

# THE ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SHAWN MENDES' SONG LYRICS

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## Abstract:

*This Final Project focuses on analyzing the figurative language contained in the lyrics of Shawn Mendes' song on the Illuminate album. The aim of this research is; 1) To find out the types of figurative language contained in the lyrics of the Shawn Mendes song on the Illuminate album. 2) To find out the non-literal meaning of the figurative language contained in the lyrics of the Shawn Mendes song on the Illuminate album. 3) To find out the contribution of Shawn Mendes' song lyrics on this album Illuminate for poetry learning. Researchers conducted qualitative research using document analysis as data. The results showed that (1) There are many types of figurative language in the lyrics of the Shawn Mendes song on the Illuminate album. In fifteen songs there are 58 lyrics that contain figurative language, namely Onomatopoeia 10 lyrics (17.24%), Hyperbole 14 lyrics (24.14%), Repetition 9 lyrics (15.52%), Simile 13 lyrics (22.41%), Personification 3 lyrics (5.17%), Irony 3 lyrics (5.17%), Metaphor 1 lyrics (1.72%), Symbol 4 lyrics (6.91%), and parallelism 1 lyrics (1.72%). (2) The non-literal meaning in this album is that the songwriter wants to convey expressions of breakups with very heartrending lyrics. (3) The contribution of the lyrics to this song in teaching poetry is the use of creative and attractive media for the teacher or lecturer for learning poetry so that students do not get bored doing the assignments given by the lecturer or teacher, and also the use of song as the learning media has a positive impact on students. Based on the research results of this final project, the researcher suggests teaching students with interesting and creative media for learning poetry.*

**Keywords:** *Figurative Language, Shawn Mendes, Illuminate album*

## 1. Introduction

English is the language used by most people in the world. English which is an international language makes all people in the world learn it. No exception in Indonesia. Indonesian people learn English in both formal and informal levels. Most students in Indonesia experience difficulties in learning English, this is due to differences in mother tongue and also differences in grammatical components. Marcus Schulzke (2014), stated that English is now a Global Language, this is because English is the second most popular language in the world and is also the main Language in international communication. English is a Global language, as most people say. Most politicians on television speak in English. When you travel everywhere, you see all the signs and advertisements in English. Whenever you go to a hotel or a place to eat in another country you will find a menu book in English. English students are required to have 4 skills; those are, listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Crystal David, 2016). In this era of globalization, we are required to master the skills in English because we will be able to communicate with people in various countries. We can convey all our ideas and opinions and channel them into a text that can be understood by various people. Such as captions on the Instagram application, poem, fiction, or song.

A lot of students in Indonesia like listening to music. They learn English through music, by listening to music they get new language vocabulary they do not know yet, so they will tend to look for meaning in a song's lyrics. Moreover, most song lyrics use a poetic expression or not real meanings or figurative language. Figurative language is words that are used occasionally in everyday life, because these words are very informal, not in the actual meaning of the word, but the figurative language is used to emphasize or give a sense of beauty in a sentence. According to Nana Nurdiana (2015), Figurative language is used in any form of communication, such as in daily conversation, articles in newspapers, advertisements, novels, poems, etc.

Based on the explanation above, this research is aimed to answer the following problems:

1. What kind of figurative language found in Shawn Mendes' album: Illuminate?
2. What is the non-literal meaning of the figurative language used in Shawn Mendes' song lyrics?
3. What are the contributions of Shawn Mendes' song lyrics to poetry teaching?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Theory

Figurative Language not only consists of one or two kinds but many. The kinds of figurative language can be divided into four groups namely; comparison, allusions, affirmation, and conflict. Common types of figures of speech we know as follows:

#### a. Simile

McMahan, Funk, Day et al (2014), stated that simile is an imaginative comparison that uses words like or as or that. If you said, “My Sister is like a doll,” or “My brother’s good as gold,” you would be making simile, a comparison between two different things that use a certain word to compare it. A simile is one of the figurative languages belonging to the comparative figurative language group. Simile figurative language that compares two different things directly intending to provide a description or explanation of one of the two things. Simile figurative languages usually use words like; like, so, as, than, seems, appears, similar to, and resemble. We often use simile figurative language in everyday conversation. For example “Susan is as smart as a mouse-deer”. Mouse deer is known as a clever animal, and in this sentence, Susan’s cleverness compared to deer. Here the use of the word “as” is very helpful in describing similarities.

