

Figurative Meaning Found in Song Lyrics of “Am” Album By Arctic Monkeys

Indra Desman Telaumbanua¹, Ketut Sudrama², Dewa Ayu Tri Udiani³
Universitas Warmadewa Denpasar-Bali, Indonesia¹²³

{sudrama@gmail.com², triudiani@gmail.com³}

Abstract. In a song, the language which is also often used is figurative language. The meaning of words in it uses non-literal meaning to make the song more interesting and imaginative. The non-literal meaning can be seen in the lyric of a song, in fact, in the westerns music too. The purpose of this study is to identify the kinds of figurative meaning used in Arctic Monkeys’ songs and analyze the literal meaning of those figurative forms. The theories applied to support this study proposed by Mildred L. Larson as a main theory, and supported by theory proposed by Laurence Perrine. This study is designed in qualitative approach. All data used in this research were taken from the song lyrics of AM Album by Arctic Monkeys. As a result of the analysis shown that there are ten types of figurative meanings found in thirteen songs from “AM” album. The figurative meanings found that are Metonymy, Synecdoche, Euphemism, Idioms, Hyperbole, Personification, Metaphor, Simile, Symbol, and Paradox. And the meanings represented by the used of each those types. In conclusion, types of metonymy, synecdoche, idiom, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, euphemism, and symbol which dominate use for the song lyric.

Keywords: Meaning; figurative meaning; song lyrics

1 Introduction

In every works, such as poems, poetries, songs, and other literatures, meaning is an important thing because it influences someone to recognize authors’ or speakers’ ideas. Discussing about meaning, definitely we talk about semantics. Semantics is central to study of communication; and as more a crucial factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes more pressing. Seven types of meaning, they are: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meaning. Generally, song lyrics are full of hidden meaning. It could not be understood literally because its meaning sometimes is deliberate designed in figurative meaning. This thing not only occurred in song lyrics but also in some kinds of literatures.

As mentioned previously that some song lyrics use figurative meaning or metaphorical language or simply metaphor, to make it more interesting and imaginative. Figurative language or language style is a way to increase the effect by introducing and comparing certain objects or materials or more generally to calm others. Like other works of art, song is also composed by

using language. The language which is also often used in the song is figurative meaning. Almost all of the songs contain figurative meaning inside their lyrics.

Lyric is an expression of writer's feeling or experiences of life such as, love, happiness, sorrow, family and friendships. Understanding the aesthetic value behind song is hard because it has figurative meaning. To comprehend well, the readers must identify words or phrases that consist of figurative meaning. Therefore, since studying poem is worth and interesting to do, studying song is worth and interesting too. The fact is the reason why this research concentrated to study figurative meaning contain in songs.

The following are some related researches had been conducted related to the figurative language. The analysis of figurative language used in the lyric of firework by Katy Perry. The study found that there are some kinds of figurative language used such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, affiliation, symbolic, paradox, and personification. The second related research was studied the analysis of figurative languages used in the novel the book of forbidden feelings written by Lala Bohang, found that there are 5 types of figurative language used in the novel. They are simile, personification, metaphor, apostrophe, and hyperbole. Metaphor is the dominant used of figurative languages in the novel. The use of figurative language is to make the sentences more vivid, expressive, and has deep meanings. Those are to add clarity, to give color to the novel, to persuade, and make the sentences more dramatic and beautiful. These studies were looking for the different object analysis with this present study. Therefore, arctic monkeys' songs are interested to be conducted.

Arctic Monkeys' songs are selected as the object because the songs are containing many kinds of figurative meanings and phrases. Arctic Monkeys is an English rock band formed in 2002 in High Green, a suburb of Sheffield. Their debut album is the fastest-selling debut album by a band in UK chart history, and in 2013, Rolling Stone ranked it the 30th greatest debut album. They have been nominated for five Grammy Awards, also won the Mercury Prize in 2006 for their debut album, in addition to receiving nominations in 2007, 2013 and 2018. The band have headlined at the Glastonbury Festival twice, in 2007 and again in 2013, and many more. The songs are actually contain many kinds of figurative meaning that interesting to be analyzed. The problems which are analyzed and discussed in this research can be formulated into what types of figurative meanings are found in Arctic Monkeys' songs? And what are their meanings? Therefore, this study aims to find out the types of figurative meaning are found in Arctic Monkeys' songs and analyze the real meaning of those figurative forms.

