

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN ADELE’S SONG LYRICS  
“EASY ON ME”: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

**A THESIS BY**

**Indah Safitri  
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**English Education Study Program  
Language and Arts Education Department**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY  
2023**

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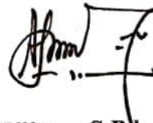
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**This thesis was defended by the writer in final program examination and was approved  
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**Date : June 26, 2023**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned

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Certified that the thesis titled 'Figurative Language Used in Adele's Song Lyrics "Easy on me": A Discourse Analysis' is my work and that I did not plagiarize or quote inappropriately contrary to the ethics and rules recommended by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I should be brought before the court if it is discovered that I have plagiarized this work.

Indralaya, June 2023

The Undersigned



Indah Safitri

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## DEDICATIONS AND MOTTOS

*I dedicate this thesis to my parents, especially my mother, who has always encouraged and motivated me not to give up on completing this study.*

*To my mother and my father*

*Yusmi Yuarsa & Leo Brata*

“Allah does not put an obligation on anyone beyond this capacity”

Quran: Surah Baqarah | Verse 286

“Life is suffering. It is hard. The world is cursed. But still, you find reasons to keep living.”

Princess Mononoke (1997)

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Indralaya, June 2023

The writer



Indah Safitri

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- Appendix D Thesis Exam Approval

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN ADELE'S SONG LYRICS "EASY ON ME": A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

Figurative language is a type of language used to convey information beyond its literal meaning. The utilization of figurative language expression can be found in the song lyrics. The object of this study was the song lyrics Easy on Me by Adele. This study aimed to find out figurative languages types, the meanings of figurative language, and the implications of this study for student's reading literacy. This study applied a descriptive research approach with documents as the analysis instrument. This study combed Easy on Me for song lyrics and scripts to collect data. Based on Perrine's (1969) categorization of figurative language, the results found that nine categories of figurative language were identified. There are 4 instances of personification (18.2%), 1 instance of metaphor (4.5%), 2 instances of hyperbole (9.1%), 2 instances of litotes (9.2%), 1 instance of paradox (4.5%), 1 instance of allusion (4.5%), one instance of ellipsis (4.5%), 2 instances of metonymy (9.1%), and 8 instances of the symbol (36.4%). The use of figurative language expressions in Easy on Me explicitly gives the emotions, fear, and devastation due to divorce and surrender. Also, some of the lyrics are interpreted in terms of the beauty and calm of nature. The implications of this study for students' reading literacy, it is evident that the research holds significant educational value, enhancing students' comprehension of the meaning of English songs. Within this study, figurative language serves as a powerful mode of self-expression, particularly through the medium of songs. As literary works, songs have the ability to evoke deep emotions and offer a gratifying experience to listeners. However, true satisfaction can only be achieved when listeners fully grasp the songwriter's intended message.

*Keywords: figurative language, song lyrics, Adele, Easy on Me, discourse analysis, reading literacy.*

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents (1) background of study, (2) problems of study, (3) objectives of study, and (4) significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Language is a highly crucial aspect of daily existence. People around the world use it to communicate in order to share ideas and objectives. They will attempt to comprehend what others are saying if they speak a language different from their own. People must understand the functions of the language or words of others, whether spoken or written in order to comprehend the meaning. In this age of globalization, English is widely spoken. People from other countries utilize worldwide to share their thought and ideas. English language is studied worldwide because it is acknowledged as a passport, a means to a better career, a higher wage, more excellent knowledge, and communication (Thirumalai, 2002). Numerous media disseminate English-language knowledge, messages, or information in spoken or written formats, like television, song, music, radio, etc., or magazines, newspapers, journals, textbooks, etc. This is the why, in general, some individuals must acquire English, despite the general belief that English is a difficult language to learn. It is due to their need for more stimulation. Due to a dearth of stimulation, there may be obstacles to overcome. With the motivation to study, it is easier to learn English effectively. This viewpoint is congruent with Fitriati & Jannah (2016) assertion that student lack the desire to learn English, particularly speaking since they perceive their English to be poor, English to be tedious, and speaking English to be difficult. Due to their dislike for the language, they lacked the self-assurance necessary to speak English in presence of the class.

However, in this day of globalization, people can effectively learn English through various methods or sources. One strategy to help English learners is to introduce them to music that the majority of them like listening to nowadays. They enjoy in listening to their favored songs every day. The songs are capable of

helping students improve their listening and pronunciation skills. Consequently, encourage students to improve their communication skills. Millington asserts (as reported by Murphey, 1992) that songs are capable of helping students of language enhance their listening and speaking skills, vocabulary, sentence structure, and usage. Shen (2009) considers songs to be intelligible, pleasant, genuine, with plenty of proper language. Therefore, studying English through song is a comfortable language, particularly for English.