#### b. Metaphor

A metaphor is one of the figurative languages that belong to the comparative figurative language group. A metaphor is used to explain or describe a thing by referring to other things that are considered to have characters that are similar to something or someone. McMahan, Funk, and Day et al (2014), stated that metaphor is an imaginative comparison between two objects which are not the same but have the same elements. For example when Shakespeare wrote about young people who are in love “The eternal summer shall not fade”. This means comparing young people who are in love with summer pleasures.

#### c. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the use of words such as sounds that indicate the meaning that sounds like its meaning or can also be said to imitate the sound. They add onomatopoeia to increase the level of pleasure and also the reality for writing (Nurdiana, 2015). In Greek “Onoma” means

“name” and “poeicin” means “make” which if combined may mean “make a name”. Onomatopoeia is imitative words from natural sounds. Often referred to as a mock voice that is converted into a word. Like the sound of a cat “meow” or the sound of a pig “oink.oink”. Most of us often use onomatopoeia in our daily lives. Like when we exchange messages with someone and we are sleepy we will type the word “Hoamm” or when we laugh most Indonesian people will type “wkwkwkw” which means laughter for Indonesians.

**d. Personification**

Personification is figurative language that gives human nature or character to inanimate objects, animals, or ideas. For the example the Sun greets me with the morning. The sky is filled with dancing stars (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Someone who loves animals is very familiar with personification because they often give human characteristics to nonhuman (McMahan et al., 2014). A figurative language where human qualities are given to animals, things, or other ideas. Personification is a style of language that makes things or anything as if they live by being given the characteristics as if they were doing something like a human. The figurative language of personification comes from the Ancient Greek “Prosopopoeia” which means to humanize. Oftentimes we listen to people use this personified figurative language.

**e. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is a style of language that expresses something by exaggerating so that it often makes it look bigger than it is. Statements that are intentionally made to exaggerate facts either maximize them or minimize them to attract the attention of the audience. Hyperbole or exaggerated language formed from a fact that was exaggerated or exaggerated than the truth. Hyperbole is usually used to make a joke or sensual effect to make an idea more manipulative so that it exploits the reader. An example is: I was surprised until half-died hear his saying (Nurdiana, 2015b).

**f. Symbol**

A symbol is a category of comparative figurative language that compares a thing by describing the meaning of a thing in the form of symbols, symbols, figures, animals, or objects. One thing compared to another can replace the word from it, but still has the same meaning as

the writer intended. If simile says A like B, while Symbols only talk about B, symbols can be concrete objects, objects, actions, which are explained only for their Own interests and suggest meaning (Arifah, 2016). For example, the national flag is a symbol of the practice feeling. The symbol used is usually a symbol that is common or easily understood by someone.

**g. Repetition**

Repetition is a figurative language in the form of repetition of words or other forms that are repeated to have the same meaning of the word while having the same implied meaning. Both in the first sentence, second, third, or the other is the same. Figurative language repetition functions to emphasize a meaning that is in a sentence. Repetition is a figurative language that uses the word repetition to emphasize meaning (Nurdiana, 2015). Some singers use lexical or structural repetition to overcome so that the audience does not feel bored or to create an effect, but this repetition does not mean the singer lacks ideas. The singer uses repetition to gather momentum and carry more ideas in the next stanza, to emphasize a point, or to authenticate a claim. Repetition is also able to arouse the audience's emotions. Example: Goodbye my girls, goodbye my sweetheart, goodbye my angel.

**h. Irony**

Irony figurative language is figurative language which states something contrary to its true meaning. Commonly used as sarcasm. Irony figurative language is included in one type of oppositional figurative language. It comes from the Greek which means hypocrisy, debate, and also ignorance. Qurrotul'ain (2017), says that chronic comments may be funny or a little sarcastic. The irony is the opposite of what someone did; a compilation of events is not expected to occur. This incident is a mismatch in expectations and actualization. Irony can consist of drama (drama), verbal (statement), or situational (episode).

Literature is a work of art consisting of various forms. Can be through writing or words. Usually, literature is poured into a poem, fiction, drama, and song. Literature is creative or imaginative writing. According to Esther Lombardi (2020), Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. Literature is writing formed by letters, most literature is the work of creative imagination, such as poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, journalism, and song.

Songs are one of the best tools to learn English. According to Hariyanto (2017), a song is a composition consisting of the voice of a data singer and musical instrument. There are many messages delivered in a song. Songwriters usually express their feelings into song lyrics. Based on Hornby quoted by Qurrotul'ain (2017), the lyrics are expressions of feelings of the author, which is connected to his singer, which is written in a poem in the form of a song. Songwriters also express what they see and experience. However, sometimes the songwriters also make words that contain a lot of meaning in the songs which made the songs more beautiful. According to Diana (2019), lyrics are made by creative people and imaginative thinking power. Someone who writes lyrics is usually called a lyricist or songwriter.

