

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SELENA GOMEZ' SELECTED SONGS

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*Abstract*— This article was created with the aim of exploring the use of the figurative language in selected songs from Selena Gomez's album Rare and their meaning. There were three songs chosen, namely Cut You Off, Vulnerable, and A Sweeter Place. This study has two problems formulated in this research, namely: what kind of figurative language is found in Selena Gomez's album entitled Rare and what is the meaning of figurative language found in Selena Gomez's album entitled Rare. The theory to describe figurative language is from Abrams' theory (1999) while the meaning is from Leech's theory (1981). The author found three types of eight types of figurative language, namely 1 simile, 3 hyperbole, and 1 metaphor and found one type of meaning according to Leech (1981), namely connotative meaning.

*Keywords:* Figurative Language, Rare, Song Lyrics

### 1. Introduction

Language is the way humans communicate with each other. Communication by language can be successful if there is an understanding between the participant and the speaker. Language is important to us in many aspects of human life. Communication is important because it can reduce the level of ambiguity in social interactions (Hasanaj & Manxhari, 2017). In a cultural expression, language is a fundamental aspect. Apart from being a means of expressing intent, language also used to maintain social relations (Sirbu, 2015). Language is communication that has several meanings. The two main meanings in language are literal and figurative meanings. Figurative meaning is an expression conveyed in a word or sentence that is different from a literal interpretation. According to Hutauruk (2019) figurative language is used imaginatively either in speaking or writing. (Keraf, 2009) stated the figurative language reinforce meaning, activate an object.

Figurative language can be in several ways, some of which are metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, personification, and irony. Metaphor is one of the figures of speech. The use of literal sentences in the language sometimes makes it boring. Metaphor is a non-literal language used in the form of a kind of comparison or viewing (Knowles & Moon, 2006). Simile is a direct contrast between two alternatively viable words. According to Hidayati (2017), Simile is opposites. Usually use conjunctions as like, if, and like. Parables are considered the same metaphor, but one aspect distinguishes them. Metaphor compares things implicitly, whereas Simile is quite explicit. Hyperbole is one of the dimensions of figurative language used to exaggerate the fact to impress and influence the reader or listener on the debated issue (Burgers et al., 2016). In addition, hyperbole can be found in works of literature to help the writer express more messages.

Furthermore, this figurative language was used in everyday interactions to enhance dramatic feelings and draw others deeper into the speaker's speech. On the other hand, paradoxes are contradictory situations or elements that are not in accordance with the statement (Iryanti, 2010). Furthermore, Personification is a way to express something with the dependents of inanimate objects doing what animate objects usually do. Irony used to express something in its context and hide its true meaning (Tarigan, 2013). Irony is said; it is subtle, but it can also express harsh feelings. This figurative language to classified as humor or contradictory characters. There are several studies that have discussed figurative language.

The first study was conducted from Nursolihat & Kereviati (2020). In this journal, it is found that the majority of the figurative language is metaphor. This a similarity research that it uses a qualitative descriptive

research method and focuses on the words and meaning of the song album. This study uses the notion of meaning according to Leech (1981). Meanwhile, previous studies used several approaches from different authors.

The second study was conducted by (Rohani et al., 2018). As a result, 13 types of the figurative lexicon can be found in the December edition of The Jakarta Post's "features" with simile and conceptual meaning is dominant. The difference between previous research and this research lies in the source of the data. Previous research has focused on the various types and meanings of figurative language expressed in the December issue of The Jakarta Post's "features". Studies across thirteen species were found in the "features" section. The similarity of this research is that the writer uses a qualitative descriptive method and for the presentation of the second finding, the informal method used in this study is data analysis.

Lastly, the related of figurative language was taken from Harya (2017). The difference between this research and previous research lies in the analysis of the problem. His study found that there were seventy sentences indicated to have a figurative meaning. In the novel, simile is the most common type of figurative language. In this study, the writer analyzed figurative language and its meaning in song lyrics from the album Rare using theory (Abrams, 1999) to classify the types of figurative language. In addition, the approach used to analyze the meaning in Selena Gomez's lyrics is from (Leech, 1981). This topic is interesting to study because the lyrics of the song are unique and fun, especially in terms of figurative language. The music used as the data source is Pop genre music. This study will be useful for listeners and readers of this album to understand a deeper meaning.

