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## **Figurative Language Found in Selected Song Lyrics by Eminem**

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**Abstract** *Figurative language is an additional way of saying something than using the usual one. Thus, there are figurative words or phrases that cannot be literally true in any circumstances. This study discusses about an analysis of figurative language in Mockingbird by Eminem. The purpose of this study is to find the type of figurative language used and the contextual meaning in Mockingbird by Eminem. The source of the data was taken from the lyrics of Mockingbird by Eminem. Mockingbird by Eminem is classified as rap song released on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The research design used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a document or content analysis as the research type. The thesis described type of figurative language and contextual meaning from Mockingbird by Eminem. From the analysis, there were nine types of figurative languages: they were metaphor, simile, symbol, personification, metonymy, allegory, hyperbole, and irony. To support the analysis, some types of figurative language and other related references were used. There were also some related theories about figurative language used to support the analysis. Twenty five have been selected to be analyzed. There were 2 types of Metaphor, 5 types of Simile, 3 types of Symbol, 1 type of Personification, 4 types of Metonymy, 1 type of Allegory, 6 types of Hyperbole, and 3 types of Irony. Then the types of figurative language were classified and analyzed. This study is highly expected to give contribution for the reader to know about figurative language clearly. It can help*

*the reader know contextual meaning and enrich new English vocabulary used in the daily conversation. It is also can be expected to speak English fluently.*

**Keyword:** *Figurative Language, Contextual Meaning, Mockingbird by Eminem*

**Abstrak** Bahasa kiasan adalah cara tambahan untuk mengatakan sesuatu daripada menggunakan yang biasa. Jadi, ada kata atau frasa kiasan yang tidak bisa benar-benar benar secara harfiah dalam keadaan apa pun. Penelitian ini membahas tentang analisis majas dalam Mockingbird karya Eminem. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dan makna kontekstual dalam Mockingbird karya Eminem. Sumber data diambil dari lirik Mockingbird karya Eminem. Mockingbird oleh Eminem tergolong lagu rap yang dirilis pada 12 November 2004. Desain penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan jenis penelitian dokumen atau analisis isi. Tesis ini mendeskripsikan jenis bahasa kiasan dan makna kontekstual dari Mockingbird karya Eminem. Dari hasil analisis, terdapat sembilan jenis bahasa kiasan yaitu metafora, simile, simbol, personifikasi, metonimi, alegori, hiperbola, dan ironi. Untuk mendukung analisis, beberapa jenis bahasa kiasan dan referensi terkait lainnya digunakan. Ada juga beberapa teori terkait tentang bahasa kiasan yang digunakan untuk mendukung analisis. Dua puluh lima telah dipilih untuk dianalisis. Ada 2 jenis Metafora, 5 jenis Simile, 3 jenis Simbol, 1 jenis Personifikasi, 4 jenis Metonimi, 1 jenis Alegori, 6 jenis Hiperbola, dan 3 jenis Ironi. Kemudian jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan tersebut diklasifikasikan dan dianalisis. Penelitian ini sangat diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi bagi pembaca untuk mengetahui tentang bahasa kiasan dengan jelas. Ini dapat membantu pembaca mengetahui makna kontekstual dan memperkaya kosakata bahasa Inggris baru yang digunakan dalam percakapan sehari-hari. Hal ini juga dapat diharapkan untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan lancar.

**Kata kunci:** *Bahasa Kiasan, Makna Kontekstual, Mockingbird oleh Eminem*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is very important in human life, because we cannot communicate with each other without it. In daily life, people need language to communicate, to interact and to get information from other people. Language is used to express someone's feelings or emotion and also to express their ideas, thoughts and imaginations. Human being is a social and an individual person and always communicates with each other. As human beings, people cannot separate themselves from involvement of social communication and interaction, which certainly makes themselves impossible to live without language. According to Kreidler (1998:19) language is a system of symbols through which people communicate. Language cannot be separated from us, because it is so important in

every aspect of human life, such as: technology, education, sciences, politics, economics, art and etc. In art for example: namely song.

Song is one of the literature works which has a function as a media of expression, entertainment and social criticism toward the expression of feelings and thoughts created by the authors. As a media of entertainment because it is fun for the listener and as a medium of social criticism directed to responses or opinions related to people's lives. In line with Apriono (2017), he argues that “The using of figurative languages in the song has a purpose in order to create intended meaning and to attract listeners through the lyrics used”. As a result, it can be argued that figurative meaning does not always work on catching the idea of the song but also well understanding in interpreting of it.

