



Prosiding

Seminar Nasional Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran
Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro

Tema "Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran di era digital untuk Pengalaman Belajar
Imersif"



Exploring Figurative Language in Lana Del Rey's Songs for English Vocabulary Learning

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abstrak— Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan yang ditemukan dalam lagu-lagu pilihan Lana Del Rey dan mengeksplorasi kontribusinya terhadap pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dari lirik lagu pilihan Lana Del Rey yang mengandung ungkapan kiasan. Peneliti menganalisis data berdasarkan teori bahasa kiasan yang dikemukakan oleh Laurence Perrine. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa jenis bahasa kiasan ditemukan dalam lagu-lagu tersebut, yaitu simile, metafora, personifikasi, hiperbola, litotes, simbol, paradoks, dan apostrof. Di antara jenis-jenis tersebut, metafora dan simbol merupakan ungkapan figuratif yang paling dominan digunakan dalam lirik lagu. Temuan penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa bahasa kiasan dalam lagu dapat mendukung pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris karena siswa dapat memahami makna kontekstual dan makna non-literal melalui penggunaan bahasa yang autentik. Selain itu, lagu dapat digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran yang menarik dan menyenangkan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata serta keterampilan interpretasi siswa. Oleh karena itu, lagu-lagu Lana Del Rey dapat dimanfaatkan sebagai media alternatif dalam pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris dan bahasa kiasan.

Kata kunci— Bahasa Kiasan, Lirik Lagu, Pembelajaran Kosakata, Lana Del Rey

Abstract— This study aims to analyze the types of figurative language found in Lana Del Rey's selected songs and explore their contribution to English vocabulary learning. This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected from selected song lyrics by Lana Del Rey containing figurative expressions. The researcher analyzed the data based on the theory of figurative language proposed by Laurence Perrine. The results showed that several types of figurative language were found in the songs, namely simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, litotes, symbol, paradox, and apostrophe. Among those types, metaphor and symbol were the most dominant figurative expressions used in the lyrics. The findings also indicate that figurative language in songs can support English vocabulary learning because students can understand contextual and non-literal meanings through authentic language use. In addition, songs can be used as interesting and enjoyable learning media to improve students' vocabulary mastery and interpretation skills. Therefore, Lana Del Rey's songs can be utilized as alternative media for teaching English vocabulary and figurative language.

Keywords— Figurative Language, Songs Lyric, Vocabulary Learning, Lana Del Rey

INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English has become one of the most widely studied foreign languages in the world. English has become an international language used for communication, education, business, and technology around the world (Rif'attullah, 2024). In learning English, vocabulary mastery is an important aspect because it helps students understand meanings in communication. However, students often experience difficulties in understanding implied and figurative meanings because they tend to only understand literal meanings found in dictionaries. Therefore, learning media are needed to help students understand language meanings contextually.

One of the learning media that can be used in English learning is songs. Songs not only function as entertainment, but also provide authentic language use in natural contexts. Prastiwi et al. (2021) stated that English songs can effectively improve students' vocabulary mastery by helping them learn and remember new words. Through songs, students can learn vocabulary, pronunciation, and language expressions in a more interesting and enjoyable way. Songs can be used as enjoyable learning media to improve students' English literacy and vocabulary mastery because music creates a more interactive and motivating learning atmosphere (Nurdianingsih et al., 2024).

In semantic studies, figurative language is one of the important aspects used to convey meaning indirectly in order to create imaginative and emotional effects. According to Laurence Perrine (2018), figurative language makes language more vivid and expressive compared to literal language. Figurative language commonly found in song lyrics includes metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, irony, and paradox. According to Tirtanawati et al. (2024), semantic analysis helps reveal the deeper meanings, emotions, and associations expressed through song lyrics

Among contemporary singers, Lana Del Rey is known for her poetic and emotional lyrical style. Her songs often contain figurative expressions that describe love, sadness, nostalgia, freedom, and self-identity. Lana Del Rey's songs contain various figurative expressions and contextual meanings that reflect emotional experiences, romance, sadness, and self-expression (Noviani & Bram, 2021). These

characteristics make Lana Del Rey's songs relevant to be analyzed from a semantic perspective, especially in the study of figurative language.

Several studies have examined figurative language in song lyrics from a semantic perspective. Hanisfi (2022) analyzed figurative language in Adele's album 25 and found that hyperbole, similes, metaphors, personification, symbols, paradoxes, and allegories are frequently used to convey emotional meaning in song lyrics. The study emphasizes that figurative language helps listeners understand the deeper message behind the literal meaning.

