

AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN THE SONG'S LYRICS IN THE MOANA MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

Figurative language is one of the languages used in literary works, especially in song lyrics. It is often used to help songwriters create beautiful songs by conveying unusual words in a song's lyrics. It also gives the right role to the reader or listener. Therefore, the use of figurative language in a work will make the reader or listener excited. The use of figurative language can also make listeners have a broad imagination and understand the meanings available through figurative language in a song explicitly. When people listen to music through its lyrics, language plays an important role in conveying the meaning of the song. Moana is a Disney film that also uses many songs as the background. Therefore, this study aims to determine the types of figures of speech and the meaning of song lyrics in the Moana movie. The researcher analyzed the types of figurative language and the meanings contained in the song's lyrics. The researcher also analyzes how figurative language contributes to the meaning of the song's lyrics.

The researcher analyzed the song's lyrics by reading them intensively and paying attention to each line. After that, the researcher analyzed the figurative language and the meaning of the song's lyrics. This is to determine whether the sentences are included in figurative language based on the meaning of the sentences in the lyrics of the song. The data instrument is song lyrics in the movie Moana. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. Through these steps, the researcher found 8 figurative languages in the song's lyrics, that is symbol, metonymy, personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, allegory, and understatement. From this thesis, the researcher hopes that they will be interested in learning more about figurative language, and they will better understand the meaning of figurative language in a song.

Keywords: Types of Figurative Language, Meaning of figurative language, Semantics, Song Lyrics, Moana movie.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the important things in human existence. According to Chomsky (1972), when we study human language, we approach what some might call the "human essence," the distinctive qualities of the mind that, as far as we know, are unique to humans. From the statement above, it can be said that whatever humans do when they get together—whether they are playing, fighting, studying, or making things—they talk. We live in a world of languages. The possession of language, perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other creatures. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human. It means language is the source of human life and strength.

Language cannot be separated from us, because it is an important tool in communicating to share ideas, thoughts, and convey messages to others. According to Kramsch, language is the primary way we conduct our social life (1998, p3). In language, there is a formal system that includes sounds, signs, symbols, and gestures. When we know a language, we can speak and be understood by others who know that language. Every individual uses language as a means of communication everywhere and all the time. But language is more than just speech. According to Jakobson (1980), a language without meaning is meaningless. One form of language used to create an atmosphere or feeling for the listener or reader is called figurative language. We can find figurative language in languages to beautify a meaning. Language is also applied in several forms of communication such as in conversation, novels, poetry, song lyrics, and other forms.

The science that studies language is linguistics. The job of the linguist is to reveal and make explicit this knowledge about meaning that every speaker has. In contrast to other disciplines dealing with language, linguistics is concerned with describing the rules of language structure, determining the extent to which these structures are universal or language-specific. Linguistics is a valuable component of understanding a language. According to Akmajian et al (2001:5) in linguistics, language can be studied from branches of linguistics and its relationship with other disciplines. One of the studies of linguistics besides Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Pragmatics, namely Semantics.

The study of the linguistic meaning of morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences is called semantics. Semantics is a branch of linguistics that is no less important to study. The researcher will focus on Semantics, which is about the study of

meaning. We can say that Semantics expresses and makes explicit knowledge of the meaning that each speaker has. Knowing a language also means being able to produce new sentences that have never been spoken before and understand sentences that have never been heard before. Through Semantics, the researcher will learn more about the meaning of the song's lyrics in the *Moana* movie. In semantics, several types of meaning mention figurative languages, such as hyperbole, simile, personification, and others.

In studying and understanding a literary work, such as novels, poetry, song lyrics, and other forms, people not only understand the form of language or speech, but also the meaning contained in the literary work. It can be said that the author of a literary work wants to make the reader or listener feel and capture the meaning contained in it. However, sometimes readers find it difficult to understand the meaning of the utterance because the lyrics used by the author usually contain an implied meaning. Based on the results of interviews conducted with several college students, some of them have difficulty understanding literary works that contain too much figurative language and this makes them lazy to read them. This is also experienced by the researcher when listening to several songs in the *Moana* movie. Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining the figurative language contained in the song lyrics in the *Moana* movie.

