

Figurative Language Used in Mariah Carey'S Song Lyrics in Butterfly Album

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Abstract: *This undergraduate thesis entitled "Figurative Language Used in Mariah Carey's Butterfly Album" is appealing to be discussed since figurative language is a relevant topic to the consistency of being used in literary work and song is an applicable object to be analyzed. This undergraduate thesis aimed to identify the types of figurative language and to explain the meaning of figurative language implied in Butterfly Album by Mariah Carey. The data of this thesis were taken from the album named Butterfly by Mariah Carey. The documentation method alongside with note-taking technique was used in this undergraduate thesis to collect the data. The qualitative method was used in this undergraduate thesis to analyze the data that has been collected. The data that have been analyzed were presented in the informal method alongside the descriptive technique. This undergraduate thesis used the theory stated by Knickerbocker and Reninger in the book Interpreting Literature (1963) and Leech in the book entitled Semantics: The Study of Meaning (1981) This undergraduate thesis identified types of figurative language in The Butterfly Album by Mariah Carey, those are simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox. Furthermore, the types of meaning found in the album are conceptual, connotative, and affective.*

INTRODUCTION

Language functions as a medium for communication which is explained by Aristoteles that human uses to convey their ideas, emotions, thoughts, wants, and feelings through speech sounds. Moreover, to communicate their needs, humans not only produce them through sound but also through written work. Hence, as speakers and listeners, humans also become writers and readers. Furthermore, literature as a written word offers the readers imaginative stories or any factual information. In a literary work such as novel, poem, or song lyrics, attractive language is needed to make the work have artistic and appealing points to read. One way to make the works become interesting is by using figurative language. It is a language that uses non-strict words and non-realistic meaning phrases to express something. It employs all types of creative writing and flourishes with imaginative language for written or spoken language to elaborate complex ideas.

Humans are creative living creatures who will keep continuing to create things like new songs that keep on released every year. With this statement, as literary work will keep continuing to be produced, the existence of figurative language will also continue to be used. Hence, figurative language is a relevant topic and song is an applicable object to be analyzed.

Mariah Carey as a singer-songwriter expresses all of her songs figuratively. One of her best albums which has sold over 27 million worldwide is the *Butterfly* album which already celebrated its 25th anniversary. As this album already reached its quarter-century age, the songs are still enjoyed and remarkable by the listeners. The celebration was mentioned in some online platforms such as Billboard, Rollingstone, Hapersbazzar, Spotify, and many more which reminisce about the impact of this album on her career, the music industry, and the listener. If a song could touch and beautifully relate to your heart then it is the work of figurative language the songwriter creates.

As a result, looking up to the successful singer-songwriter that sticks to figurative language which the result of the works speaks them self on how they fluence the listeners, figurative language will keep continuing to be used as content analysis. Therefore, this thesis analyzed deep further the songs in the *Butterfly* album by Mariah Carey.

This review begins with an undergraduate thesis from Anggreni (2022), entitled “Figurative Language in Barack Obama’s Speech at the United Nations General Assembly”. This thesis aims to identify the types and analyze the meanings of figurative language used in the speech. Qualitative methods and data collection methods are used to find the data (watch and read transcription; collect the data to determine the type of figurative language using the note-taking technique). The data is descriptively present as it answers the first and second chapters gradually, with the help of a code that the researcher created to identify the type and time. Hence, the Researcher used figurative speech theory by Wren & Martin (2000) and the theory of meaning by Leech (1981). As a result, twenty-eight data were founded which contain simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, euphemism, antithesis, epigram, irony, and symbol, as also five types of meaning such as conceptual, connotative, social, affective, and reflected meaning. The strength of this thesis is the object and the way it presented its analyses by using code to show the time from the video and type of the figurative language. Her research is related to this proposal as both have the same aim to find the type of figurative language and the meaning inside it. However, as both have different types of objects (speech and song lyric), the approach contrast shoon how both choose different figurative language theory.