Another study conducted by Swarniti (2022) examined figurative language in Adele's song *Easy On Me*. The results indicate that symbolism is the most dominant type of figurative language used in the song's lyrics. This study concluded that figurative expressions play a crucial role in conveying feelings and ideas imaginatively, thereby enabling listeners to interpret emotional meanings more effectively.

Furthermore, Sitepu (2023) analyzed figurative language in Joji's song *Glimpse of Us* and identified various types of figurative language, including allegory, metaphor, and personification. The study revealed that figurative language contributes to the aesthetic value of the song's lyrics and helps express complex emotions through indirect meaning.

Although these studies have successfully identified and analyzed figurative language in song lyrics, most of them have focused only on classifying the types of figurative language and their meanings. Only a few studies have explored how the figurative language found in songs can contribute to English vocabulary learning. Furthermore, research discussing figurative language in Lana Del Rey's songs remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the figurative language used in several selected songs by Lana Del Rey and explain its contribution to English vocabulary learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study focuses on five selected songs by Lana Del Rey, namely *Young and Beautiful*, *Brooklyn Baby*, *Summertime Sadness*, *Chemtrails Over the Country Club*,

and Cinnamon Girl. According to Ahmad and Wilkins (2024), purposive sampling is a deliberate process of selecting data sources that are relevant to the research objectives and capable of providing rich information about the phenomenon under investigation. These songs were purposively selected because they contain rich figurative expressions and are among Lana Del Rey's most popular songs, making them relevant for semantic analysis and vocabulary learning.

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to analyze figurative language in the song lyrics of Lana Del Rey. The data of this study were words, phrases, and sentences containing figurative language. The data were collected through documentation techniques by listening to the songs, reading the lyrics, identifying, and classifying figurative language based on the theory of Laurence Perrine (2018). The data were then analyzed to determine the figurative meanings and their contribution to English vocabulary learning. This study referred to the qualitative research method proposed by (Creswell, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed figurative language in several selected songs by Lana Del Rey using the theory of Perrine et al. (2018). The analysis focused on identifying the types of figurative language and their contribution to English vocabulary learning. The data of the study were obtained from words, phrases, and sentences containing figurative expressions in the song lyrics.

The results showed that there were several types of figurative language found in the analyzed songs, namely simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, litotes, symbol, paradox, and apostrophe. Symbol and metaphor became the most dominant types of figurative language found in the song lyrics. These expressions were used to describe emotions, love, sadness, nostalgia, freedom, and self-identity

Tabel 1. Figurative Language in Lana del Rey's Songs

No.	Type of Figurative Language	Total Data
1.	Simile	10
2.	Metaphor	12
3.	Personification	2
4.	Hyperbole	6

5.	Litotes	1
6.	Symbol	14
7.	Paradox	5
8.	Apostrophe	1

The findings of this study showed that figurative language has an important role in conveying emotional and contextual meanings in the songs of Lana Del Rey. Metaphor and symbol became the most dominant types of figurative language found in this study. This indicates that the songwriter frequently uses indirect expressions to represent emotions, experiences, and self-identity. These findings are in line with the theory of Laurence Perrine, which states that each type of figurative language has a function to convey emotional, imaginative, and indirect meanings in song lyrics.

The findings of this study showed that there were several types of figurative language found in the songs of Lana Del Rey, namely simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, litotes, symbol, paradox, and apostrophe. Based on the theory of Laurence Perrine, the use of figurative language makes song lyrics more expressive and meaningful. Therefore, in this section, the researcher discusses each type of figurative language found in the research data as follows:

1. Simile

Simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things using words such as *like* or *as*.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) "The way you'd play with me Like a child"

Using the word "like" to compare how a partner treats a child. This demonstrates innocence and emotional dependence.

2) "Shine like diamonds"

uses a simile to convey a sense of preciousness and radiance.

b. *Brooklyn Baby*

1) "You Say I'm like the ice"

Using the word "like" to compare the singer to ice, indicating a cold, difficult-to-open-up, and emotionally repressed nature.

2) "Judge me like a picture book"

The singer compares people's judgment of him to judging a book only by its cover without understanding its true contents.

3) "Like fire and water"

It represents two opposing personalities who are difficult to reconcile.