Song has two elements, such as lyric and music. When listening a song, sometimes people not focus on the lyric that used in a song. Usually people just like the song because the singer or maybe the music is good. And sometimes when people try to focus on the lyric, they will found some difficulties in understanding the meaning of the song lyrics. Especially, when the lyric used figurative language. Whereas, knowing the meaning of a lyric is important so that the message to be conveyed by the songwriter can be understood by the listener. Therefore, one of the way to know the true meaning that contained in figurative language.

Figurative language, as known as figure of speech, is also described as a beautiful language which used to raise and develop the effect imagination by introducing and comparing certain objects or things with objects or other things (Tarigan, 2009, p. 104). Every language has literature and figurative language such songs as well. Therefore, to understand about the lyrics used in songs the listeners must learn about figurative language to easier understanding the meaning through the lyrics in songs applied. Song is interesting to be examined because most of people are familiar with songs in their daily life, and the language that is used in songs is very unique.

Moreover, it is challenging for people to interpret and understand the figurative language meaning of the source language into the equivalent of the target language used (Prakasiwi, 2015). If figurative language poorly understood, it may cause misinterpretation because figurative language has the implicit meaning. Therefore, figurative language cannot be translated word by word, but they must pay more attention to its implied meaning than the form of language used especially in songs' lyrics. As a result, it is essential to conduct this kind of study focusing the figurative language in the songs' lyrics.

Eminem is a famous rap singer and a songwriter who has already launched 8 albums. He uses rap music as a way to reveal his thoughts and feelings. Eminem is able to discuss topics that many people can relate to such as drug abuse, mother, childhood, relationship, children, politics, and being white in black neighborhoods (Abrams, 2007, p.16). His lyrics are unique so it is interesting to

research the figurative meaning in Eminem Songs Lyrics. According Karina (2017) most of his songs contain a lot of figurative language that he uses to represent his real life situation in implicit way. In this research, the writer focus on describing the figurative language and contextual meaning.

**METHOD**

The method applied in this study will be descriptive qualitative method for implementation this study because this study is intended to describe the types of figurative language and the contextual meaning used in selected songs by Eminem in the form of description. Qualitative method is applied as research procedures that result descriptive data containing spoken and written words from the people and behaviors of people which can be observed in the research (Moleong, 2010, p. 4). The source of data in this study taken from song lyrics entitled Mocking Bird by Eminem. Meanwhile, the data of this study are all of the words, phrases and sentences used in songs’ lyrics by Eminem containing figurative languages and contextual meaning.

Data reliability in this study was obtained by triangulation technique that is a technique used by repeatedly reading data which is obtained. Then, the reliability of the data is tested again with the technique expert judgment (Zuchdi, 1993: 755). In applying the expert judgment technique the researcher involved the thesis supervisor. Lastly, the researcher would draw the conclusion based on the data findings in this study conducted. The tools or instrument to collect analyze data is the table to identify the figurative languages. To help collecting and analyzing data, the writer administered the example of table 1, as follows.

**Instrument 1.**

| No | Song Lyrics | Types of Figurative Language | Number |
|----|-------------|------------------------------|--------|
| 1  |             |                              |        |
| 2  |             |                              |        |

**Instrument 2.**

| No | Lyric | Contextual Meaning |
|----|-------|--------------------|
| 1  |       |                    |
| 2  |       |                    |

**Instrument 3.**

FIELD-NOTE

Code            01  
Title            : **Figurative Language**  
Subject         :  
Place            :  
Time            :

.....

Those table was made for analyzing the eight types of figurative language and contextual meaning. To analyze the Figurative Language easily, the researcher also provide song title, lyric and description, and meaning. At the first, the researcher identified the lyric base on the types and kinds of figurative language. The writer also provide the meaning of lyrics to help the researcher understand the song lyrics and the contextual meaning easier.

In collecting and analyzing the data, the writer conducted some steps:

- a. Looking for Mockingbird song lyric by Eminem from the website.  
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/eminem/mockingbird.html>)
- b. Reading and copying lyrics.
- c. The writer needs to read the lyrics to understand the meaning. The writer read the lyric many times in order to comprehend it.
- d. Identifying the sentences and phrases which have figurative language.
- e. Copying the lyrics which conducted figurative language into instrument 1 of the data collection.
- f. Drawing the description of figurative language in the instrument 3.
- g. Tested by expert judgment ( thesis supervisor )

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on research finding, the research identified twenty five figurative languages in song lyrics. There are two lines identified as metaphor, five lines identified as simile, three lines identified as symbol, one line identified as personification, four lines identified of metonymy, one line identified as allegory, six lines identified as “hyperbole”, and three lines identified as “irony”. Therefore, the researcher found that the dominant figurative language is “hyperbole”.