In English, literal and figurative meanings are distinguished (Börjesson, 2011). Literal language describes the actual context, which requires no further interpretation. However, figurative meaning refers to the implied meaning in words and paragraphs. Understanding the meaning of song's lyrics requires acknowledging the incorporation in works of literature, specifically by identifying the figurative language used in the song. According to Cuddon, J (2013), figurative language is a language that employs figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and alliteration. In addition, Abrams et al., (2009) provides keywords for comprehending figurative language, which is comprehending the true significance of words to create a particular meaning or effect. Figurative language is used for enhancing the narrative effect of the song by comparing or identifying one thing with another whose meaning or non-literal connotation is recognizable to the readers. In summary, the figurative sense refers to the implicit (non-literal) meaning in words and paragraphs. Therefore, the meaning cannot be taken literally.

Effective metaphors, exciting phrase, written well structures, poetry, and attractive rhythm are a few examples of figurative language characteristic. By displaying inventive artistic expression, the researcher hopes to convey profound interpretation and meaning, but this is inherent to the audience. Written works is used to characterize written works, but meaningful language distinguishes literature, as Meyer (1997) points out. Understanding the speech pattern, utterance, and message included inside literature helps readers learn and comprehend it (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018). It shows that the researcher wants the readers to feel the meaning and comprehend it. Since the researcher typically

keeps the intended meaning from the reader, it may be difficult for readers to understand the statements' intentions. What is usually spoken or written may not consistently be the same as what is being tried to express, especially when writing with specific diction and imagery. For instance, *Youth must think outside the box*. The phrase "outside the box" could be interpreted directly to describe something ridiculous. On the other hand, the preceding phrase refers to the capacity for creative thought. Instead of simply stating that youth must act artistically, the argument is enhanced by the use of figurative language and the unexpected.

Since its meaning transforms from literal to figurative, figurative language is occasionally referred to as metaphorical language or simply metaphor (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963). It may be a reiteration repetition, arrangement or deletion of words with lexical meaning or a phrase with a special meaning unrelated to the literal meaning of the word. Figurative language enhances the meaning of words, embellishes them, and emphasizes their meaning. Because of this, figurative language is deeply ingrained in traditions, conduct, and worldview. According to scholars and experts, various forms of figurative language are categorized differently. Nevertheless, four categories of figurative language are typically found in literary works and textbooks for English language study. These are simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Figurative language is closely associated with works of literature such as novels, poems, short stories, folk tales, scripts, and other prose forms. Therefore, an essential created item like song lyrics may contain figurative language. A song is a literary work example. Listening to music is an exciting experience; however, listeners will be dissatisfied if they do not comprehend the songwriter's intended message. Kimball (2006) shows that people recognize music for what it is whenever they hear it. Using language, tune, harmony, and rhythm songwriters construct visual images. The complete sense of poetry and melodic perception are combined to produce a distinctive, one-of-a-kind representation of the song in words and sound. As a result, when people hear these visuals, they develop mental images and participate in sentiments taste, smell, and spiritual senses.

In general, the more types of figurative language used in a poem, the more interesting the poem will be. For the most part, song lyrics and poetry are similar in terms of applied language styles. There are many ways to express our feelings through language, such as writing songs. The song is one of the media used to express feelings sung by the human voice; it is interesting to be analyzed because the song's lyrics contain a variety of words types. Some lyrics relate to poetry in that they use figurative language in some sentences. In a song, it can also get knowledge by interpreting the languages in the lyric of song while listening and exploring the most profound meaning of those lyrics. Figurative language analysis in song lyrics is essential for several reasons. In the beginning, it is better to sing a song while comprehending the lexical and contextual meanings of the lyrics than sing without this knowledge. Secondly, examining figurative language provides additional practice in lexical and contextual meaning comprehending.

Songwriters and authors used figurative language to communicate ideas, concepts, intensions, and feelings. The expressive message of a song can engage and fascinate listeners. Alternately declared, the song can be used as a feature to effectively convey feelings and enable listeners to interpret the message through the lyrics. Typically, song lyrics consist of a brief narrative carefully crafted to convey a captivating and artistic meaning. In the recent era, many amazing singers have created emotional songs. Adele is one of them. Adele is one of the most famous singers in the world. Adele released an album titled "30" in 2021. "Easy on Me" is one of the most popular songs on this album. This album was released during the COVID-19 pandemic. The song has received many extraordinary awards, achievements, and ratings.

The people are unfamiliar with the existence of figurative language in song lyrics, causing them to misunderstanding song lyrics. People sometimes sing a song without understanding the meaning of the lyrics, either because of the song's popularity or because it has a pleasant tune. To interpret a song, one must therefore comprehend figurative language as a linguistic feature. In literature, linguistics, and language study, the significance of understanding and recognizing figurative language in literary works is expected and predictable. People who are

looking for the meaning of figurative language in songs will be cautions when singing and will distinguish between good and negative lyrics. Therefore, the researcher considers how ironic it is that individuals are unable to comprehend the content of songs with figurative language characteristics, given that studying English purpose in Indonesia is to communicate in the famous community.