4) "Like the wind and sea"

It symbolizes a relationship that is interconnected but unstable and difficult to control.

5) "I'm churning out novels Like Beat poetry on amphetamines"

Comparing writing productivity to amphetamine-influenced Beat poetry. Showing wild and intense creativity.

c. *Summertime Sadness*

1) "Telephone wires above sizzlin' like a snare"

The telephone cable is compared to the sound of a snare drum using the word "like," suggesting a tense and emotional atmosphere.

2) "Like the stars miss the sun"

The feeling of loss is compared to the stars disappearing when the sun rises. It indicates deep longing and loss.

d. *Chemtrails over the Country Club*

1) "Like when we were kids"

Compares the present situation to childhood using the word "like." This comparison emphasizes the innocence and happiness experienced during childhood.

2. Metaphor

Metaphor is a direct comparison without using comparison words.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) "Aching soul"

2) "Aching soul" is not a physical wound, but a metaphor for emotional pain and deep sadness.

3) "Electric soul"

The partner's souls are described as "electric" to indicate a strong, energetic, and passionate attraction.

4) "He's my sun"

5) "Sun" is a metaphor that the man is the source of life and happiness.

b. *Brooklyn Baby*

1) "You're burning up, I'm cooling down"

"Burning up" symbolizes intense emotions or anger, while "cooling down" indicates calmness and emotional distance.

2) "You're blind, I see"

"Blind" does not mean physically blind but not understanding the situation or reality.

c. *Summertime Sadness*

1) "I'm on fire"

"On fire" is not literally burning, but describes a very strong emotion, passion, or feeling

2) "I'm feelin' electric tonight"

The word "electric" describes intense and passionate emotional energy.

d. *Chemtrails over the Country Club*

1) "I'm on the run with you"

"On the run" doesn't mean actually running away, but rather describes freedom and an effort to get away from social pressure with a partner.

2) "You're in the wind, I'm in the water"

Wind and water symbolize two different but complementary characters.

3) "Nobody's son, nobody's daughter"

Depicts freedom of identity and not being tied to social or family expectations.

e. *Cinnamon Girl*

1) "Push me out"

Indicates an emotional connection that is difficult to separate despite attempts to distance oneself.

3. Personification

Personification gives human characteristics to inanimate objects or abstract concepts.

a. *Summertime Sadness*

1) "Like the stars miss the sun"

The stars are given a human ability, namely the feeling of missing someone. Since stars cannot feel emotions, this lyric is classified as personification.

2) "Telephone wires above are sizzlin'"

Telephone wires are described as if they can perform an action associated with living things. The lyric creates a vivid image by giving human-like characteristics to an inanimate object

4. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggerated expression used to emphasize certain feelings or situations.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) "I've seen the world, done it all"

This sentence exaggerates the singer's life experiences as if he has experienced everything in the world.

2) "Forever wild"

The word "forever" suggests something exaggerated to describe a free and wild relationship without time limits.

b. *Summertime Sadness*

1) "I'll miss you forever"

The lyric exaggerates the feeling of missing someone by using the word “forever.” It does not literally mean an endless period of time, but emphasizes the depth of the singer’s longing and emotional attachment

2) “Kiss me hard before you go”

The word “hard” is overused to indicate the intensity of love and deep emotional separation.

3) “I’ll die happy tonight”

An exaggerated statement to show that the happiness of that night felt absolutely perfect.

c. *Cinnamon Girl*

1) “First who ever did”

Shows that no one has ever treated a singer so gently before.

5. Litotes

Litotes is an expression that understates something to convey a particular meaning.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) “Will you still love me when I got nothing but my aching soul?”

The singer understates her worth by saying that she has nothing except her aching soul. This expression minimizes her value to emphasize her insecurity and fear of losing love when her beauty and youth are gone.

6. Symbol

A symbol is a word or expression that represents another deeper meaning.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) “Diamonds, brilliant, and Bel Air now”

“Diamonds” symbolize luxury, wealth, and high social status. “Bel Air” also symbolizes elite living.

2) “Hot summer nights”

Summer is used as a symbol of passion, love, freedom, and romantic memories.

3) “Channeling angels”

The word “angels” symbolizes purity, spirituality, goodness, and ideal qualities rather than referring to literal angels. The lyric uses angels to represent a higher spiritual or emotional state.

b. *Brooklyn Baby*

- 1) “Feathers in my hair”

“Feathers” symbolizes freedom, bohemian style, and artistic identity.

