
Figurative Language in Justin Bieber's Selected Songs

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the figurative language employed in Justin Bieber's songs and interpret the meanings of the lyrics. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. The data was taken from the song lyrics of Justin Bieber's selected songs. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using the theory proposed by Reaske (1996). The results of the data analysis show that there are five types of figurative language found in Justin Bieber's song lyrics. They are simile, personification, paradox, symbolism, and repetition. Personification is the form of figurative language that is most commonly used in the song lyrics.

INTRODUCTION

Language is used as a means of communication by people to convey written or spoken messages to others. People employ a standard set of spoken or written symbols called a language to communicate with one another regularly. Communication, identity expression, play, creative expression, and emotional release are just a few of language's many functions. Songs about love, social issues, politics, personal experiences, and other topics are among the many songs that songwriters and performers create to convey the emotions of the songs to the listeners. The song is, as far as we know, both a work of art and literature.

According to Meyer (1997), literature refers to literary works that employ language properly and have elements like imaginative metaphors, well-chosen phrases, exquisite grammar, rhyme, and alliteration, which the author intentionally left up to interpretation and meant to be viewed with the eye of the artist. In order to make the language that they employ in their work more attractive and enticing to listeners, songwriters and composers frequently utilize metaphorical language.

Cuddon (2013) states that figurative language is a type of language that employs devices like metaphor, simile, and alliteration. A song is both a performance and a work of literary authorship. The purpose of a song, a piece of music with spoken lyrics, is to convey ideas and emotions. Songs are compositions of music and lyrics created with the intention of the lyrics being sung to elicit a suitable sensation or emotion in relation to a specific subject.

Griffie (in Safira, 2020) defines a song as a music component created by words intended to be sung. While it is enjoyable to listen to music, enjoyment is limited if one does not comprehend the figurative language frequently used in the song. Figurative language is frequently utilized in songs because well-written lyrics often use it. Even the words used to describe things in figurative language have deeper meanings than their literal meanings. The researchers conducted a study based on these definitions to learn more about figurative language in Justin Bieber's selected songs. In essence, figurative language is a component of semantics. The researchers are aware that semantics allows people to understand a song's true meaning. When listening to

music, especially with figurative elements, one cannot pay close attention to the words. Typically, people only enjoy the music because it is good or because they enjoy the vocalist's voice. Understanding the lyrics' meaning helps us understand the song's meaning and purpose.

This research applies Reaske's figurative language theory. According to Reaske (1996), figurative language is the words and group of words that highlight or change the meaning of the words from their common form. When the speaker or writer use uncommon words to describe a thing, this is called a figure of speech. Figurative language can change words or sentences into something more attractive. It has the value of art so that readers feel they could relate to the writer when using those words or those sentences. Figurative language is different from the vocabulary used in the conventional, literal means to describe people or objects.

There are many listeners who find difficulties in understanding the implied meaning of a literary work. This research was conducted so that listeners could find out the deeper meaning of the object of research. Justin Bieber's songs were selected as the data of this study because his songs are well - known worldwide. The figurative language used in Justin Bieber's song lyrics from the album "Purpose" will be examined in this study. The album "Purpose" was released in 2015, and many of the song lyrics use metaphorical language, which can be described as romantic and poetic.

Language has important roles in human existence and human communication. We are unable to communicate with others without language. Figurative language is a type of language that employs speech patterns. Figurative language, often known as the figure of speech, is a means of using words to convey meanings different than their literal ones. According to McKenzie (in Nuraeni & Peron, 2017), figurative language is a type of language that conveys ideas different from their literal meaning. In brief, figurative language is a technique used to communicate with others using an analogy of a thing. Figurative language is important for a specific type of writing to convey a message and meaning. Songs usually use figurative language. However, it is also popular in prose and nonfiction writing.

Several previous studies discussed figurative language. The first study was conducted by Fitria (2018). Her study analyzed the album by One Direction entitled "Up All Night". Qualitative descriptive method was used in the study. There were six types of figurative language found in the study, namely repetition, parallelism, metaphor, simile, and hyperbole.

The second previous research was conducted by Ibrahim et al. (2019). The research analyzed the lyrics of the song "Endless Love" to find out the various types of figurative language in that song. The descriptive method was used in the study, and the data were divided into primary and secondary data. The research found seven types of figurative language. There are repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, pleonasm, personification, dispersonification, and onomatopoeia.