2 Methods

The study was designed in descriptive qualitative approach. All data taken from the Arctic Monkeys' album that released on 2013, entitled AM, randomly. AM is the fifth studio album by English indie rock band Arctic Monkeys. The data resources were thirteen songs in AM album, they are Do I Wanna Know, R U Mine, One For the Road, Arabella, I Want it All, No. 1 Party Anthem, Mad Sounds, Fireside, Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High, Snap Out of It, Knee Socks, Suck It and See, and I Wanna Be Yours. Those data were collected by observation technique.

In this steps, researcher was listening to the Arctic Monkeys' songs from the album of AM carefully, then, specifying the statement related to figurative meaning which was used in Arctic Monkeys' songs. After collecting the data, researcher analyzed the data by applying descriptive method. The data were categorised accordance with its types and presented into paragraph by providing information inductive and deductive technique.

3 Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis found there were eight types of figurative meaning, they are metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, euphemism, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and symbol. In line with stated that there are twelve types of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole/overstatement, understatement, and irony. The types were found in AM album supported that figurative meaning consists of metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, hyperbole, euphemism, metaphors, and simile. Those types of figurative meaning were found presented in following.

3.1 Metonymy

Metonymy is a sort of allegorical significance where an item or idea is alluded to not by its own name, but rather by the name of something firmly connected with it. Are there some **aces** up your sleeves? (Do I Wanna Know? – line 4). The lyric is one of the parts of Arctic Monkeys' song entitled Do I Wanna Know in line 4. The word "Aces" is being used to refer to the word burden. As we know, when we are playing card the ace is a special card that could be a killer for each player. The literal meaning is the singer that wondering to the woman that keep the secretes which assume as a burden that should be concealed and cared of by herself, no one knows who she really wants to be with, him or the other guy.

And it seems as though those **lumps in your throat** (No. 1 Party Anthem – line 12). The words "lumps in your throat" refer to "words that held in his mind". The word "lumps" is meant to the opinion of someone that has an association with the "words". The literal meaning of the lyric is the men who is look like cannot deliver his opinion in his mind, he is very nervous about approaching her so that no words could explained from her mouth.

More I get through **the gears** incapable of making alright decisions (Why Do You Only Call Me When You're High? – line 21). The words "the gears" are meant to the bumpy conditioned that have an association with "the barrier". The meaning of this lyric is the more he through the barrier, the more he confused to take alright decision.

Darling how could you be so **blind**? (Snap Out of It – line 25). The word "blind" refer to "unconscious" to the way her choose. When we fall in love, we usually didn't know which one is right and which one is wrong. The lyric have a literal meaning as the boy who wondering to the girl who is getting obsessed of love by another men, while the girl is very important to him.

3.2 Synecdoche

Synecdoche is an interesting expression where, frequently, a portion of something is utilized to allude to its entirety. Here are the lyrics belong to figurative meaning of synecdoche found in Arctic Monkeys' songs. Her **eyes** invite you to approach (No.1 Party Anthem – line 10). Eyes is a part of human body which replace the word "sight" or a desire of the girl who mentioned by the singer focused in her gesture. The literal meaning of the lyric is the woman that wants to get closer with the men through the sight of her gesture to make him approach her.

Under a **spell** you're hypnotized (Snap out of It – line 24). The word "spell" refers to the whole part of seduction from another man. The singer explained about the girl who is hypnotized by someone with his words. The literal meaning of this lyric is the woman who is influenced of seduction by another men, she blinded by someone who is make her falling in love and want to forget the singer.

You have got **that face** that just says “Baby, I was made to break your heart” (Suck It and See – line 19). The word “that face” from the example above indicates a whole part of human body which replace the word "expression" of the woman. The literal meaning of this lyric is the singer state that without she said her feelings, the man already understand what she means only by her expression.

Each had a half of a king and queen **seat** (Knee Sock – line 30). The word “seat” is refers to the whole part of the word “chair”. The literal meaning of this lyric is about the woman and the man who are has the same position that if they being together they could be a powerful.

3.3 Idioms

Idiom is a kind of non-literal implying that is an expression that individuals state that is regularly acknowledged as having an unexpected significance in comparison to the individual words may persuade. I wanna grab both your shoulders and shake baby, **snap out of it** (Snap Out Of It – line 6 and 7). In the words “snap out of it”, is the condition to stop experiencing something unpleasant or stop behaving in a negative way. In this lyric the singer conveys about the men who wants to make the girl that falling in love with another men to become conscious and back to the men again. It is obviously belongs to figurative meaning of idiom.

Suck it and see you never know (Suck It And See – line 5). The words “suck it and see” usually said to mean that the only way to find out if something new is a good idea and is likely to be successful is to actually try it. The literal meaning of this lyric is the men give a suggestion for the girl in order to try to re-establish their relationship before the men change his mind to leave her.