- 2) “My boyfriend’s in a band”

The band became a symbol of indie life, artistic freedom, and Brooklyn alternative culture.

- 3) “Hydroponic weed”

Shows a free lifestyle and rebellion against social norms.

- 4) “Brooklyn baby”

“Brooklyn” has become a symbol of modern, indie, free, artistic, and anti-mainstream identity.

c. *Summertime Sadness*

- 1) “Heavenly side”

“Heavenly” symbolizes perfect, beautiful, and heaven-like love.

d. *Chemtrails over the Country Club*

- 1) “Chemtrails over the country club”

“Chemtrails” symbolize conspiracy, social anxiety, or modern uncertainty, while “country club” symbolizes elite and suburban American life.

- 2) “Jewels in the swimming pool”

“Jewels” symbolize luxury, social status and glamorous lifestyle.

- 3) “Little red sports car”

The red sports car symbolizes freedom, rebellion and passion for life.

- 4) “White picket chemtrails”

“White picket” usually symbolizes the ideal American family life, but combined with “chemtrails” it creates a critique of the seemingly perfect suburban life.

e. *Cinnamon Girl*

- 1) "Cinnamon in my teeth"

Cinnamon symbolizes the sweet, warm, and sensual flavors of a loving relationship.

- 2) "Violet, blue, green, red"

These colors represent complex emotions such as sadness, passion, serenity, and love.

7. Paradox

Paradox is a statement that appears contradictory but actually contains truth.

a. *Young and Beautiful*

- 1) "No longer young and beautiful"

There is a conflict between true love and physical beauty. The singer questions whether love remains when beauty is gone.

b. *Summertime Sadness*

- 1) "Summertime sadness"

"Summer" is usually synonymous with happiness, but it is combined with "sadness" so that it creates a conflict of meaning between the cheerful season and sadness.

- 2) "Later's better than never"

Contains a conflict of meaning but shows that something late is still better than nothing at all.

c. *Chemtrails over the Country Club*

- 1) "I'm not unhappy, I'm just wild"

The singer denies being unstable or sad, but instead admits to being wild, demonstrating a conflict of emotional identity.

d. *Cinnamon Girl*

- 1) "Hold me without hurting me"

A hug that should provide a sense of security is instead associated with the possibility of emotional pain.

8. Apostrophe

a. *Young and Beautiful*

1) "Dear Lord, when I get to Heaven"

The singer speaks directly to God even though God is not physically present in the real conversation.

The findings of this study show that figurative language in the songs of Lana Del Rey has a relationship with English vocabulary learning. The use of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbol, and paradox helps students understand meanings not only literally but also contextually. According to Wirayuda (2025), songwriters often use figurative language in song lyrics to convey ideas and emotions indirectly, rather than explicitly. Through these figurative expressions, songwriters are able to convey deeper meanings, personal experiences, and emotional messages that encourage listeners to interpret the lyrics beyond their literal meaning.

The use of metaphor and simile in song lyrics can help students understand vocabulary through comparison and imagination. For example, the expression "*He's my sun*" is not interpreted as the real sun, but as someone who is considered important and brings happiness. Through this expression, students can understand that a word may have different meanings depending on the context.

In addition, symbols found in song lyrics also help students understand the emotional meanings of vocabulary. Words such as "*Diamonds*" or "*Hot summer nights*" not only have dictionary meanings, but also represent luxury, nostalgia, and emotional experiences. This can help students expand their vocabulary understanding and improve their interpretation skills in understanding English texts.

Songs can also be used as more interesting and enjoyable learning media. Through song lyrics, students can learn vocabulary in more authentic contexts so the learning process becomes easier to understand. Therefore, the use of songs in English learning can help students understand contextual and figurative meanings in English vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that figurative language has an important role in conveying emotional and contextual meanings in the songs of Lana Del Rey. The findings showed that several types of figurative language were found in the selected songs, namely simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, litotes, symbol, paradox, and apostrophe. Among those types, metaphor and symbol were the most dominant figurative expressions used in the lyrics.

The use of figurative language in the songs reflects emotions, experiences, nostalgia, freedom, and self-identity through indirect and imaginative expressions. In addition, the findings indicate that song lyrics can contribute to English vocabulary learning because students are able to understand contextual and non-literal meanings through authentic

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to Allah SWT for His blessings and guidance in completing this study. The researcher also would like to thank the lecturers, Parents and friends for their support, motivation, and encouragement during the process of conducting this research.

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