The third study was conducted by Setiawati and Maryani (2018). The researchers analyzed the songs entitled "Red" and "22" by Taylor Swift. This study tries to identify the figurative language used in Taylor Swift's songs. The descriptive qualitative method was used by collecting data from library research. In this research, the researchers found six types of figurative language, namely simile, metaphor, hyperbole, paradox, irony, and personification.

Those previous researches are relevant to this study since they analyzed the use of figurative language in song lyrics. The researchers also apply a qualitative descriptive approach to examine figurative language. However, this study uses different data sources. Several songs in Justin Bieber's album "Purpose" are used as the data source in this study. Personification is one of the important forms of figurative language in this study. The researchers are interested in conducting this study to analyze the information and identify the

figurative language used in selected songs from Justin Bieber’s album. Figurative language is a component of language. Therefore, understanding it is crucial. Since song and figurative language are intimately connected, the researchers thought this study would be a beneficial resource for students who want to comprehend the importance of figurative language in improving the student’s capacity to appreciate songs.

METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach was used in this study. The focus of qualitative research is the meanings, conceptions, definitions, traits, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things (Berg, 2001). The descriptive method will describe facts first, followed by analysis and justification.

The data of this study were taken from Justin Bieber’s songs in the album “Purpose”. Four songs were chosen as the data source. The first song is “What Do You Mean”, released on August 28, 2015. The music video has attracted a large audience worldwide, with more than two billion views on YouTube. The second song is “All in It”, released on November 14, 2015. The song conveys a positive message to the listeners so they always do something with dedication. The third song is “Love Yourself”, released on November 24, 2015. This song describes the story of a woman who is excessively obsessed with maintaining her appearance and never considers the man. There are more than 1.6 billion views of the music video for the song “Love Yourself.” The fourth song is “No Pressure”, released on November 14, 2015. The music video for the song “No Pressure” has been viewed more than 26 million times. The songs were chosen as the data source since they are popular worldwide and contain a lot of figurative languages.

The observation method was used in collecting the data. The analysis was presented in the descriptions related to the contents of this research. The data was analyzed by using the proposed theory by Reaske (1996). The song lyrics were examined and categorized based on the types of figurative language. Ary (in Andriani, 2017) stated that reducing and classifying the data, synthesizing, looking for meaningful patterns, and figuring out what matters are all part of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the analysis, five types of figurative language are found in this research. They are simile, personification, paradox, symbolism, and repetition. Personification is the most common type of figurative language that is used in the data of the study. The following are the data found related to the analysis of figurative language types in Justin Bieber’s songs. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 1 Types of Figurative Language in Justin Bieber’s Selected Songs

No	Song Titles	Types of Figurative Language
	What Do You Mean?	Personification “ Trying to catch the beat , make up your heart”
		Repetition “Give it, back,back,back ”
	All In It	Simile “You could be icy like cake”

	Personification “A simple melody, simple enough to make the world sing ”
Love Yourself	Personification “All the times that you rain on my parade ” “Was I fool to let you break down my walls? ”
	Paradox “I didn’t wanna write a song, cause I didn’t want to thinking I still care”
	Symbolism “For all the times you made me feel small ”
No Pressure	Simile “We’ve been on and off like the cross light”

Discussion

Several types of figurative language are found in Justin Bieber’s selected songs. The discussion is presented as follows.

1. Simile

According to Reaske (1996), using the words “like” or “as” draws attention to the comparison. A simile is a figure of speech that contrasts two distinct ideas through the use of a distinct linking word, such as “like” or “as.” The aim of a simile is to inform the audience about an unknown object by making comparisons to something the reader is familiar with. The following song uses a simile in the lyrics.

Data 1

“You could be icy like cake”

In data 1, the word “icy” refers to a cold-hearted person, while the word “cake” refers to a person who is soft and sweet. In these lyrics, the phrase “icy like cake” depicts a woman who appears gentle but does not care about other people. She acts nice and friendly, but she is actually not caring. These lyrics convey the message that we should not judge people by their appearance but by their attitude.

Data 2

“We’ve been on and off like the cross light”

Since people are not objects, they cannot be switched on or off. When the man tries to communicate with his girl and end their argument, their relationship, their communication is inconsistent, or “on and off.” Sometimes they talk and sometimes they do not. The lights that are on and off are imagery of their relationship.

2. Personification

According to Reaske (1996), personification is the process of integrating non-human objects, abstractions, and ideas with human characteristics. Personification is a figure of speech in which human attributes are added to an inanimate object, an animal, or an abstract attribute. Personification is a type of figurative representation in which a human character is put upon an animated object. The following songs use personification in the lyrics.

