

AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN ADELE'S SONGS EASY ON ME AND WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

TRISNAYANTI SALAM, TIRZA KUMAYAS, DELLI SABUDU

Universitas Negeri Manado

Correspondence author: #0009117305@unima.ac.id

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Abstract : The title of this research is " An Analysis of Figurative Language In Adele Songs' Easy On Me And When We Were Young ". This research aims to describe the types and meaning of figurative language in lyrics of Adele's Songs. The method used is descriptive qualitative, analysis with a pragmatics approach. The relevant theories that researchers use are figurative language (Rambi & Kumayas 2021:378), theory of types of figurative language in Keraf (2004:136-145). Based on the research results, The figurative language found in "Easy on me" reveals her self-reflection mode as well as vulnerability while navigating through acceptances as well as changes. On the same note "When We Were Young" employs descriptive language full of images and metaphors that express melancholic feelings about time passing.

Keywords: *Figurative Language, Pragmatics, Meaning, Song Lyrics, Adele's Songs*

INTRODUCTION

Since humans and language are inextricably linked, language plays a significant part in human existence. Language is also a gift from the creator to humans because only humans have language. Language is a means or tool that humans use in the process of communicating even According to Gleason (2007: 353), language has a system of rules, language is arranged and organized very well. According to Gleason (2007: 353), language has a system of rules, language is arranged and organized very well. The organization involves five rule systems: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. De Saussure (2011: 286), states that meaning is

an understanding or concept contained in linguistics. Linguistics is the science that studies language. Fromkin (2000: 3) states that linguistics is the science that studies human language. Internal and exterior linguistics make up the two subfields of linguistics. Phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics make up internal linguistics. Sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, semiotics, and applied linguistics are the subfields of external linguistics. In this research the focus is on internal linguistics regarding semantics.

According to Betti (2021: 3), the meaning of a word in semantics encompasses both its denotation (the actual entity it refers to in the world) and its intension (the concepts or mental images it evokes). This dual aspect of meaning helps to account for words that do not directly refer to tangible entities, such as "sing" or "altruism". Semantics does not only discuss the meaning or significance of words. But it also discusses words and the development of word meanings.

A song is a creative arrangement of tones or sounds in a specific order, combination, and temporal relationship that usually features musical instruments and results in a seamless and continuous musical composition. Songs are a way to express emotions and feelings in a pleasant way. Songs can also be a medium for conveying criticism about the situation in society. Moral values are usually implied in the lyrics written by the author.

Song lyrics are a string of words expressed by the author about something he has seen. To express this, the author creates a lyric with the meaning contained in each lyric, both implicit and explicit. Song lyrics are created through a process of choosing the right diction so as to produce good lyrics. In this research the author selected Adele's song since she frequently hears these two hits and they are both highly well-liked by the general audience. so the author was interested in researching the figurative language in the lyrics of the songs "Easy On Me" and "When We Were Young". In the song lyrics, the author can better understand the message in the lyrics and better understand figurative language when conducting research.

Songwriters often use figurative language in making songs to make them interesting. However, many listeners just listen but don't know the true meaning of a song, especially if the song uses a lot of figurative language, which makes the listener misunderstand because they don't understand the true meaning of the song. Likewise, Adele is among the most well-known vocalists in the world. She sings songs that have implied meanings written using figurative language, including "Easy on Me" and "When We Were Young".

Based on the explanation above research questions of this research is "What types of figurative language will be find in the lyrics of the songs 'Easy On Me and When We Were Young'?" and second "What are the meanings of the figurative language are find in the lyrics of the songs 'Easy On Me and When We Were Young'?"

And based on research questions the purpose of this study is "To identify the types of figurative language in Adele's songs 'Easy on Me' and 'When We Were Young'." And "To analyze the meaning of figurative language in Adele's songs 'Easy on Me' and 'When We Were Young'"

In choosing this research topic, the author has a reason because it is indicated that the two song lyrics predominantly use figurative language and none of the song lyrics have been researched before so the author is interested in researching them. Author delimited this research only discuss figurative language found in Adele's songs 'Easy on Me' and 'When We Were Young', namely, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, allusion, and imagery.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Type

This research classifies as descriptive qualitative research method with qualitative approach. In descriptive qualitative research, research results can be in the form of notes, photos, recordings, documents or relevant records, this research is not in the form of numbers (Tarigan, 2009:6). Qualitative descriptive methods are used to describe, explain social phenomena from the participant's perspective in the form of figurative language analysis in the lyrics of the songs Easy On Me and When We Were Young.