**Figurative Language**

After grouping the figurative language into a table, in this session is a description of the figurative language table. The figurative language that found in Mockingbird by Eminem song lyrics as follows:

### ***Metaphor***

From the lyrics above, daddy is with you is a form of metaphor. It cause, is it is the definition of something to the other something. It means daddy always in your heart wherever you are. So the sentence is a metaphor.

*Papa was a rollin' stone*

The lyric above included symbol in the word of Rollin Stone. It caused “Rollin Stone” means an international music magazine. At that time Eminem got his popularity and his photo was in Rollin Stone Magazine.

### ***Simile***

*I try to keep you sheltered from it but somehow it seems*

The lyric included simile because in this lyric used words seems. Eminem wants to protect his daughters, but he didn't know how to describe the real protection. This lyric included simile because of this lyric used the word like. In line with McArthur (1996:935) sentences that contain words like is a simile. The meaning of this lyric is their relationship feel different like when they are dating (boyfriend and girlfriend) than now.

*I sat up the whole night crying cuz daddy felt like a bum*

The lyric above included simile, because it used word like. In line with McArthur (1996:935) sentences that contain words like is a simile. The lyric explained about the habit in daily life. The true meaning is Eminem getting fired from his job and became a jobless.

*It seems like everything was just starting and fall apart*

The lyric above included simile, because it used word like. In line with Widiyanti (2013) said using like, seem, as, than can be described as an explicit comparison directly states one thing as the similarity toward other things. This lyric explained about the good life, a good relationship, just starting but it is going to messy because a trouble.

*See how much you have both have grown it's almost like your sisters now*

The lyric above included simile, because it used word “like”. In line with Widiyanti (2013) said using like, seem, as, than can be described as an explicit comparison directly states one thing as the similarity toward other things. Hailie Jade Scot Mathers grew beautiful like her adopted sister Alaina Marie Mathers and became a strong person.

## ***Symbol***

*Straighten up little soldier*

The lyric little soldier above imagery Eminem's daughter. In line with Parede (2008:24) a symbol is something that is itself and also stands for a particular objective reality.

From the lyrics Straighten up little soldier, it means Eminem wants his daughter to be a child who is tough in facing all tests. Because at that time the test of his daughter faced was very hard for a child.

*But I'm trying to give you the life that I never had*

The lyric I never had above imagery Eminem wants to give a harmonious life without shortcomings in terms of the economy. Because when Eminem was a child, he lived in broken home condition, and poor. So Eminem does not want to give his children his past life to his daughter.

*Trying to start a piggy bank for you so you could go to college*

The lyric above included symbol in the word of Piggy Bank. It caused piggy bank means saving money in the money box.

## ***Personification***

*And if that mockingbird don't sing and that ring don't shine*

The sentence above is considered as a personification. The word sing is the characteristics of human beings, but in this lyrics mockingbird can do it. It is an impossible thing. The author tells that this lyric means a bird can't sing.

## ***Metonymy***

Metonymy is the use of something closely related to the thing essentially mean (Perrine, 1987:67). It can be considered that metonymy is the substitution of a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it.

*When it spins when it swirls, when it whirls, when it twirls*

This lyric is written by using a type of metonymy. Spins, Swirls, Whirls, Twirls are rap technique and only rapper knows about this technique. This sentence means Eminem is a real rapper.

*His job was to keep the food on the table for u and mom*

This lyric is written by using a type of metonymy. Keep the food on the table was an Eminem's job as a waitress in a restaurant before he got fired. This lyric makes the reader imagine that the singer had a job like before but with no salary.

*And dad moved back to the other side of 8 Mile and Novara*

This lyric is written by using type of metonymy. 8 miles is Eminem's movie. This lyric makes the reader imagine that the singer wants to describe his struggle became a great rapper in his film.

*And if you ask me too Daddy's gonna buy you a mocking bird*

This lyric is written by using a type of metonymy. Mockingbird is a book that tells a single parent-father who is very fond of his child. This sentence means if Hailie wants her father to become a good father.

### **Hyperbole**

*"I can see your sad, even when you smile even when you laugh"*

The lyric above included hyperbole, because in our mind impossible if someone can be smiling even laughing when they are sad. The real meaning is Eminem knows Hailie deeply. The researcher finds hyperbole sentence in this lyric because the Author putting exaggeration sentence. This sentence means Eminem's deep cry at his fate often overshadows his best efforts to give the best to Hailie.

### **Irony**

*"No more crying wipe them tears. Daddy's here no more nightmares"*

The meaning of the lyric above is bad things going to be gone, when daddy come beside you.