Don’t get that **sinking** feeling, don’t fall apart (One For The Road – line 25). The word “sinking” is refers to “be drowned”. But in this lyric, that word does not means someone has drowned. The literal meaning of this lyric is a suggestion for the woman in order not to continuously thinking harder about the things that made her sad or disappointed.

Will you pour me **one for the road**? (One For The Road – Line 14). The words “one for the road” here refers to a final drink before leaving home to fortify one for the journey ahead. Thus, it is clear that the meaning of those words is the singer wants the woman pouring him the last drinks. He is wondering if the woman will pour him a drink to ease the pain before he has to leave.

3.4 Euphemism

A euphemism is a figurative expression which is in some ways like a metonymy. There is the substitution of one word for another or one expression for another. Why’d you only call me when you’re high? (Why’d you only call me when you’re high? – line 13). The word “high” here refers to a condition of human who getting “drunk”. The word “drunk” is too vulgar to express in this lyric that is why it is being euphemistically by saying it “high” to replace “drunk”. The singer conveys about the guy is clearly in love or infatuated with this girl but for whatever reason only contacts her when he is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Love buckles under the strain of those wild nights (Mad sound – line 6). The word “wild nights” in this lyric is refers to the time for having sex. The words “having sex” is to vulgar to say, that is why it is being euphemistically by saying it “wild nights”. The meaning of this lyric is to tell that a couple that is inevitable to having a sex because of they love each other.

3.5 Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a language style that involves an overstatement of thoughts for the sake of emphasis. Here are the lyrics belong to figurative meaning of hyperbole found in Arctic Monkeys' songs. It's an exploration she's made of **outer space** (Arabella – line 15). As we know that it is impossible for the ordinary people to go to the outer space. It is usually only can doing by the astronaut. Outer space is where all of the planets, stars, galaxies, and other objects are found. It means the outer space is the place that really wide. The meaning of this lyric is Arabella has a lot of knowledge because of her experience that are so vast.

Like in my heart there's that **hotel suite** and you lived there so long (Fireside – line 5). The words "there's that hotel suite and you lived there so long" meant the men who love the woman for a long time. The lyric exaggerate "hotel suite" as a special position or the space he has for her in his heart. The meaning of this lyric is the singer explaining to the woman that she is a special person in his life.

I wanna be your Fort Cortina **I will never rust** (I Wanna Be Yours – line 3 and 4). I will never rust means the love that will stay continually by the singer to the girl. This lyric makes the love of the singer sounds timeless and eternal like an exaggeration. The meaning of this lyric is the man who wants to adore someone the whole of his lifetimes with an extraordinary love.

And let me be the **portable heater** that you'll get cold without (I Wanna Be Yours – line 15). As we know, portable heater is a heater that we could bring wherever we want. A human absolutely cannot be a portable heater that is why these words are to exaggeration. The meaning of this lyric is the man who wants to always be with her any time for the girl, and would give a comfortable feeling every time she is with him.

3.6 Metaphor

A metaphor is figurative language which directly refers to a certain thing by mentioning another. It might give clearness or distinguish shrouded likenesses between two thoughts. The lyric that indicate the figurative meaning of metaphor can be seen in the following.

I'm a puppet in a string (R U Mine – line 1). In this lyric "I'm" is the first idea as a topic, and the second idea is "a puppet" as an images. The point of similarity of "I'm" and "a puppet" is "under control". In this lyric, the comparison is implied. The puppet is an object that is animated or manipulated by a person and usually resembling a human, animal or mythical figure. Thus, the singer comparing himself as a puppet that is everything he did was directed by someone else. The meaning of this lyric is someone who is realized about himself that is in under control of something in his mind. He is describing how much she controls him as if he is just her puppet.

She's a silver lining lone ranger riding (R U Mine – line 6). This lyric "she" is the first idea as a topic, and the second idea is "silver lining" as an images. The word "silver lining" refers to something perfect or majestic. It gives clearness or recognize shrouded likenesses between two thoughts which is "she" and "silver lining". The meaning of this lyric is the precious woman who has a self-reliant, and perky

But **she's a modern lover** (Arabella – line 14). In this lyric "she" is the first idea as a topic, and the second idea is "modern lover" as an images. The point of similarity of "she" and "modern lover" is "a youthful". The meaning of this lyric is explaining Arabella is an old woman but still act like a youthful.