Next is research by Lusiana (2017) entitled “Figurative Language Used in Taylor Swift’s Songs in the Album 1989”. Identify the types and analyze the lexical meanings of figurative language used by Taylor Swift in the 1989 album. The song was chosen to be analyzed Bad Blood, Blank Space, Clean, New Romance, and Style. Qualitative methods and documentation methods were used to find the data. Hence the researcher used the figurative speech theory by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and the theory of lexical meaning by Chaer (2013). As a result, in five songs, eight types of Figurative Language were founded which contain simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, irony, dead metaphor, and paradox, as also for the meaning she found contrasted with its lexical meaning because the result shows how the song has intense and impressive meaning. Her thesis is related to the proposal as both have the same aim to find the type of figurative language, however, to discover the meaning she uses lexical meaning to compare with the real meaning inside the lyrics. Hence, her thesis focused on the lexical meaning and compared it to the figurative meaning, however, the focus of the research will be the meaning of how the lyrics implicitly describe.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

In order to arrive at a scientifically acceptable result, certain theories will be used to analyze the data. In the theoretical aspect to analyze the data, this undergraduate thesis used the theory of Figurative language by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) which will be supported by the theory of meaning by Leech (1981). Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963: 367) stated metaphor meant to convey meaning beyond its literal meaning, figurative language is also known as metaphorical language or simply metaphor as its major responsibility is to communicate meaning from the literal to the level of figurative. This theory has ten figurative language types namely: simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, paradox, dead metaphor, and allusion. Leech (1981) conducted seven types of meaning namely conceptual, connotative, collocative, reflective, affective, social, and thematic.

RESEARCH METHOD

The documentation method was utilized alongside the note-taking technique to gather the data. There were certain steps to collect the data. First, listen to each song of the *Butterfly* album and read the lyrics entirely. Next, read each line of the lyrics of every song intensely and elaborate them into a note for each song. Third, selected the lines of the lyrics that had the figure of speech based on the theory by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963). Last, made a list of the lines of the lyrics that had been selected into systematic data.

The qualitative method was used to examine them. The data were analyzed with a descriptive technique which means the systematic description was presented as clearly as possible by the scope limitations of the discussion. There were certain steps to analyze the data. Those steps were, to identify the types of figurative language used in the song lyrics in *Butterfly* album by Mariah Carey using the theory of Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and explained the meanings of figurative language implied in the song lyrics in *Butterfly* album by Mariah Carey using the theory of Leech (1981).

The Informal method was used as a way to convey information using words or phrases. The result of this thesis was presented in an informal method as the data is lyrics. In order to present the analysis, this research used the informal method alongside the descriptive technique which was applied to explain the result of the data analysis. Hence, the analysis was presented through descriptive analyses that stated below the data in paragraph form by beginning with stating the type of figurative language implied based on the theory by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and afterward explaining the meaning of it based on the theory by leech (1981).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The *Butterfly* Album by Mariah Carey has eleven songs: Honey, Butterfly, My All, The Roof, Fourth of July, Breakdown, Babydoll, Close My Eyes, Whenever You Call, The Beautiful Ones, and Outside. To identify the figurative language types, this undergraduate thesis used the theory purpose by Knickerbocker and Reninger. The theoretical framework presented ten types of figurative language, based on the album, seven figures of speech were found. The result and discussion are explained as the following.

Data 1: “And it’s just like honey” line 19, Honey

“Honey is the first track of the *Butterfly* album. The song is about the compassion and addiction one feels when being adored by a significant other. It is supported by statements from Mariah

Carey's Memoir titled *The Meaning of Mariah Carey* (2020) "It was a secret shout-out to Derek Jeter. "Honey" was a song about jonesin' for that DJ feeling." He was her lover ("The thought of the simple pleasure of just being close to Derek was liberating." "Derek was definitely no longer pedestrian; he was closer to a Prince Charming.")

The figure of speech in the lyrics is directed with the word "it" and "Honey". According to the Oxford Dictionary, the term "honey" refers to a delicious, sticky yellow-brown substance generated by bees that are smeared on toast like jam; a way of addressing someone you like or love; or a person you like or love and believe is particularly nice. Furthermore, the word "it" is used to refer to a baby, particularly one whose sex is unknown; used to identify a person; When discussing time, date, distance, or the weather, it is employed as the subject of a verb. used to refer to an already known or occurring event or scenario used as the subject or object of a verb when the true subject or object is towards the conclusion of the phrase; used while discussing a scenario utilized to accentuate any section of a statement.

