

Analysis of Figurative Language in Song's Lyrics *Die with a Smile*

Tasya Faradillah Syain¹, Abu Fanani²
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2}
✉ tasyafsyain@gmail.com abu.fanani@ac.id

Abstract:

Figurative language is an expression that contains many interpretations. Like in song lyrics, it is usually a series of beautiful words accompanied by a melody. Song lyrics are arranged beautifully to convey an implied message, like in the song *Die with a Smile* by Bruno Mars feat Lady Gaga, which has recently been the talk of the town. This song talks about the deep love of a couple who seem to have no tomorrow. This research aims to analyze the figurative language in the song's lyrics *Die with a Smile*. Using Kennedy's theory of figurative language, several forms of figurative language in the song lyrics were identified. The data collection technique in this research was observation, using the descriptive qualitative method. The results of this research are metaphors (4), similes (1), imagery (3), and hyperbole (1). The result shows that *Die with a Smile* had some figurative language in the lyrics. It is as if this songwriter wrote the lyrics fully and intensely with a beautiful word arrangement that vividly conveys the true meanings.

Keywords: Figurative language; song lyric.

Abstrak:

Bahasa kiasan merupakan ungkapan yang memiliki banyak penafsiran. Seperti halnya dalam lirik lagu, bahasa kiasan biasanya berupa rangkaian kata-kata indah yang disertai dengan melodi. Lirik lagu disusun dengan indah untuk menyampaikan pesan tersirat, seperti dalam lagu *Die with a Smile* karya Bruno Mars feat Lady Gaga yang akhir-akhir ini menjadi perbincangan hangat. Lagu ini bercerita tentang cinta yang mendalam dari sepasang kekasih yang tampaknya tidak memiliki hari esok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bahasa kiasan dalam lirik lagu, *Die with a Smile*. Melalui penerapan teori bahasa kiasan Kennedy, beberapa bentuk bahasa kiasan dalam lirik lagu tersebut berhasil diidentifikasi. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah observasi, dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini adalah metafora (4), simile (1), imaji (3), dan hiperbola (1). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Die with a Smile* memiliki beberapa bahasa kiasan dalam liriknya. Seolah-olah pencipta lagu ini menulis liriknya dengan penuh intensitas dengan susunan kata yang indah yang secara gamblang menyampaikan makna sebenarnya.

Kata kunci: Bahasa kiasan; lirik lagu.

INTRODUCTION

Through the hype of social media, like Instagram and TikTok, everyone easily connected. There are no barriers to preventing information between humans because of the ease of technology that is currently developing. "Social media is a media that allows

users to represent themselves in interacting, building cooperation, sharing, and communication with other users in forming virtual social relationships” (Nasrullah (2015) as cited in Manurung et al. (2023)). They share moments or thoughts on social media. Music is one of the characteristics of youth nowadays. Also in her article Manurung et al. (2023) says that the number of users on Instagram is increasing to 98.06 million. Most of them are listeners and enjoy music.

Through hype of music platforms like Spotify, it makes the listener listen to music anytime. According to Spotify, their users are 626 million. Of the many music genres, pop music has more listeners because of its broad appeal, catchy melodies, and mainstream accessibility. Music with the most relatable lyrics or closest feeling to the listener is in demand. In compliance with Fuld et al. (2009), some studies show that around 17% of male adolescents and 25% of female adolescents enjoy their favorite songs because the lyrics reflect their emotions. Additionally, adolescents tend to pay more attention to lyrics when they feel personally connected to the music, even if they don’t fully grasp every detail of the message. Especially, if the song is sung by a top singer, such as Bruno Mars, who is widely loved. Bruno Mars is an American singer, songwriter, and producer. He is famous for his work that constantly engages the audience with his easy-to-listen songs and his ability to blend various genres like Pop, RnB, rock, funk, reggae, and soul. His debut was successful with the songs *Just the Way You Are* and *Grenade*. Mars has won 15 Grammy Awards and sold more than 130 million records worldwide, making him the best-selling artist of all time. His newly released song featuring Lady Gaga is in the top tier where the two form living-legend doing feat. This song delights its listeners by embracing the nostalgia of the 60s and 70s and blending it with pop ballads. The distinctive melodies from that era, emo, emotional lyrics, and soft arrangements create an atmosphere that takes listeners back to the past.