## **2. Literature Review**

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## **3. Methods**

This study data was derived from selected songs from album Rare by Selena Gomez. There are three selected songs that contain figurative language, namely: Cut You Off, Vulnerable, and A Sweeter Place. This section discusses the theories that the writer employs to solve all of the problems in this study. This study the writer used the theory from Abrams (1999) to classify the type of the figurative language. Meanwhile, to analyze the meaning of the figurative language the writer used theory of meaning from Leech (1981). There are three step that used in collecting the data of this research such are: 1) reading intensively and carefully each song lyrics in the album while listening to the music, 2) taking notes and collecting the sentences or phares that are classified as figurative language, 3) using theory Abrams (1999) about figurative language and from Leech (1981) theory of the meaning to analyze the data. This study used qualitative data analysis methods to explain the data descriptively. This study uses formal and informal presentations for presenting the data.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

In this part, the analyzed of figurative language in album *Rare* by Selena Gomez's selected songs used the theory of figurative language by Abrams (1999) and for analyzing the meaning of each types of the meaning used seven types of the meaning by Leech (1981).

##### 1. Simile

Abrams (1999: 97) stated that simile is a direct contrast between objects. A direct or explicit comparison means that two objects are compared in the sense that one object can be referred to by terms used in the other to make a clear description. Therefore, choosing the comparison will be crucial since they need to indicate the similarity through the words: like, same, as. There are also two types of similes mentioned namely clear and unclear simile. The clear simile occurs when the two things are clearly stated. Indistinct similes occurs when the two objects are not directly conveyed.

###### Data 1

*If my love was like a flower, would you plant it, would you grow it?  
I might give you all my body, are you strong enough to hold it?*

(Vulnerable, Line 8)

The data above categorized as a simile. Abrams (1999: 97) stated that simile is a direct contrast between objects. A direct or explicit comparison means that two objects are compared in the sense that one object can be referred to by terms used in the other to make a clear description. Therefore, choosing the comparison will be crucial since they need to indicate the similarity through the words: like, same, as. It can be seen from the word "my love was like a flower" refers to Selena's feelings of love like a flower. Here, the songwriter wants to say that she really loves her boyfriend. This data has a connotative meaning when a word is associated with an imaginative or emotional meaning, beyond the literal meaning. Connotation has various meanings other than denotative meaning (Leech, 1981). It is classified as a connotative meaning. The songwriter tries to explain that she loves her boyfriend and will give everything to the boyfriend she loves.

##### 2. Hyperbole

Abrams (1999: 120) hyperbole a condition when the point of utterance is exaggerated, which makes an overstatement. That used to underline the point in a great respect. Thus, the condition when a person utters a hyperbole figure that called hyperbolic. The example to state hyperbole can be explained as follows: "anger already rampant until it almost blew me". In this respect, the speaker tries to make a point that s/he is extremely angry by saying his/her anger would blow up. Speakers and listener also in this case should share the same culture or understanding towards a figurative language so that the intention of the hyperbole can be transferred fully to the hearer.

###### Data 2

*So I gotta get you out my head now  
I just cut you off  
You out my head now*

(Cut you off, Line 9)

This data is classified as hyperbole. Hyperbole is a condition when an utterance's point is exaggerated to make an exaggerated statement. It is used to underline it with great respect (Abrams, 1999: 120). This data shows that Selena wants something to come out of her head like a foreign object that is bothering her mind. The data refers to Selena thinking about someone for four years and wants that person out of her head.

This data data uses connotative meaning. Connotative meaning occurs when a word is associated with imaginative or emotional meaning, beyond its literal meaning, connotation has various meanings other than literal meaning (Leech, 1981). The word "get you out my head now" literally means an object that wants to be thrown away. In this data, the singer uses hyperbole to describe the word "you" as an object. The true meaning of this data illustrates that Selena is determined to forget someone or her ex burden on her mind.

###### Data 3

*If I show you all my demons and we dive into the deep end  
Would we crash and burn like every time before?*

(Vulnerable, Line 9)

The data is classified as hyperbole. Hyperbole a condition when the subject of the utterance is exaggerated so as to make an exaggerated statement, Abrams (1999: 120) . It is used to underline a point with great respect. Thus, the condition when someone pronounces a hyperbolic figure is called hyperbolic. The word “demons” written in the lyrics of this song has a different meaning. In religion, mythology, occult, and folklore, demons (from the Greek, *daimôn*) are supernatural beings and are usually depicted as evil beings. While the devil in the lyrics of this song does not mean that Selena becomes a devil, but shows a naughty person.