## 2.2 Previous Studies

There are three previous studies related to figurative languages. They were done by Nana Nurdiana (2015) From IAIN Palangkaraya, with the title "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Katy Perry's song". The result of her study is she found nine types of figurative language in Katy Perry's song. There was Personification, Metaphor, Simile, Hyperbole, Allusion, Repetition, Onomatopoeia, and Idiom. Khadijah Arifah (2016) From Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, with the title "Figurative Language Analysis in Five Jhon Legend's song." She found ten types of figurative language in Five Jhon Legend's song. There was Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Oxymoron, Paradox, Symbolic, Repetition, Allusion, and Anumerasio. Wati Handayani (2017) From University Muhammadiyah Malang, with the title "The Analysis of Figurative Language in Shawn Mendes's song." The result of her research is she found the kind of figurative language which used in Shawn Mendes' song lyrics is Hyperbole, Metaphor, and Repetition. Analyzing the album and song also elaborated by Susanto (2017) the interpersonal meaning realized in the lyrics of Christina Perri's album "lovestrong" and the contribution for teaching a modern English grammar.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This type of research is a descriptive qualitative analysis of textual data because the data used for a study is a lyric text of the song Shawn Mendes. The researchers looked at the figurative language used in the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the *Illuminate* album.

The object of this case study is the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the *Illuminate* album. In this album there are 15 songs, including; *There's Nothing Holding Me Back*, *Ruin*, *Mercy*, *Treat You Better*, *Three Empty Words*, *Don't Be A Fool*, *Like This*, *No Promises*, *Lights On*, *Honest*, *Patience*, *Bad Reputation*, *Understand*, *Hold On*, and *Roses*. This study aims to find the figurative language used in the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the *Illuminate* album.

The data source used by researcher came from the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the *Illuminate* album produced in 2016. Shawn Mendes' song lyrics in the *Illuminate* album were obtained from a website called [azlyrics.com](http://azlyrics.com).

The researcher as a tool or instrument for analysis and also collects data in a study based on the researcher's perspective based on the theory used by the researcher. The method used in qualitative research is collecting and also analyzing data. Semiawan (2010) says, in qualitative methods, researchers are data collectors and cannot be represented or delegated.

#### **3.2 Instruments**

In qualitative research, researchers are instruments used to understand a meaning that is in a literary work. Because researchers have extensive knowledge and also have many references related to this research. So researchers can adjust to the reality found when conducting qualitative research. According to Moleong as cited in Qurrotul'ain (2017), this qualitative research instrument is a researcher himself with the knowledge of a researcher and also references various sources related to this research. The researcher used document analysis. Document analysis is a method used to collect data taken from notes, books, and the internet. (Lusiana & Qomariana, 2017)

### 3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the most important part of qualitative research. Researchers will get data from the research and also the conclusion of data analysis. Data analysis is a systematic process, organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials used to enhance the understanding of researchers in research aimed at presenting what a researcher has found. Data analysis is also a way that researchers use to answer research questions (Simanjuntak, 2016). In analyzing data, several steps that must be done by researchers to understand the data results: First, read the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the Illuminate album. The second analyzed the figurative language in the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the Illuminate album. The third, finding out the non-literal meaning in the lyrics of the song Shawn Mendes in the Illuminate album. Finding out the contribution of figurative language use in the Shawn Mendes' song lyrics to Poetry teaching. Write a conclusion in accordance with the results of the analysis.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Types of Figurative language found in the Shawn Mendes' song lyrics in the album illuminate.

Researcher found many types of figurative language in every song lyric in the Illuminate album. In this album there are figurative languages such as Onomatopoeia, Hyperbole, Repetition, Simile, Personification, Irony, Metaphor, Symbol, and Parallelism. So researcher has found 58 figurative language lyrics on the fifteen Shawn Mendes song on the Illuminate album.