A song is used to express feelings from the lyrics and music played. Beautiful words are carefully woven together to express emotions vividly and tangibly, like *Die with a Smile*, Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga, released August 2024. This song's lyrics are full of figurative language. Figurative language is like the deeper meaning of the words itself. Figurative language is a comparison between similarities or differences that are stated implicitly (Keraf, 2009). Thus, figurative language means using words or expressions with meanings beyond their literal interpretation. It is often employed to create vivid imagery,

convey complex ideas, or evoke emotional responses. Figurative language is commonly analyzed in literature, poetry, rhetoric, and other forms of communication to understand deeper meanings and stylistic choices. As follows in music, song lyrics are one form that can be studied using figurative language.

The research problem focuses on understanding how figurative language in song lyrics, specifically in a collaboration between Bruno Mars feat Lady Gaga, enhances emotional expression and conveys meaningful messages. The main goal is to help listeners gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the complex messages woven into popular music through figurative language. The significance of this study is to provide insights into how song lyrics build emotional connections and cultural identities. Song lyrics frequently express universal themes such as love, loss, resilience, and identity, which resonate with many listeners, establishing a sense of shared understanding and empathy. Understanding the figurative language in these lyrics can enhance our understanding of the feelings and experiences expressed, allowing us to investigate the power of words in shaping mood, behavior, and societal values.

The research gap lies in the limited exploration of how figurative language in contemporary song lyrics conveys complex emotions and ideas, particularly in popular music collaborations like the one between Bruno Mars feat Lady Gaga in *Die with a Smile*. This gap suggests a need for more studies examining how figurative language enriches lyrical expression, resonating emotionally with listeners. By focusing on this song, the research aims to bridge this gap, providing insights into how artistic language in modern music enhances its impact and relevance for today's audiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides and supports the researchers' originality from some previous studies as references to this research, such as those of Ibrahim et al. (2019) in their research "The Analysis of Figurative Language in "Endless Love" Song Lyric." It is found that there are seven findings of figurative language in the song lyrics of Endless Love. By applying descriptive methods and using structuralism as its approach. The second previous study is an article by Datul and Agung (2023) entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language In The Song Lyrics By Jamie Miller." From this research, they found fifteen figurative languages

in eight Jamie Miller songs, using a qualitative approach and applying Kennedy et al.'s (2013) figurative language theory.

The following previous study is an article from Eka Agustina and Mustikawati (2023) titled "Analysis of Figurative Language In Song Lyrics "Make It Right" And "Permission To Dance" By BTS." This research concludes with the founding of fourteen figurative languages from both songs by applying a qualitative method and the approach of Griffiths (2006) and Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963) as the theoretical framework. The last previous study is coming from Ni Wayan Swarniti (2022) with her article "Analysis of Figurative Language in "Easy on Me" Song Lyrics." With the theoretical framework of Miller and Greenberg (1981), the research findings are four data for comparative figurative language, five for contradictive figurative language, and thirteen for corelative figurative language.