Regarding the Leech theory (1981) this sentence is also classified as a connotative meaning because there is a hidden meaning behind its literal meaning. The meaning that the writer wants to convey in this sentence is if Selena shows all her naughty traits then it is dangerous for them to plunge her into a very bad thing. Leech, (1981) connotative meaning occurs when a word is associated with an imaginative or emotional meaning, beyond its literal meaning. Connotation has various meanings other than denotative meaning. The songwriter wants to convey the meaning that Selena shows all her naughty traits, then it is dangerous for them to plunge her into something very bad. Selena hopes that the love and trust she has given her partner does not lead to disappointment.

#### **Data 4**

*As I fantasize*

***So much to see, I'm in paradise***

*Always seem I'm new inside*

(A sweeter place, Line 24)

The data above is categorized as hyperbole. According to Abrams (1999: 120) hyperbole is a condition when the subject of the utterance is exaggerated so as to make an exaggerated statement. It is used to underline a point with great respect. Thus, the condition when someone utters hyperbole is called hyperbolic. In this data has a different meaning than what is written. The word “paradise” is a place in the afterlife which is believed by adherents of several religions to be a gathering place for human spirits who during their lives in this world do good in accordance with the teachings of their religion. A living person cannot be in paradise.

This sentence is also classified as a type of connotative meaning. Connotative meaning occurs when a word is associated with an imaginative or emotional meaning, beyond its literal meaning (Leech, 1981). The word “paradise” is the main topic of this data. The word “paradise” connotatively means the gathering place of good spirits. The meaning that the songwriter wants to express in this sentence is the happiness that is felt because all the desired things can be achieved so that the writer imagines being in paradise.

### **3. Metaphor**

Metaphor is using a phrase to say something but in a symbolized way. According to Abrams (1999: 97) a word or expression used in a metaphor which in literal usage, donates the application of one type of thing to another type of thing without making a comparison. For most people, metaphors are devices of poetic and rhetorical imagination that develop extraordinary problems rather than ordinary language. As a result, most people believe that they can function without metaphors.

#### **Data 5**

*Red lips, french kiss my worries all away*

*There must be a sweeter place*

***We can sugarcoat the taste***

(A sweeter place, Line 4)

The data above is categorized as a metaphor. Metaphor is one of the figurative language commonly used in everyday life because it is effective in giving ideas or messages that are not easily understood. In addition, it can convey emotions and feelings through language. According to Abrams (1999:97) words or expressions used in metaphors which, in literal usage, contribute to the application of one type of thing to another without making comparisons. And it can be seen from the sentence "we can sugarcoat the taste" has a different meaning by using figurative words that describe an object or action. The word “sugarcoat” means to make something appear more positive or pleasing than it really is. In the English - Indonesian dictionary, the meaning of sugarcoat is to coat with sugar. In the lyric "we can sugarcoat the taste" the meaning of the word sugarcoat is to make something seem more positive or pleasant than it really is. In the song, Selena

broke up with her boyfriend and she was looking for a place to forget the sadness of her broken heart. The word "taste" in that sentence has the meaning of feeling sad because he broke up with his girlfriend. Actually he's still heartbroken but he wants to forget it soon and wants to look fine. The meaning that the songwriter meant in the sentence was that Selena was trying to cover her sadness with joy and happiness

The data "we can sugarcoat the taste" is categorized as connotative meaning. Connotative meaning occurs when a word is associated with an imaginative or emotional meaning, beyond the literal meaning. Connotation has various meanings other than denotative meaning (Leech, 1981). In this data the songwriter wants to say that he has done something without realizing that his girlfriend is having an affair or lying.

## 5. Conclusion

From the research above, it can be concluded that researchers have analyzed the selected song from Rare by Selena Gomez which was released in 2020 by the Washington Post. There are 3 selected songs, including: Cut You Off, Vulnerable, and A Sweeter Place. In this study the researchers found five data, namely; 1 simile, 3 hyperbole, and 1 metaphor. In addition, the researcher found that the dominant meaning is connotative meaning. In this study, researchers found that songwriters express feelings deeply and meaningfully and have high imaginations to express their feelings to listeners through song lyrics.

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