Apart from novels and poetry, figurative language can be found in songs. The song is an example of a literary work. Songs have two elements, such as lyrics and music. Griffie (2001), mentioned that song is part of music that is formed through words that aim to be sung. Music is also one way to carry out communication activities through sound which is expected to convey messages in different ways. Music is part of a work of art. As part of a work of art, music can be a medium for someone to communicate with others. Not many people sing songs just to please themselves, most people sing songs because they want to be heard by others. Through music, musicians want to explain, entertain, express experiences to others.

One method that can help learners to understand figurative language is to understand song lyrics. The song was chosen as the main object because it is closest to human life. Many messages are conveyed through songs. Song lyrics contain many aspects such as rhythm, figurative language, and stanzas. When listening to a song, sometimes people do not specialize in the lyrics used in a song. Usually, people

slightly like the song because of the singer or even the sweet music. And sometimes when people try and specialize in lyrics, they will find some difficulty in understanding the meaning of song lyrics. Especially if the lyrics use figurative language. Knowing the meaning of a lyric is important so that the message the songwriter wants to convey can be understood by the listener. Therefore, one way to find out the meaning contained in figurative language is to use semantic analysis.

According to Kennedy (1979), as quoted by Listiani (2015), figurative language is defined as a figure of speech used in a language. Figurative language has several types, namely Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Onomatopoeia, Oxymoron, Hyperbole, Litotes, Idiom, Alliteration, Allusion, and others. Figurative language is a language that uses words or expressions with meaning to convey ideas or emotions either through speaking or writing. Figurative language or figure of speech itself is usually used to analyze the deeper meaning of words. In songs, for example, it is also used to make the lyrics sound more beautiful. This theory is the basis for analyzing the figurative language used in the song lyrics in the *Moana* movie.

There are several types of figurative language in the song lyrics in the *Moana* movie. For example, in the lyrics to the song "How Far I'll Go" by Alessia Cara, the first lyric is, "I've been staring at the water's edge." This lyric contains hyperbole because it uses an exaggerated expression. In the lyrics of the song "I am Moana", the eleventh lyric, "And nothing on earth can silence." This lyric contains personification because it connects human nature with non-human things and makes it more relatable.

Moana is a 2016 American 3D computer-animated musical fantasy-adventure film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. The film is directed by Ron Clements, John Musker. It talks about Moana, the strong-willed daughter of a Polynesian village chief, who was chosen by the ocean to reunite the mystical relic of the goddess Te Fiti. When a curse strikes the island, Moana sets sail in search of Maui, a legendary god, in hopes of returning the relic to the goddess Te Fiti and saving her people. As other Disney films have back sounds, this also applies to the *Moana* movie. In this film, many back sounds are presented. But the researcher only uses some songs from this movie. There are some of the song's lyrics part in the *Moana* movie.

METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell & Poth (2017), this approach is appropriate for exploring research problems; when complex and detailed understanding is required; when a researcher wants to write in a flexible literary style; and when the researcher seeks to understand the context or set of participants. The researcher needs research designs to ensure the evidence obtained to answer the original question is as clear as possible. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach in this study. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive and tends to use analysis. It is based on the data described by the theories deemed relevant, to generate theories and strengthen existing theories. So, the researcher used this approach because the data was collected through song lyrics.

The data collection method is one of the important steps in this research because we can get the best results. The researcher also uses several studies as a reference in collecting data. In this study, the researcher collected data in some steps. First, the researcher watched the *Moana* movie to understand the story content of this movie which can be related to the lyrics of the song sung in this movie. Second, the researcher began to hear and choose song lyrics that would be used as research material. Third, the researcher listened to the songs to get the feel of the song. Fourth, the researcher chooses sentences in song lyrics that contain figurative language. Finally, the researcher grouped the song lyrics into several figurative languages contained in the lyrics of the song.

DISCUSSION

a. Summary of Figurative Language in *Where You Are*

1. Symbols in *Where You Are*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language symbols in the lyrics of the song *Where You Are*. In this song, there are 2 symbols of figurative language.

Table 1. Symbol

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Way | Path | Choice |
| Time | Period | Chance |

The first symbol comes from the word **way**. In literal meaning, the word **way** refers to a **path**. Whereas in figurative language, this word means a **choice**. The meaning of the lyrics "Moana, give way, give way" means Moana, make a choice. The second symbol comes from the word **time**. In literal meaning, the word **time** refers to a period, but in figurative language, this word means an **opportunity**. The meaning of the lyrics "Moana, it's **time** you knew" means Moana, this is your chance to know.