She's a certified **mind blower** knowing full well that I don't (No. 1 Party Anthem – line 16). In this lyric “she” is the first idea as a topic, and the second idea is “mind blower” as an images. The word “mind blower” refers to something that is astonishing or overwhelming. The lyric imagine how great that woman to know what the men do not know about. The meaning of this lyric is a woman that astonishing a man who adore her because of her mind.

3.7 Simile

A simile is one kinds of figurative language which is commonly recognizable with a comparison or it shows similarities between two different things. A simile is indicated by the words ‘like’ or ‘as’ to describe the similarities. The lyric that indicate the figurative meaning of simile can be seen in the following.

And **her lips** are **like** the galaxy's edge (Arabella – line 16). This lyric also using the word “like” to compare the word “her lips” and “the galaxy's edge”, which is it clear as simile. The galaxy's edge is a colorful stripe of stars, gas, and dust whereas it is very beautiful. Lips is a part of human body especially in human face that usually noticed when talking with each other beside the eyes and gesture of that person. The meaning of this lyric is the admiration to the beautiful woman who is that is stunning. Therefore, the singer imagine the woman by the beautiful of the universe.

Leather jacket **collar popped** like **antenna**, never knowing when to stop (No 1 Party Anthem – line 2). The word “collar popped” and “antenna” are compared and showing similarities between two different things. Antenna is a cable or device that is usually used to send or receive radio or television signals. The words “leather jacket collar popped” is refer to the man who is trying to find the truth. The meaning of this lyric is a guy who has come into the someplace hoping to impress this girl. The men who never stops to find the truth, either the woman already left or not from his life.

Your love is like a **studded leather headlock** (Suck It And See – line 1). The words “studded leather” refers to the leather stuff, and the word “headlock” refers to the “strangled”. The words “a studded leather headlock” refers to the man who feels an invisible strangulation. The comparison of “your love” is being made to emphasize a headlock that be perceived by the studded leather. In this lyric the singer explain about the love of the woman, that feels a choke to him. There is a bond between their relationship and it is hard to separate.

3.8 Symbol

A symbol, however is not necessarily related to metaphor. It can be stand alone and represented a common understanding a simple object or a complex pattern of associations. **Old dog** new tricks, can you feel it? (I Want it All – line 9-11). The words “old dog new tricks” is not only discussing about dog, rather about mortalities of some species and therefore speaking symbolically. An old dog is a symbol for someone who's no longer young. The singer wants to describe about someone old who has an intellection like a younger. He still tried to find something new in his current age.

When the **zeroes line** up on the 24 hour clock (Knee Sock – line 9). The words “the zeroes line up on the 24 hour clock” is the symbolically of the time in 12 pm. Based on the song entitled “Knee Sock”, zeroes line up is the symbol of 00.00 which shows the middle of the night, thus the singer wants to figure to the listener that the time was a midnight when the girl knows there is someone who will call her.

4 Conclusion

Grounded by the research result above found that the types of figurative meaning used in song lyric consists metonymy, synecdoche, idiom, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, euphemism, and symbol which dominate use for the song lyric as the data source. Each kind of those figurative meaning has certain purposes. Metonymy is used to compare something that involving association. Synecdoche is the use of the part for the whole of something or an object. An idiom is a phrase or expression that typically presents a figurative, non-literal meaning attached to the phrase; but some phrases become figurative idioms while retaining the literal meaning of the phrase. Hyperbole is used to exaggerate the condition of the story within the song. Metaphor is used as an implied comparison between two different things. A simile is indicated by the words 'like' or 'as' to describe the similarities. Euphemism is used to avoid an offensive expression, or one that is socially unacceptable, or one that is unpleasant. It can be stand alone and represented a common understanding a simple object or a complex pattern of associations.

References

- [1] G. Leech, *Semantic-The Study of Meaning*. USA: Penguin, 1981.
- [2] K. L. Knickerbocker and H. W. Reninger, *Interpreting literature: preliminaries to literary judgment*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.
- [3] H. G. Tarigan, *Pengkajian Pragmatik*. Bandung: Angkasa, 2009.
- [4] Hariyanto, "The Analysis of Figurative Language Used in the Lyric of Firework by Katy Perry (A Study of Semantic)," *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 46–60, 2017.
- [5] W. Damayanti, "The analysis of figurative languages used in the novel the book of forbidden feelings written by Lala Bohang," 2018.
- [6] L. Perrine, *Sound and Sense an Introduction of Poetry*. USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992.
- [7] M. L. Larson, *Meaning-Based Translation, A Guide to Across-Language Equivalence*. New York: University Press of America, 1998.