Data Collection

The researcher listened to and read the lyrics to Adele's songs "Easy On Me" and "When We Were Young," which she obtained from the internet in order to gather data. Next, by listening to the song several times and observing the figurative language used in the lyrics, the author was able to identify the data.

Procedure Data

1. Download the lyrics to the songs Easy On Me and When We Were Young from Adele
2. Listen to every lyric of the songs Easy On Me and When We Were Young from Adele
3. Recognize and know all the figurative language in the lyrics of the songs Easy On Me and When We Were Young.
4. Group all lyric structures to find out figurative language in songs by analyzing, explaining and concluding with Miles and Huberman (2007).

Data Analysis

Following data identification and classification, the author reads the two Adele song lyrics to evaluate figurative language before describing them using Miles and Huberman's (2007) theory.

1. Data Reduction

The researcher concentrates on the primary research problem and provides a summary of the chosen key points in this step. Then, by categorizing the song lyrics required to meet the goals of this research, it is made simpler by removing unnecessary information to create a clear image and make it simpler for researchers to locate the data they need. Researchers focused on finding figurative language used in the lyrics of the songs Easy On Me and When We Were Young.

2. Data Display

After the data has been reduced, it is then displayed. Researchers use narrative writing to present data.

3 Drawing/Verification

Analyzing the data, specifically making inferences and confirming them, is the last phase. To make things apparent, researchers draw conclusions and highlight key themes from all of the data that has been gathered. The problem formulation that was developed at the outset is addressed in this conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

General Features of Figurative Language

Language that departs from the traditional literal means of describing things or people is known as indicative language. This language employs terms or statements that have meanings distinct from their literal understanding. (Rambi & Kumayas 2021:378). According to Ibrahim, et. al. (2019) The use of figurative language in a song is crucial for conveying beauty and

messages, as well as for adding color and a special effect for readers or listeners.

The analysis is carried out using the methods recommended by Miles and Huberman (2007). This study focuses on Adele's two songs. The English artist Adele's song "Easy on Me" is taken from her fourth studio album, *30* (2021). Adele's ballad and song "Torch Song" discuss her divorce and plead for forgiveness from her ex-husband, her child, and herself. The song "When We Were Young" from Adele's third studio album, *25* (2015), is performed by the English vocalist.

Adele's song, which was released as the album's second single on January 22, 2016, was written by Tobias Jesso Jr. and produced by Ariel Rechtshaid. It features piano accompaniment and explores the anxiety of growing older and losing one's youth.

Figurative Language in "Easy on Me" Song

There are several figurative sentences found in the song Easy on Me, but the author only took 2 types of figurative sentences. The following data is obtained:

1. Metaphor

"There ain't no gold in this river that I've been washin' my hands in forever"

In this line, this metaphor illustrates a sense of futility or lack of reward, comparing the situation to a river where the speaker has been seeking something valuable ("gold") in vain. The act of "washing hands" suggests effort or repeated attempts that have yielded no results.

"I know there's hope in these waters, but I can't bring myself to swim"

In this line, the metaphor portrays the idea of knowing that there is potential or hope (represented by "hope in these waters"), yet feeling

unable to take action or engage with it, much like standing by water but being unable to swim.

"When I am drowning in this silence"

In this line, this metaphor conveys the overwhelming nature of silence, likening it to the sensation of drowning. It suggests that the absence of communication or expression is suffocating or difficult to endure.

"I was still a child"

This metaphor reflects the speaker's past state of innocence or immaturity, implying that they were less experienced or developed at the time. It highlights a contrast between past naivety and present understanding.

2. Similes

Adele's song "Easy on Me" uses many types of figurative language, but within the existing delimitations the author only takes metaphors and similes, but in Adele's song "Easy on Me" there is no similes.