*"Daddy's always on the move Momma's always on the news"  
is always in bad news makes Hailie's life*

*"The harder that I try to do that the more it backfires on me"*

The true meaning of the song lyric above is Eminem when forces his will its going comeback in bad things to him. It is included irony, and the Author hopes that we are should be careful to force the will.



## Contextual Meaning

According Petada (2001, p.116), Contextual meaning could be regarded as a situational meaning. It rise as a result of the relationship between speech and context. It took the form of a lot of things.

*I can see your sad, even when you smile even when you laugh (Line10)*

*I can see it in your eyes, deep inside you want to cry (Line 11)*

The sentence "I can see you're sad, even when you smile, even when you laugh" can be interpreted as "I can see your sadness, in your smile and laughter". This sentence is a form of Eminem's expression, who knows that his daughter is sad even though he smiles and laughs. The next sentence is a continuation of the series of events in the previous sentence. The phrase "I can see it in your eyes, deep inside you want to cry" means because your eyes cannot lie, deep down you want to cry". The point of this sentence is that as a father, he knows that his daughter is sad just by seeing the meaning behind the look in his eyes. It seems that Eminem really understands the character of his daughter.

*I'll never forget that christmas*

*I sat up the whole night crying' (Line 52)*

*Cause daddy felt like a bum, see daddy had a job (Line 53)*

But his job was to keep the food on the table for you and mom (Line 54)

These lyrics show that as a father, Eminem feels useless because he does not have a steady job and no money. At that time Eminem was just an unknown rapper and worked in a small restaurant as a cook and dishwasher at the Gilbert's Lodge restaurant in the Shores St Clair area and he got fired by his boss. Then he just pondered in the chair wishing that his daughter's life could be better than him.

In this lyric, Eminem's condition is very bad because of the dismissal by his boss to Eminem. At that time Eminem became a jobless person and he expressed his disappointment in that lyric. The researcher found Eminem's disappointment in the lyric "(53) see daddy had a job. (54) But his job was to keep the food on the table for you and mom." This was the Eminem's ironic life.

*And dad moved back to the other side of 8 mile on Novara (Line 65)*

*And that's when daddy went to California with his CD and met Dr. Dre (Line 66)*

From the lyrics of this song Eminem mentions 8 miles which is one of the films starring by Eminem which tells of his struggle to become a great rapper. Here Eminem also mentions Novara, Novara is one of the areas close to Detroit, where Eminem and his family live. It all has to do with the story of his experience with his wife after a big fight. Eminem decided to go to California from the city where he lived while carrying a CD that containing his own rap song. When Eminem performs in concerts from stage to stage he met Dr. Dre accidentally. Dr. Dre is one of the most famous rapper and Eminem that was recruited to become a partner in his production house.

In the stanza, Eminem uses the slang word "Ima". "Ima" is slang to say "I am going to". The choice of this word comes from Eminem's environment which the citizen majority is black and rapper, they prefer using non-formal language. And Eminem also mentions "give you the world" that means give everything to his daughter what she wants. Eminem will do everything and give everything to make his daughter happy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through the analysis of Eminem's song lyrics Mockingbird, it can be concluded that Figurative language is the one aspect which is used in Eminem song to give the powerful effect to the song. After analyzing the data, the researcher found eight types of figurative language being used in Eminem's song such as simile, metaphor, personification, symbol, metonymy, allegory, hyperbole, Irony. In this study, the researcher has 25 data. There are 6 data of hyperbole, 5 data of simile, 4 data of metonymy, 3 data of symbol, 3 data of irony, 2 data of metaphor, 1 data of allegory, and 1 data of personification. It can be said that the dominant types of figurative language in those songs is hyperbole. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration for extra effect. The author used hyperbole to produce images in listener and to explain ideas, emotions, and images in a more efficient way than through plain language.

The words chosen in the lyrics of the song represent his identity as Eminem, who grew up and lives in the black community of Detroit, America. Eminem is a white American who uses the American hip-hop culture, which comes from African American culture, to introduce himself to the American music market. He is very influenced by the hip-hop culture because of the environment where he used to live. There is a relationship that occurs in the lyrics of the song, namely between Eminem as a composer and singer of the song, and with the listeners of the song. The purpose of this song is to provide a description of a piece of his life story as a father and a famous rapper. Finally, there is a process of transcultural flow or cross-cultural flow in the song lyrics. In Eminem's song, who is a white person, there are forms of hip-hop culture that move, change, and are reused to form

a new identity. In this case, the hip-hop culture that originally belonged to black Americans was transculturated by forming a new identity, Eminem's identity as a white hip hop singer from America.

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