"It" in this song refers to the following line of the lyrics as love from someone that the person gets or feels (when your love comes over me, line 20) and the songwriter compares it with honey. The dictionary also denotes the word "honey" for someone that we love or a precious person that we adore. However, the word honey in the lyrics compares to the word "it" which is referring to how the singer feels when she receives love from her significant other. As the sentence compares "it" and "honey" with the use of the word "like", example 1 is a **simile** as the sentence compares two things with the word "like".

The word honey in the lyrics is the representation of the songwriter's impression when she receives the love. The word "honey", based on the dictionary, describes it as sweet and sticky. However, in the song, the lyrics mention further descriptions of the word "honey" which are "You know sugar never ever was so sweet" (line 25) and "One hit of your love addicted me" (line 27). Both lines display the effects of sweetness and adhesion of her significant other's love. Hence, the meaning of the lyrics is that the love of her significant other's is sweet and adhesive which is associated with the logical, cognitive, or denotative substance. It is identified as having a **conceptual meaning**.

Data 6: "Life was a winding road" line 5, Close My Eyes

The figure of speech in the lyrics is printed with the word "life" and "a winding road". According to Oxford Dictionary, life is the ability of humans, animals, and plants to breathe, develop, create young, and so on before they die, which objects do not have, and the condition of being alive as a human; a person's existence.

In the lyrics above, the phrase is compared to a winding road that denotes a curved shape road. In the lyrics above, the comparison is life and a winding road. In between the words, "like" or "as" are omitted, creating a **metaphor**.

The life that she mentioned in the lyrics was when she was a child (I was a wayward child, line 2). She compares that period to a winding road that has curves through the road. The songwriter wanted to show that her childhood life was moving to the right and left to keep ahead. To reach the purpose of life, struggle and many struggles occurred; however, those made her stronger even though it was tough for a child to consent (And I learned many things little ones shouldn't know, lines 6 and 7). Thus, the meaning of line 5 in Close My Eyes is derived from what it refers to, apart from its merely conceptual content which makes it have **connotative meaning**.

Data 8: “But I just had to see your face” line 12, The Roof

The figure of speech in the lyrics is pointed with the word “face”. The face is the front area of a person's head from the brow to the chin or an animal's comparable section; The surface of an item, especially one that is visible or serves a specific purpose. (Oxford Dictionary, 2008)

As the face is part of the body, the lyrics mention the face to refer to one human being which is her significant other. When someone mentions the longing to see someone’s face, that means wanting to meet in person. Therefore, the word “face” which dedicates a relationship in which it is part of the body creates a **synecdoche** for the lyrics.

Hence, the lyrics are saying that “I”, the songwriter/singer, not only want to see her significant other’s face, which could be done by looking at his picture but also to meet him as an individual in person. In addition, the meaning of the lyrics is obtained from its reference, apart from its merely conceptual content which makes it have **connotative meaning**.

Data 15: “And I'll try to drink you out of my head” line 22, Babydoll

The figure of speech in the lyrics is pointed with the word “drink”. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word “drink” refers to a liquid for drinking; a quantity of a liquid that you drink, alcohol or an alcoholic drink; anything that you drink at a social event.

The song explains line 22, the lyrics above, by mentioning what it refers to in Line 21 “So I'll have a little more wine”. Therefore, the word “drink” in the lyrics refers to consuming alcohol. Furthermore, lines 24 and 25 states “Till I'm high enough I can” and “Forget all about you until”. Those lines explain that the word “drink” is used as a related word to describe “forget” as mentioned in line 25. Hence, the employing of another linked word in lyrics creates **metonymy**.

By stating “And I'll try to drink you out of my head”, the writer wants to drink until she stops thinking about the significant person. That means she wants to forget him out of her memory. Therefore, the meaning of the lyrics above has derived from what it refers to, apart from its merely conceptual content which is defined as **connotative meaning**.

Data 21: “And I will breathe for you each day” line 29, Whenever You Call

The figure of speech in the lyrics is pointed with the word “breathe”. According to the Canadian Lung Association, humans breathe 22.000 times every day. It is an automatic action as humans powered themselves by breathing. The word “breath” according to the Oxford Dictionary means the air that is in and out of the lungs; an amount of air that takes into the lungs at one time.