**Tabel types of figurative language.**

No	Types of figurative language	Total	Percentage
1.	Onomatopoeia Example: 'Cause every time that she gets close, <b>yeah</b> . This lyric is onomatopoeia because the word "Yeah" is the human sounds.	10 lyrics	17,24%
2.	Hyperbole Example: <b>Ripping all the skin from off my bones</b> . These lyric are hyperbole because the word "Ripping all the skin from off my bones" is an act that exaggerates the real situation.	14 lyrics	24,14%



3.	<p>Repetition</p> <p>Example: <b>I know we would be alright, I know we would be alright.</b> These lyric is repetition because the word “I know we would be alright” repeated in one sentence.</p>	9 lyrics	15,52%
4.	<p>Simile</p> <p>Example: I know I can treat you better <b>than</b> he can. This lyric is simile because the songwriter uses the word “than” to compare the way he treats women and the way the ex-woman treats her.</p>	13 lyrics	22,41%
5.	<p>Personification</p> <p>Example: Your <b>lips are talking</b> when we don't speak. This lyric is personification because the mouth is an object that is given human characteristics.</p>	3 lyrics	5,17%
6.	<p>Irony</p> <p>Example: I always give in <b>when you tell me lies to reassure me.</b> These lyrics are ironic because the writer always gives up when someone tells a lie to convince the songwriter.</p>	3 lyrics	5,17%
7.	<p>Metaphor</p> <p>Example: <b>Tell me that you're willing then you say you won't.</b> This lyric is metaphor because the songwriter compares the feeling of the subject to say something but in the end, the subject did not say.</p>	1 lyric	1,72%
8.	<p>Symbol</p> <p>Example: And all of my friends seen her <b>naked.</b> This lyric is symbol because the word “naked” not the real meaning of “naked” but the symbol of authenticity.</p>	4 lyrics	6,91%
9.	<p>Parallelism</p> <p>Example: People getting <b>off and on.</b> This lyric is parallelism because the word of “off and on” is equal</p>	1 lyric	1,72%
Total		58 lyrics	100%

## 4.2 The non-literal meaning of that figurative language found in Shawn Mendes' song lyrics

The researcher also explain about the non-literal meaning in every lyric of Illuminate album which contains the elements of figurative languages. The songwriter wants to convey about expression of breakups with very heartrending lyrics an also about the love that he has.

<b>The Lyric</b>	<b>The non-literal meaning</b>
I love it <b>when you go crazy.</b>	The purpose of the song's lyrics is that the songwriter likes his girlfriend a lot when his girlfriend does things that are out of bounds. These lyrics mean that Shawn Mendes loves his girlfriend for who she is. It doesn't matter what people think about his girlfriend.
You keep <b>tearing me apart.</b>	The purpose of the song's lyrics is that his girlfriend continues to hurt the songwriter. Even though the songwriter has apologized and begged forgiveness to his girlfriend. These lyrics mean that even though his girlfriend had no intention of hurting Shawn, it still broke Shawn and made Shawn very unhappy.
She's not even <b>drop-dead gorgeous.</b>	The purpose of the song's lyrics is that she is not arrogant with the beauty she has. This lyric means that he did not expect that even though his girlfriend has a perfect heart and physical beauty, she is never proud of what she has.

## 4.3 The contribution of Shawn Mendes' song lyrics to poetry teaching.

The researcher found the contribution of Shawn Mendes' song lyrics to poetry teaching. The song in the Illuminate album can be used for learning poetry as a fun learning medium and the language that is easily understood by the students. The use of songs in poetry learning provides good vibes for students and lecturers. Students are more enthusiastic when learning poetry, no

longer feel bored when learning poetry which is usually only filled with books or novels that have many pages. The lecturer is also more excited when all the students are enthusiastic about learning fun poetry. A very good impact when the song is used as an example in learning poetry.

## 5. Discussion

The writer also found that the use of simile type of figurative language was also widely used by the songwriters. According to the author, Shawn uses similes to create a listener's imagination as well as an explanation of the image by comparing an object or other object, and also describes the idea and also what Shawn feels.

Second, researcher found non-literal meaning in Shawn Mendes' song on the *Illuminate* album. When a listener is able to understand a speaker's idea, it means that he can understand its meaning, so that the interaction between them runs smoothly. (Sihombing et al., 2015).

In the sense that the meaning of a word has a very important role in communication. That is why the researcher explains the non-literal meaning in each song's lyrics which contains elements of figurative language. In the album itself, most of the songs are expressions of breakups with very heartrending lyrics. Like the songs "Three empty words" and "Don't be a fool" which makes you feel it when you break up with your lover. The song "Three empty words" and "Don't be a fool", there are convey many interesting meaning the Shawn Mendes through this *Illuminate* album.