3. Hyperbole

"I had no time to choose what I chose to do"

This is an exaggeration, as it's unlikely that there was literally no time to make decisions. The phrase amplifies the emotional pressure Adele felt, suggesting that the decisions were made under stress or in haste without much consideration.

"You can't deny how hard I've tried"

4. Personification

"I know there is hope in these waters" – Here, the "waters" are personified, as they are described as having the ability to contain "hope." Water, in this case, is symbolic of life or emotional experiences, and by giving it the quality of holding hope, Adele brings a sense of life and possibility to the metaphor of water.

"I was still a child, didn't get the chance to feel the world around me" – While this isn't strictly a case of direct personification, "the world around

me" could be interpreted as being given the ability to interact with or affect the speaker, almost as though the world is something that could have offered her experiences or opportunities that she missed.

5. Allusion

Allusion to Innocence and Growth:

"I was still a child" – This line alludes to the speaker's innocence and lack of experience at the time. While not a direct reference to a specific work or event, it draws on the broader cultural understanding of childhood as a time of naivety and learning, implying that she made decisions without fully comprehending their consequences. This can be seen as an allusion to the universal theme of personal growth and maturation.

Allusion to Baptism/Spiritual Cleansing:

Although the song isn't specifically religious, the line "There ain't no room for things to change / When we are both so deeply stuck in our ways" references the ideas of human transformation and redemption, which are frequently connected to spiritual or emotional purification. Given the metaphor of water throughout the song (e.g., the river and "hope in these waters"), it could be interpreted as an allusion to the Christian practice of baptism or symbolic renewal, where water represents purification and starting anew.

Allusion to Life's Difficulties:

"There ain't no gold in this river" – This line alludes to the idea of seeking something valuable (such as fulfillment, happiness, or meaning) but not finding it. While not a direct reference, it echoes the common metaphor of "gold" representing success or emotional treasure, reminiscent of phrases like "searching for gold" or "the gold at the end of the rainbow." It evokes the human struggle of searching for meaning in life, which is a universal theme in literature and culture.

Allusion to Decision-Making and Responsibility:

"I had no time to choose what I chose to do" – This alludes to the pressure of making life-altering decisions in a state of unpreparedness. It taps into the broader existential theme of making choices without fully understanding their ramifications, alluding to a sense of fate or inevitability that often appears in literature dealing with life transitions and personal responsibility.

Figurative Language in "When We Were Young"

1. Metaphor

"You look like a movie":

This metaphor suggests that the person evokes feelings similar to those inspired by a cinematic experience, implying beauty, nostalgia, and perhaps a sense of idealization. It conveys the idea that the person has a larger-than-life presence.

"You sound like a song":

Here, the comparison of the person's voice or presence to a song suggests a deep emotional resonance. It implies that the person brings back memories and feelings that are as impactful and memorable as a favorite tune.

"It's hard to win me back":

This metaphor suggests that love and relationships are akin to a competition, where emotional connections are treated like a game that one must "win." It emphasizes the difficulty and emotional stakes involved in rekindling a relationship.

"Let me photograph you in this light":

The act of wanting to "photograph" someone metaphorically suggests capturing a moment in time. The "light" symbolizes a perfect or special moment, reinforcing the idea of preserving memories and emotions associated with that person.

"When we were young":

This phrase serves as a metaphor for a time of innocence, freedom, and idealism. It reflects on a nostalgic period in life, contrasting it with the complexities of adulthood.

"You're a memory":

This metaphor indicates that the person is not just someone from the past but is now part of the speaker's memories, suggesting longing and a sense of loss.

"I'm in the corner watching you kiss her":

This metaphor captures the feeling of being an outsider in a moment of intimacy, highlighting themes of unrequited love and longing. It conveys a sense of vulnerability and emotional pain.

"Just like a song":

This reinforces the earlier metaphor about music, suggesting that the memories associated with this person play over and over in the speaker's mind, much like a song that lingers after it ends. Simile

"You're like a dream come true"

In this line, the simile compares the person to a "dream come true," suggesting that their presence or the relationship feels ideal and overwhelmingly positive, as if a wish or fantasy has been realized.