Some individuals are generally difficult to understand emotionally. According to Hude (2006) spontaneous emotional reactions are frequently difficult to manage or hide. As a consequence of emotional events or stimuli, physiological appearance, including facial expressions, attitudes, and behavior, are manifested as emotional expressions. There are numerous methods through which people convey their ideas to others so that they might comprehend and understand its significance. Song is one of the methods that can be used. A self-expression reveals a thought, feeling, or expressions; a self-expressions is not a type of statement; a self-expressions may be involuntary, voluntary, or both voluntary and willed; self-expression when expressive (Green, 2013). Many people express their thoughts and emotions via song. A song is a vocal or instrumental performance of a singer or verbal composition. These are numerous messages contained within a song. Through music, people can express their voice to a large audience, allowing others to understand their emotions and ideas. These are currently many songs that can communicate our emotions, including songs with love, social, and political themes. At this time, individuals can communicate through song. It means that the song can be used to convey thought and emotion so that the audience what the composer intends. From the description above, the researcher would like to imply that the figurative language in the song makes it easy for people to show their emotional expressions whether they are sad, happy, or angry, even based on their age.

Figurative expressions, semiotics or symbols, lyrical content, and their combination were chosen as the primary data source for the current study, as all of these elements function as "one-container" engaging discourse. The present study was conducted using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, which was regarded to be the most applicable method because the data provided on song



lyrics meets all the criteria for text in Fairclough's CDA, which includes speech, writings, images, and the combination of these three elements (Hassen, 2015). Fairclough's CDA has also been deemed the most appropriate method for investigating the appropriateness of the song lyric concerning the norms and values of the students' society, as well as how language could stimulate changes in society, particularly among adolescents, as a means of changing behavior and gaining power.

In previous study, many studies were conducted. First, Hakim (2018) implemented a study titled "The analysis of figurative language in lyrics of "Album 21" by Adele." The analysis showed 35 (43.75%) figurative sources in hyperbole. Personification is inferior to hyperbole. Personification ranks second among all figurative language in the lyrics of Adele's "Album 21" with 12 seeds (15%). As many as 10 seeds for synecdoche (12.55), 8 seeds for repetition (10%), 4 seeds oxymoron (5%), three seeds for simile and litotes (3.75%), 2 seeds metaphor and ellipsis (2.5%), and 1 seed for zeugma (1.25%). Another study, Mukhtar (2019) study titled "Figurative languages Used in Guns N' Roses' Songs and its Contribution to English Learning at Senior High School." The study suggests that 35 expressions from 10 types of figurative languages. They are 6 symbols, 6 metonymies, 4 hyperboles, 7 repetitions, 1 simile, 3 metaphors, 1 personification, 5 imageries, 1 synecdoche, and 1 allusion. Moreover, the last new study finished by Nabila & Petrus (2022) is entitled "Figurative language Found in Taylor Swift's Song Lyrics in the Album Folklore." The result of the study found 17 types of figurative language: metaphor, personification, simile, allegory, hyperbole, irony, oxymoron, paronomasia, synecdoche, symbol, allusion, onomatopoeia, euphemism, gradation, metonymy, and paradox. Metaphor was the most frequent sort of figurative language among those discovered.

Based on the previous background, the researcher would like to find the various types of figurative language and identify the meanings through research titled "Figurative Language Used in Adele's Song Lyric "Easy on Me": A Discourse Analysis." The researcher chose this issue because so many of Adele's songs use figurative language and because researcher believes many people are

still unfamiliar with the songs' meaning. By examining the form and meaning of figurative language, it is possible to comprehend the meaning of entire songs as well as the goal of the songwriter.

### **1.2 The Problem of the Study**

- a) What figurative languages are used in the song lyrics of Adele's album "Easy on Me"?
- b) What are the meanings of figurative language used in the lyrics of Adele's album "Easy on Me"?
- c) What are the implications of this study for students' reading literacy?

### **1.3 The Objective of the Study**

- a) To find out figurative languages used in the song lyrics of Adele's album "Easy on Me".
- b) To find out the meaning of figurative language used in the song of Adele's album "Easy on Me".
- c) To find out the implications of this study for students' reading literacy.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study can be considered in two ways, theoretically and practically.

Theoretical

1. The results of this study are expected to contribute positively to the study of figurative language, especially in analyzing the use of figurative language in song lyrics.
2. As a reference to the people having the same interest in studying the figurative language.
3. This study will inspire those who would like to do similar research along with the progress of science.

## Practical

1. For those who love songs, a figurative language is one way to understand its function.
2. This research is expected to give constructive feedback to the student of English, particularly those who are much involved in analyzing figurative language.

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