2. Metonymy in *Where You Are*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language metonymy in the lyrics of the song *Where You Are*. In this song, there are 6 metonymies of figurative language.

Table 2. Metonymy

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| The village of Motunui | A physical Motunui village | People who are in the Motunui village |
| Ground | Land | The place where Moana is now, namely the village of Motunui |
| A chief | Head | A leader |
| The village | The village | People who are in the village |
| The village | The village | People who are in the village |
| The village | The village | People who are in the village |

The first metonym comes from **the village of Motunui**. This sentence refers to **the physical village of Motunui**, but in figurative language, it refers to the **people who are in the village of Motunui**. So, the meaning of the lyrics "The village of Motunui is all you need" is Motunui village people are all you need. The next word that contains metonymy is **ground**. This word refers to **land** but figuratively means **where Moana is now, namely the village of Motunui**. The meaning of the lyric "Moana, stay on the ground now" means Moana, stay in the village of Motunui. The next word is a **chief**. Means **head**, but in figurative language means **leader**. So, the meaning of the lyrics "Our people will need a chief" means Our society needs a leader. The next word that contains metonymy figurative language is **the village**. This word is repeated several times in different

stanzas. **Means the village**, but in figurative language, it means **people who are in the village**. So, the meaning of the lyric “The village may think I'm crazy” means that people in the village may think that I am crazy. The next lyric “The village believes in us” means that the people in the village believe in us. And the last lyric is, “The village believes” which means the people in our village believe.

3. Personification in *Where You Are*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language personification in the lyrics of the song *Where You Are*. In this song, there are 6 personifications of figurative language.

Table 3. Personification

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Comes a day | A day comes | Next day |
| The island gives | The island gives | Supply |
| Dance with the water | The water can dance | Dancing beside the water |
| The water is mischievous | The water has a naughty attitude | The water cannot be controlled |
| The village may think | A village is thinking | The people in the village thought |
| The voice starts to whisper | The voice is whispering | The voice is getting annoying |

The first sentence that contains personification is the **comes a day**. In literal meaning, it refers to **a day comes**, but in figurative language, it means **the next day**. So, what the songwriter wants to convey from the lyrics of “There comes a day” is Next day will come. The next sentence is **the island gives**. In literal meaning, it means **the island gives**, but in figurative language, it means to **supply**. So, the meaning of the lyric “The island gives us what we need” means the island supplies everything they need. The next sentence is a **dance with the water**. In literal meaning, this expression seems to state that **the water can dance**, but in the figurative language, the lyrics “I like to dance with the water” have a meaning, namely I like to dance beside the water. The next sentence is **The water is mischievous**. In the literal meaning of this sentence, it seems as if **the water has a naughty attitude**, but in the figurative language, it means that **the water cannot be**

controlled. So, the meaning of the lyrics "The water is mischievous, ha!" is the water cannot be controlled. **The village may think** has a literal meaning as if **the village thinks**, but in figurative language, this sentence refers to **people in the village who think**. So, the meaning of the phrase "The village may think I'm crazy" is that the people in the village may think that I am crazy. **The voice that starts to whisper** has a literal meaning, namely a **whispering voice**, but in the figurative language, it means that the voice intended in the previous lyric is getting annoying.

4. Metaphor in *Where You Are*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language metaphor in the lyrics of the song *Where You Are*. In this song, there are 4 metaphors of figurative language.

Table 4. Metaphor

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|--|---|--|
| happiness is where you are | happiness is where you are | happiness can be found anywhere |
| Stubbornness | Stubborn | someone who is difficult to manage or does not want to listen to the advice of others. |
| mouth | We have mouths to feed inside | Their stomachs must be filled |
| every path leads you back to where you are | every road brings you back to where you are now | wherever we are going, we will actually return to where we came from |

The first sentence that contains the figurative language of the metaphor is **happiness is where you are**. This literally means **happiness is where you are**, but in the figurative language, it means happiness can be found anywhere. The second sentence is **Stubbornness**. This sentence, has a figurative meaning, namely **someone who is difficult to manage or does not want to listen to the advice of others**. So, the meaning of the lyrics "Stubbornness and pride" is to show that Moana is the daughter of her stubborn father. The third lyric has a word that is

mouth. In figurative language, this means indicating that their stomachs should be filled with food. The last sentence is **every path leads you back to where you are.** In figurative language, this means wherever we are going, we will actually return to where we came from.