Therefore, the researchers are excited about this phenomenon and curious to examine the figurative language in song lyrics. The data is collected from the song lyrics of Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga, *Die with A Smile*. The song by Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga is meaningful and enjoyable to hear, as is the case nowadays. The song lyrics' values of love, friendship, and unbreakable relation imply many kinds of figurative language inside. Furthermore, analyzing the figurative language utilized in Bruno Mars featuring Lady Gaga's song lyrics would be exciting and new.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researchers are using a descriptive qualitative method. According to Wiersma (1991), descriptive validity in qualitative research refers to the factual accuracy of an account, ensuring that it reflects what occurred without distortion, selectiveness, or fabrication. This research focuses on document analysis to gather data. The data source of this research came from song lyrics *Die With A Smile*. After carefully listening to the music and reading the lyrics to understand their meaning, note-taking techniques were used to gather data. While listening to the songs and reviewing the lyrics, the researchers highlighted words containing different types of figurative language, which were then identified and analyzed in Bruno Mars's song lyrics. By applying Kennedy et al. (2013) theory of figurative language, researchers found some figurative language in the lyrics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section highlighted the impact of figurative language used in Bruno Mars's song lyrics. The categorization of figurative language was based on the theory proposed by Kennedy et al. (2013). Using this framework, the study identified four types of figurative language in Bruno Mars's song lyrics: metaphor, simile, imagery, and hyperbole.

Table 1. Findings

Figurative Language	Data Found
Metaphor	4
Simile	1
Imagery	3
Hyperbole	1
Total	9

Metaphor

According to Kennedy et al. (2013), metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is described as if it were something else without using "like" or "as." It creates a direct comparison between two, unlike things, implying that they share certain qualities to deepen understanding or create a more vivid image.

And our love's the only war worth fighting for (1:43-1:46)

The line shown for datum 1 is a metaphor, comparing love to a war. This suggests that love, like a war, involves struggle, conflict, or challenges, but it is presented as a battle that is meaningful and worth the effort. The metaphor emphasizes the intensity and value of love, implying that amidst all the hardships and fights one might face, the speaker believes love is the one battle genuinely worth engaging in.

If the world was ending

This line shows the metaphor since it reflects an extreme event and describes the ultimate conclusion of life. It represents the emotional intensity of facing the end of a relationship, personal crisis, or existential threat. The metaphor compares the 'ending of the world' to a profoundly impactful or life-altering moment, suggesting that in such a scenario, one would focus on what truly matters—usually love, connection, or final moments with a loved one.

And our time on Earth was through

This line is described as a metaphor as if it is comparing 'lives' and 'time on earth' with a limited time that temporary living, known from the start of life, will come to an end. By referring to life as 'our time on Earth' it emphasizes how the temporary period will come to an end.

Ooh, lost, lost in the words that we scream

This line shows metaphor as 'lost' comes to express the overwhelmed feeling or chaotic communication, represented by 'the word that we scream.' It highlights the situation change that likely becomes more intense and leads to confusion or disconnect.

Simile

According to Kennedy et al. (2013), a simile is defined as a comparison between two things, which usually uses the word "like" or "as." A simple highlight for a simile is similarities between two things to vivid imagery.

So I'm a love you every night like it's the last night

The line shown for this datum is specifically a simile. The line uses 'like' to compare loving someone with someone at a high level, which expresses the urgency of 'last night.' The lyrics represent passionate love and fullness, just like every day was their final day. The simile presents the worth of uncountable and unguaranteed love, whether they were there for each other or not. In addition, the lyrics show hope, sincerity, and loyalty.

Imagery

According to Kennedy et al. (2013) imagery is characterized by the relation to the senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) to create vivid images for the readers. Through imagery, writers evoke concrete sensations or feelings, making abstract ideas more relatable or emotionally resonant.

If the party was over

This line uses imagery since the word 'party' expresses joy, celebration, and togetherness. Therefore, the lyrics show the aftermath of an event that comes to an end, symbolizing the final or closure. This shows the listeners a sense of emptiness or loss as if it is the end of a party or life. The fleeting nature of moments means people easily come and go and change.

And our time on Earth was through

This line evokes imagery from the sense of finality and the end of life. The word 'through' highlights the end of the period as if it were the closing chapter. This imagery expresses a sense of morality and reflection on life's fleeting nature. Furthermore, it encourages us to complete the process of spending our limited time and what matters at the end of life.