Starting from the song "There's nothing holding me back" Which tells about someone who is very infatuated with his lover because his girlfriend can make him feel like someone newer and freer. That someone says that his feelings are made to tremble when invited by his lover to do all the madness that defies all his taboos and does embarrassing things. Someone is very sure that when they are together under no matter how bad they are, they will still be fine.

The next song is "Mercy" which tells of someone who is frustrated by their love relationship. When he likes a girl and hopes that their relationship can continue, but unfortunately that girl breaks his heart.

"Treat you better" is a song about a person who tells his friends that his current girlfriend is not a good boyfriend. He tries to convince her that he can treat herself better than her current ex-boyfriend.

"Don't be a fool" is about a person who is getting famous, he has a girlfriend but his girlfriend can't give him the love, support, and all the aspects that come with being in a relationship. So he thought the best way was for them to break up and

live normally. She thinks she can find someone who can treat her better and give her emotional and physical support when she starts traveling.

Finally, the researcher found the contribution of the Shawn Mendes album *Illuminate*'s song in the teaching of poetry that can be used when poetry learning is in progress because it contains a lot of figurative language and language that is easy to understand so that it increases students' enthusiasm in analyzing the task of a figurative language in a song. However, of course, this does not mean that lecturers can leave the pre-existing poetry handbook, the Shawn Mendes song *Illuminate* album is just a distraction or assignment and an example in creative and interesting learning media for students.

The use of songs in poetry learning provides good vibes for students and lecturers. Students are more enthusiastic when learning poetry, no longer feel bored when learning poetry which is usually only filled with books or novels that have many pages. The lecturer is also more excited when all the students are enthusiastic about learning fun poetry. A very good impact when the song is used as an example in learning poetry.

The use of figurative language is necessary because song lyrics will be very interesting if they have many non-literal meanings. So listeners can enjoy the meaning conveyed by the songwriter. Most of the lyrics of this song contain expressions of heartbreak with heartbreaking lyrics, so this song is perfect for someone who feels heartbroken. Not only that, but this song also contains a lot of meaning that Shawn is trying to convey. This song is also very suitable for analysis.

This song also really represents the love life of a teenager now when he is breaking up with his lover. Many lessons can be taken from the songs included in this *Illuminate* album. About how we have to treat our girlfriends, or about how a relationship can work well when there is good communication too, and about how we have to rise from the heartbreak we experience and still make it a very important life lesson.

After looking at the research results, the researchers concluded that there are several types of figurative language used by Shawn Mendes in the *Illuminate* Album. Figurative language used to express how he feels when he has a broken heart. The researchers also found non-literal meaning in the album itself, the non-literal meaning of this album is that the songwriter wants to convey expressions of breakups with very heartrending lyrics. This *Illuminate* album can also be used as a creative and innovative Poetry learning medium so that it doesn't get boring in the learning process, and also using songs as a media to poetry teaching has a very positive impact to students.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the researcher found the following:

There are many kinds of figurative language in the lyrics of the Shawn Mendes song on the *Illuminate* album. In fifteen songs there are 58 lyrics that contain figurative language, as mentioned in table 4.2 Types of figurative language. The dominant type of this album is Hyperbole.

The non-literal meaning of this album is that the songwriter wants to convey expressions of breakups with very heartrending lyrics. This song also really represents the love life of a teenager now when he is breaking up with his lover. Many lessons can be taken from the songs included in this *Illuminate* album. About how we have to treat our girlfriends, or about how a relationship can work well when there is good communication too, and about how we have to rise from the heartbreak we experience and still make it a very important life lesson.

The contribution of the song lyrics in teaching poetry is the use of creative and attractive media for the teacher or lecturer for learning poetry so that students do not get bored in doing the assignments given by the lecturer or teacher. The use of songs in poetry learning provides good vibes for students and lecturers. Students are more enthusiastic when learning poetry, no longer feel bored when learning poetry which is usually only filled with books or novels that have many pages. The lecturer is also more excited when all the students are enthusiastic about learning fun poetry. a very good impact when the song is used as an example in learning poetry.

## Suggestions

Based on the research results, the researcher provides several suggestions to consider in studying figurative language. The suggestions are follows:

For teachers and lecturers. Teachers and lecturers are expected to be able to use the songs in this album as a creative and interesting medium for learning poetry. So that students will not feel bored with learning poetry which usually only uses handbooks or novels.

For students. Students are expected to understand figurative language more easily, help them grasp meanings and messages, and can increase students' reading interest in learning poetry.

For readers. I hope this article is useful for readers. This paper can serve as a reference for anyone who has had similar research on figurative language.

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