5. Simile in *Where You Are*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language simile in the lyrics of the song *Where You Are*. In this song, there is 1 simile of figurative language.

Table 5. Simile

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| As | As | Comparing |

The word *as* is used in comparison to something else. So, in this lyric, the songwriter wants to show a comparison between the two subjects in the lyrics "In time you'll learn just as I did"

b. Summary of Figurative Language in *How Far I'll Go*

1. Metonymy in *How Far I'll Go*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language simile in the lyrics of the song *How Far I'll Go*. In this song, there is 1 metonymy of figurative language.

Table 6. Metonymy

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| the edge of the water | the edge of the water | the edge of the island in the village |

In the sentence, **the edge of the water** in figurative language denotes the edge of the island in the village that Moana sees in the lyric "I've been staring at the edge of the water."

2. Hyperbole in *How Far I'll Go*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language personification in the lyrics of the song *How Far I'll Go*. In this song, there are 2 hyperboles of figurative language.

Table 7. Hyperbole

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| perfect daughter | perfect daughter | Expected daughter |
| how hard I try | how hard I try | Keep trying |

In the first sentence, the literal meaning is the **perfect daughter**, but in figurative language, it means the **expected daughter**. So, in the lyrics "I wish I could be the perfect daughter", the songwriter wanted to show that Moana hopes to become the girl her father wants her to be. The second lyric has a literal meaning that is, **how hard I try**, but in figurative language, it means to **keep trying**. So, the real meaning conveyed in the lyrics "But I come back to the water, no matter how hard I try" is, but I come back to the water, no matter how I keep trying.

3. Personification in *How Far I'll Go*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language personification in the lyrics of the song *How Far I'll Go*. In this song, there are 3 personifications of figurative language.

Table 8. Personification

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| road leads back | road leads back | bringing him back |
| sky meets the sea | sky meets the sea | the sky penetrates the sea |
| it seems like it's calling out to me | it seems like it's calling out to me | curious |

The sentences in the table above contain personification. The first sentence of the lyrics "Every path I make, every road leads back" has the real meaning, namely, every choice he makes keeps bringing him back to a place he knows where he can't go. This can be seen in the third lyric of the second stanza. The second sentence of the lyrics "See the line where the sky meets the sea. It calls me" means the light from the sky penetrates the sea where they meet. The last sentence of the table above comes from the lyrics "And it seems like it's calling out to me, so come find me." In this lyric, the songwriter wants to explain that the light made Moana curious about the shining light.

4. Symbol in *How Far I'll Go*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language symbols in the lyrics of the song *How Far I'll Go*. In this song, there are 2 symbols of figurative language.

Table 9. Symbol

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| line | Geometric shapes | the boundary of an object |
| the line where the sky meets the sea | the line where the sky meets the sea | horizon |

The word **line** from the lyric "What's beyond that line, will I cross that line?" refers to a **line** literally, but in figurative language, it means **the boundary of an object**. So, the meaning of this lyric is What's behind that limit, will I be able to get past that limit? The sentence "the line where the sky meets the sea" from the lyrics "See the line where the sky meets the sea" has a figurative meaning, namely see that horizon.

c. Summary of Figurative Language in *I am Moana*

1. Personification in *I am Moana*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language personification in the lyrics of the song *I am Moana*. In this song, there are 3 personifications of figurative language.

Table 10. Personification

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| the world seems against you | the world seems against you | people in that world seem to be attacking/hurting her. |
| earth can silence | earth can silence | nothing can stop it |
| That voice starts to whisper | That voice starts to whisper | begins to annoy |

In the sentence, the world seems against you from the lyrics "Sometimes the world seems against you" based on the findings in the table, it means that sometimes the people in that world seem to be attacking/hurting you. In the next sentence, the **earth can silence** from the lyric "And nothing on earth can silence" has a figurative meaning that is nothing neither material nor human, can stop it. The last sentence comes from the lyrics "And when that voice starts to whisper."

The real meaning that the author wants to convey is when the calm voice mentioned in previous lyrics begins to annoy the owner.