And die with a smile

This line evokes imagery coming from the senses with visual images. As if it is the final chapter of life, death, go along with a smile that expresses joy, happiness, and peace. It is just like picturing somebody at the peace level of the end of life, where loved ones surround them, and they are happy at the end of their life. It also depicts the happy separation for the farewell.

Hyperbole

Kennedy et al. (2013) define hyperbole as a figure of speech that involves deliberate and extravagant exaggeration for emphasis or effect. Hyperbole is not meant to be taken literally; instead, it creates a strong impression, conveys intensity, or highlights a particular quality or feeling.

And die with a smile

From this line, it shows hyperbole. The idea of 'dying with a smile' exaggerates the emotional contentment or joy one might feel at the end of life. While it is impossible to guarantee to smile at the moment of death or separation, the phrase emphasizes the speaker's intense feeling of happiness, peace, or fulfillment, suggesting that their love or life experience is so profound that even death and separation seem bearable or joyous. This makes the expression somewhat hyperbolic in its emotional intensity.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussions above, the researchers conclude that the song lyrics of *Die with A Smile* contained some figurative language. Since the song is beautifully arranged, four metaphors, one simile, three imagery, and one hyperbole were found. Metaphors dominate the song lyrics as they are the most common figurative language. This song tells the story of a couple who love each other until the end of their lives. They felt satisfaction with each other as long as they were there for each other. From the research

result, this song's lyrics, *Die with A Smile*, used figurative language to express vivid images or ideas to engage the listeners. Simply put, this song's lyrics bring closure to the listeners' feelings. This research shows that music serves not mere entertainment but also as a narrative tool, conveying powerful messages through creative linguistic expression. This research highlights the importance of figurative language in music, revealing its potential to evoke emotions and articulate complex human experiences, thereby enriching both the cultural and emotional landscape of contemporary society.

REFERENCES

Datul, A., & Agung, I. G. A. M. (2023). An Analysis of Figurative Language in the Song Lyrics By Jamie Miller. *British: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, 12(1–14), 123.

Eka Agustina, A., & Mustikawati, Y. (2023). Analysis of Figurative Language in Song Lyrics “Make It Right” and “Permission To Dance” by Bts. *ELITERATE : Journal of English Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 3(1), 2023.

Fuld, G. L., Mulligan, D. A., Altmann, T. R., Brown, A., Christakis, D., Clarke-Pearson, K., Dreyer, B. P., Falik, H. L., Nelson, K. G., O’Keefe, G. S., Strasburger, V. C., De Rivas, M. R. G., Milteer, R. M., Shifrin, D. L., Brody, M., Wilcox, B., Noland, V. L., & Steiner, G. L. (2009). Impact of music, music lyrics, and music videos on children and youth. *Pediatrics*, 124(5), 1488–1494. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2009-2145>

Ibrahim, I., Akib, M., & Hasyim, R. (2019). The Analysis of Figurative Language in Endless Love Song Lyric. *Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Linguistik*, 8(2), 119–130. <https://doi.org/10.33506/jbl.v8i2.464>

Kennedy, X. J., Kennedy, D. M., & Gioia, D. (2013). An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing. In *Pearson*.

Keraf, G. (2009). *Diksi dan gaya bahasa*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Manurung, A. A., Saragih, E. P., Gurning, E., Tarigan, I. Y., Silaban, M. W., & Napitupulu, O. (2023). Social Media Utilization in the Digital Era. *IJEMS: Indonesian Journal of Education and Mathematical Science*, 4(1), 36–39. <https://jurnal.umsu.ac.id/index.php/IJEMS/article/view/13394>

Ni Wayan Swarniti. (2022). Analysis of Figurative Language in “Easy On Me” Song Lyric. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 8(1), 13–18. <https://doi.org/10.55637/jr.8.1.4708.13-18>

Wiersma, W. (1991). *Research method in education: An introduction* (5th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.