"You look like a movie"

In this line, this simile suggests that the person or the moment they are in looks cinematic, extraordinary, or visually striking, much like a beautifully composed scene from a movie.

"You sound like a song"

In this line, the simile likens the person's voice or the way they speak to a song, implying that it is melodious, emotionally resonant, or evokes strong feelings, just as music does.

2. Similes

"You look like a movie" – This simile compares the person to a movie, suggesting they have a captivating presence or evoke strong emotions, similar to a cinematic experience.

"You sound like a song" – Here, the comparison to a song implies that the person's voice or essence is melodious and evokes memories, akin to the emotional resonance of music.

3. Imagery

Visual Imagery:

"You look like a movie": This creates a vivid picture of the subject as something larger-than-life, suggesting beauty and nostalgia reminiscent of cinematic moments.

"You sound like a song": This invokes the idea of melody and rhythm, conjuring a sense of familiarity and emotional connection tied to music.

"Let me photograph you in this light": This visualizes a moment frozen in time, highlighting the importance of the setting and the emotions tied to it, emphasizing the desire to capture a fleeting moment.

Auditory Imagery:

"You sound like a song": This auditory imagery evokes the essence of music, suggesting that the person's voice is as impactful and memorable as a favorite song, stirring emotions tied to memories.

Emotional Imagery:

"Everybody here is watching you": This conveys a sense of vulnerability and the feeling of being on display, heightening the emotional stakes of the moment.

"And it's hard to win me back": This phrase conveys a sense of emotional struggle and past heartbreak, inviting listeners to feel the weight of regret and longing.

Temporal Imagery:

"When we were young": This phrase evokes the passage of time, contrasting the innocence of youth with the complexities of adult life, creating a sense of nostalgia for simpler times.

"Let me take you by the hand": This evokes a sense of connection and intimacy, reminiscent of youthful companionship and simpler moments shared.

Metaphorical Imagery:

"You still look like a movie": This metaphor suggests that the person remains captivating and memorable, creating an idealized image that highlights the permanence of those cherished memories

4. Personification

"Let me photograph you in this light":

The phrase suggests that the light can be captured or that it possesses qualities that can enhance memories, almost as if the light itself has a role in preserving moments.

"You look like a movie / You sound like a song":

While these are primarily similes, they personify the concepts of a movie and a song, suggesting that they can take on human characteristics or emotions, evoking nostalgia and emotion in the listener.

"Everybody here is watching you":

This gives a sense of agency to the "everybody," as if they have a conscious interest or intention in observing the person being addressed, emphasizing the significance of that moment.

"The way you did before":

This implies that memories themselves have the ability to act or influence feelings, as if they can evoke past emotions in the present.

Each metaphor and simile in these songs serves to convey deep emotional experiences, enhancing the lyrical impact and making the songs more relatable to the listener. The use of figurative language allows Adele

to express complex feelings in a way that resonates on an emotional level, helping to communicate the nuances of love, loss, and reflection.

For instance, personification breathes life into abstract concepts, allowing memories to "watch" and "observe," creating a vivid connection between the listener and the emotions expressed. Hyperbole emphasizes the intensity of feelings, as when she portrays the weight of regret as a burden too heavy to bear, magnifying the emotional stakes involved. Through allusion, Adele references shared human experiences that evoke nostalgia and recognition, grounding her lyrics in relatable scenarios.

Additionally, the rich imagery painted throughout the songs allows listeners to visualize scenes and emotions, transporting them to specific moments of their own lives. The combination of these elements deepens the listener's engagement, as they navigate the intricacies of their own feelings alongside Adele's powerful storytelling.

CONCLUSION

Figurative language in Adele's songs ("Easy on Me" and "When We Were Young") shows how deep her song writing is and how much emotions she gets by using metaphor, and simile. With such devices she communicates deep sentiments such like nostalgia, remorsefulness and desire making them easy to understand. The figurative language found in "Easy on me" reveals her self-reflection mode as well as vulnerability while navigating through acceptances as well as changes. On the same note "When We Were Young" employs descriptive language full of images and metaphors that express melancholic feelings about time passing. Through this analysis it is clear that metaphorical language adds to Adele's music emotional layers and universal attributes.

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