2. Metonymy in *I am Moana*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language metonymy in the lyrics of the song *I am Moana*. In this song, there is 1 metonymy of figurative language.

Table 11. Metonymy

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| the village chief | the village chief | leader of the village |

The sentence in the table above comes from the lyrics "I am the daughter of the village chief". The figurative meaning shown is that She is the daughter of the leader in her village.

3. Allegory in *I am Moana*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language allegory in the lyrics of the song *I am Moana*. In this song, there is 1 allegory of figurative language.

Table 12. Allegory

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|--|--|---|
| I am everything I've learned and more | I am everything I've learned and more | what we have learned can actually become our structure/our life. |

The sentences in the table above come from the lyrics "I am everything I've learned and more." The figurative meaning shown is What I have learned becomes my structure/my life.

4. Simile in *I am Moana*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language simile in the lyrics of the song *I am Moana*. In this song, there is 1 simile of figurative language.

Table 13. Simile

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| like | like | comparing |

The sentences in the table above come from the lyrics "It's **like** the tide Always falling and rising" The figurative meaning shown is What I have learned becomes my structure/my life. The meaning of figurative language in this sentence is that "**the call**" mentioned in the previous lyric is like a tide that sometimes rises and falls or what it means is that it is sometimes heard and not heard.

d. Summary of Figurative Language in Shiny

1. Understatement in Shiny

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language understatement in the lyrics of the song *Shiny*. In this song, there is 1 understatement of figurative language.

Table 14. Understatement

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tamatoa hasn't always been this glam | not always glamorous | Humble |

The sentence in the table above comes from the lyrics "Well, Tamatoa hasn't always been this glam". Through figurative language, the songwriter wants to convey that the meaning of the sentence is to convey *a humble attitude* because seen from the following lyrics clearly show that he was just a boring little crab.

2. Simile in Shiny

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language simile in the lyrics of the song *Shiny*. In this song, there are 5 similes of figurative language.

Table 15. Simile

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| as | as | Comparing |
| like | like | Comparing |

The five words in the table show the comparison between the two things in each sentence of the lyrics of the song "Shiny". The first word comes from the lyrics

"Now I know I can be happy as a clam." The meaning of the sentence is, Tomatoa are giant crabs that can also be happy as a clam. The second word comes from the lyrics "I'd rather be shiny Like a treasure from a sunken pirate wreck" meaning He'd rather shine like a treasure from a sunken pirate's carcass. The third word comes from "I will sparkle like a wealthy woman's neck" meaning Tomatoa is a giant crab that wants to sparkle like a rich woman's neck that sparkles with jewels. The fourth word comes from the lyric "And your tattoos on the outside for just like you I made myself a work of art" meaning Maui's tattoo inspired Tamatoa to do the same. The last word comes from the lyrics "Watch me dazzle like a diamond in the rough" meaning the charm he has is like a rough diamond.

3. Personification in *Shiny*

The table below shows the discovery of figurative language personification in the lyrics of the song *Shiny*. In this song, there is 1 personification of figurative language.

Table 16. Personification

| Figurative Expression | Literal Meaning | Figurative Meaning |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| three words to tear | three words to tear | Weapon |

The sentences in the table above come from the lyrics "I need three words to tear her argument apart." Through figurative language, the songwriter wants to convey that the meaning of the sentence is He needs three words to be a weapon to refute Grandma's argument in the previous lyric.

CONCLUSION

The researcher uses the figurative language theory from Perrine (1969) and uses the qualitative method from Creswell & Poth (2017), to become a benchmark in the analysis of the four-song lyrics in the Moana movie. To analyze these four song lyrics, the researcher used several steps. First, the researcher watched the Moana movie to understand the content of the movie's story which could be related to the lyrics of the song sung in this movie. Second, the researcher began to hear and choose the lyrics of

the song that would be used as research material. Third, the researcher listened to the song to get the feel of the song. Fourth, the researcher chooses sentences in song lyrics that contain figurative language. Finally, the researcher grouped the song lyrics into several figurative languages contained in the lyrics of the song. Through these steps, the researcher found that there were 8 types of figurative language from the four selected song lyrics, namely: symbol, metonymy, personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, allegory, and understatement. The use of figurative language in addition to beautifying the lyrics of the song also gives deep meaning and makes each sentence more lively and colorful.

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