Data 3

"Trying to catch the beat, make up your heart"

The beat is an inanimate object that cannot be held in the hands without assistance. The man is trying to catch the beat in order to revive the atmosphere and the heart when he says, "Trying to catch the beat, make up your heart." The man tries to equalize their frequency as same as when they first met. In the phrase "make up your heart", the man tries to start over everything. The personification of this part is *"catch the beat, make up your heart."*

Data 4

"A simple melody, simple enough to make the world sing"

The world cannot sing because it is not human beings. It symbolizes a condition in which something that is impossible is nevertheless achievable. The singer thought that even in the hardest moments, he attempted to make things better. Although he just does small and simple things, he will not stop to make everything better. That is the implied meaning of the line.

Data 5

"All the times that you rain on my parade"

Rain on my parade is a phrase used to depict a bad news to someone who is pleased or thrilled about something. Rain is a symbol of sadness and a parade is a symbol of happiness. He understands that she is the one who sobbed and said, "Rain on my parade," it means she was attempting to destroy his good mood by crying.

Data 6

"Was I fool to let you break down my walls?"

Now that he has fallen in love and allowed this person into his life, he may wonder if all of this was a mistake. It represents that he has a doubt about his woman. "Breaking down my walls" means she can beat him, tear him or make his personality down.

3. Repetition

According to Reaske (1996), repetition is a figure of speech that uses recurrence to demonstrate forceful pretension. It is used to ensure that readers or listeners understand what the author says. Repetition, also known as restatement, is the most direct and obvious source of lexical cohesion because it is simply the identical recurrence of a preceding lexical item. A literary device known as repetition occurs when a word or

phrase is used two or more times. Since repetition may take many various forms, it is typically not considered to be a single figure of speech. The following song uses repetition in the lyrics.

Data 7

"Give it, back,back,back"

The lyric repeats the phrase "back, back, back," which Justin Bieber has already said. Repetition makes the song more interesting. In order to create effective retention for the listeners, the singer usually says the words several times. However, as listeners, sometimes we do not want to hear the same words repeated.

4. Paradox

According to Reaske (1996), a paradox occurs when a poet introduces a combination of ideas, words, images, or attitudes that appear to be personality. A paradox is a statement that appears to be incompatible but is absolutely accurate. The following song uses paradox in the lyrics

Data 8

"I didn't wanna write a song, cause I didn't want to thinking I still care"

He said he did not want to write a song for her because he did not want to look like he still cared. However, it turned out that he still cared about her because he wrote a song about her and sang it. This lyric is included in a paradox because it contradicts the reality that occurred.

5. Symbolism

According to Reaske (1996), symbols are visible objects, places, people, or experiences that enhance the meaning of what they are. In figurative language, symbol refers to the use of symbols in a literary work. A phrase or word can serve as a sign for something other than what it was originally intended for. These signs can trigger the imagination and reactions of readers or listeners. The following song uses symbolism in its lyrics.

Data 9

"For all the times you made me feel small"

Through this lyric, the man says that the woman always makes him feel small. Feeling small here does not imply that the man has a small body. Feeling small here means the man feels despised, unwanted, unappreciated, or ostracized. In conclusion, the woman always sees the man as useless during their relationship. This kind of woman's thought makes the man's insecurity increase.

CONCLUSION

This research was focused on assessing the types and meaning of figurative language in selected Justin Bieber's song lyrics. The results of the analysis of figurative language in the songs by Justin Bieber found that there are five types of figurative language in the song lyrics. They are simile, personification, paradox, repetition, and symbolism. Similes, personifications, paradoxes, repetitions, and symbols are just a few examples of figurative language utilized in songs, according to the data offered in the study's results and discussion section. The personification type dominated this study, which means that the researchers wanted

to emphasize the author's meaning and feeling in the song lyrics. In addition, every lyric with figurative language has a comparative meaning between denotative meaning and connotative meaning, which gives the song's meaning esthetic values and colors.

Based on the results above, it is important to conduct research to comprehend the significance of figurative language. Figurative language has a connection to linguistic studies of meaning. A suggestion that can be made from this study is that other researchers may use this research as their reference to elaborate more on the analysis of figurative language. The readers or other researchers who are interested in conducting further research about this topic must have a greater comprehension of figurative language and several reasons for its use.

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