researcher who also conduct this kind of study since music and song are closely related to education and life. There are so many musicians who can be analyzed. Researchers can also analyze various things from the musicians' works. In this case, the researcher analyzes the types of figurative language found in Alan Walker's selected song lyrics. Whoever the musicians or whatever the things that are going to be analyzed, the researchers at least should know the background of the musician to make the process of analysis easier and more legitimate.

REFERENCES

- Heller, Daniel. (2011). Figurative Speech as a Representation of Meaning. *World Literature Studies*, 62-71.
- Kennedy, X Joseph. (1979) *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*^{2nd Edition}. Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Lyons, John. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, John. (1984). *Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Myers, Jack., & Simms, Michael. (1989). *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms*. New York: Longman.
- Nuriadi. (2016). *Theory of Literature: An Introduction*. Mataram: Arga Puji Press.
- Reaske, Christopher. (1996). *How to Analyze Poetry*. New York: Monarch Press.
- Tyson, Lois. (2011). *Using Critical Theory: How to read and write about literature*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- ._ “Formalist Study”.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formalism_%28literature%29. Browsed on March, 27, 2018.
- ._ “Types of Metaphor”.
<http://grammar.about.com/od/rhetoricstyle/a/13metaphors.html>. Browsed on March, 27, 2018.
- ._ “Achievement of Alan Walker”.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_Alán_Walker. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.

._ “Lyrics of Faded”.

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/alanwalker/faded.html>. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.

._ “Lyrics of Sing Me to Sleep”.

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/alanwalker/singmetosleep.html>. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.

._ “Lyrics of Tired”.

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/alanwalker/tired.html>. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.

._ “Lyrics of The Spectre”.

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/alanwalker/thespectre.html>. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.

._ “The Spectre Official Video”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJnBTPUQS5A>. Browsed on May, 26, 2018.