In the lyrics, the person would breathe for his significant other each day which is scientifically unprocurable. However, figuratively it is stated as a saying to express how much the person loves her significant other. She would give herself every day and live with the love she has for him. Therefore, the extravagance in the lyrics above created a **hyperbole**.

The meaning of the lyrics is a parasitic category as it relies on the meditation of other meaning categories, such as conceptual, connotative, or stylistic, to communicate emotions. The songwriter emerges with a loving expression as a statement of her sincerity that she will devote to her significant other every day. Therefore, **affective meaning** is identified in the lyrics.

Data 24: “Funny how one can learn to grow numb to the madness” lines 22 & 23, Close My Eyes

The figure of speech in the lyrics is pointed with the word “funny”, “numb”, and “madness”. The definition of “Funny” is making someone laugh; being difficult to explain or comprehend; being odd and unexpected; being hilarious in a way that demonstrates a lack of regard for someone; bit wild or unusual. The word “numb” denotes the absence of the power of sensation. Madness is the state of being profoundly mentally sick. (Oxford Dictionary, 2008)

The situation pointed out that someone could change from being unable to feel into having a negative emotion of being ill. However, the songwriter says it is “funny” which contradicts the situation as an emptiness that turns into sadness is important to be considered as a change of emotion that is taken seriously to be healed. Thus, the contradiction of emotion (numb, madness) and its expression (funny) creates **irony** in the lyrics.

The meaning of the lyrics is the drastic change in mental state (no sense of sensation to being ill) is difficult to elaborate on or rationalize. Hence, the lyrics are associated with the logical, cognitive, or denotative substance. It is identified as having a **conceptual** meaning.

Data 27: “Now I understand to hold you I must open up my hands” lines 6 & 7, Butterfly

The figure of speech in the lyrics is pointed with the word “hold” and “open”. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word “hold” means “to have somebody/something in hand, or arms; to put a hand on part of the body; to keep somebody/something in a particular position; hold somebody/something to support the weight of somebody/something or to have enough space for something/somebody; to keep somebody and not allow them to leave; to own or have something; to have control of something”. The word “open” denotes “to allowing things or people to go through; not closed or blocked; spread out; with the edges apart; not fastened or covered, so that things can easily come out or be put in; open a competition, building, etc. to particular people, those people can enter it; honest”. The word “hand” means “the part of the body at the end of the arm, including the fingers and thumb; help in doing something; using the hand or number of hands mentioned; hand in the part or role that somebody/something plays in a particular situation”.

There are two contradicting statements in the lyrics, line 6 “Now I understand to hold you” and line 7 “I must open up my hand”. To hold someone means to keep them with us. However, the lyrics state the opposite. Those statements create contradictions to develop a statement that makes good sense upon closer examination. Hence, a **paradox** occurs in the lyrics.

Lines 6 & 7 articulate the way the singer keeps someone in her life by letting them go. Furthermore, lines 1-5 (“When you love someone so deeply”, “They become your life”, “It's easy to succumb to overwhelming fears inside”, “Blindly I imagined I could”, “Keep you under glass”) explain the reason of holding the significant other of hers because she loves him to the fullest. Moreover, line 8 states “And watch you rise” which means line 7 “I must open up my hand” is a sacrifice for her significant other to have freedom and grow in happiness. By letting him go, she accepts and believes that his happiness is more important than having him in her life. It is shown in lines 34 – 38 (“I can't prevent this hurt from almost overtaking me”, “But I will stand and say goodbye”, “For you'll never be mine”, “Until you know the way it feels to fly”) that she knows he will never be hers until he gets the freedom. In addition, after letting him go, she believes their next encounter will be their fate to be together (lines 41-42 “If you should return to me (I will know you're mine)”, “We truly were meant to be”). Hence, lines 6 & 7 are derived from what it refers to, apart from its merely conceptual content which makes it have connotative meaning.

CONCLUSION

As a result, the analysis has identified and explained two problems of the study. Based on Knickerbocker & Reninger's theory (1963), in the first problem of the study, seven types of figurative language have been identified in Butterfly Album by Mariah Carey namely simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox.

In regards to the second problem of the study, based on Leech's theory (1981), it could be concluded that three meanings of figurative language have been explained in Butterfly Album by Mariah Carey. Thus, conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, and affective meaning.

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