

## AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN DISNEY MOVIE SONGS

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### ABSTRACT

*The aimed of this study was to analyze the figurative language used in the Disney movie songs. The data were collected from the internet with five song titles selected from different Disney movies including; Lead the Way (Raya and the Last Dragon), Carried Me With You (Onward), Nobody Like U (Turning Red), Loyal Brave, and True (Mulan), and Part of Your World (The Little Mermaid). By utilizing descriptive qualitative as the research method, the researcher analyzed the interpretation of five types of figurative language including: metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and hyperbole. The findings in this study through analyzed the five songs indicated that there are 43 figurative languages, consists of 13 metaphors, 2 similes, 4 personifications, 3 ironies, and 21 hyperboles. It can be concluded that hyperbole was the dominant type of figurative in Disney song lyrics. Therefore, this study may help readers, especially for teachers and students in understand the analysis of figurative language theory songs.*

**Keywords:** *figurative language, Disney theme songs, metaphor, simile, personification, irony, hyperbole*

### INTRODUCTION

Literature is any written or oral work that is related to human life. In a literary work, the writer may express their entire imagination through ideas, experiences, recommendations, and feelings. According to Mays (2018), writers may bring readers' or listeners' sentiments more alive and make them feel an experience that the writer also believes is distinct from literary works with other writings. Berthoud (2020) states that literary works are like time machines, so that readers and listeners can explore the writer's ideas from hundreds of years ago. They also believe that literature may provide us with a

view on the world and an opportunity to learn culture, way of thinking, and life habits. There are some types of literary works that we can easily find in our daily lives, such as fiction and non-fiction stories, poetry, plays, folklore, and songs. Typically, the stories are utilized as inspiration or are purposefully made for film, like the Walt Disney Company did.

The Walt Disney Company, widely recognized as Disney, is the world's largest entertainment and media company. In the history of animated movie production, Disney is the most successful company in the world. There are many songs used for the

soundtrack in every Disney movies. The researcher took songs from different five Disney movies, including “Lead the Way” from *Raya and the Last Dragon*, “Carried Me With You” from *Onward*, “Nobody Like U” from *Turning Red*, “Loyal Barve and True” from *Mulan*, and “Part of Your World” from *The Little Mermaid*. The researcher selected these songs because the lyrics reflect moral values that were considered appropriate and relevant to the students’ lives.

As previously mentioned, a song can be considered as one of the types of literary works. According to Tracy et. al (2021), song is one types of literary work that makes extensive use of figurative language. They also state that a song can be used as a communication media, and it conveys a message through lyrics. Songs with appropriate instruments and lyrics can bring the listener's mind and imagination into the imaginary world created by the songwriter. In line with that, figurative language is typically used in songs to raise the listeners’ emotion, to build their mental images, and bring them into the song. (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018).

The benefits of the song are not only to entertain the listener, but also can provide motivation, advice and become as a media in learning. Apsari (2012) argue that using

songs in the teaching and learning process can make students tend to be more active. In Indonesia, songs have long been as a media in learning for junior and senior high school students. It is written in the syllabus on *Kompetensi Dasar (KD)* 3.11 and 4.11 for grade 9 and KD 3.7 and 4.7 for grade 12. In this indicator, students are asked to capture the meaning and convey the moral message contained the song lyrics. The students would be given an understanding of figurative language to achieve the indicators.

Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions that convey information to a reader or listener but deviate from accurately portraying the literal meaning. Siahaan (2018) argue that figurative language is the use of words in some other way than in their literal meaning. In addition, according to Nurcitrawati et al. (2019), figurative language is described as a means of expressing something beyond the literal definition of the words. This form of language often conveys implicit meanings, requiring interpretation to capture the intended message. The use of figurative language in a sentence has its own impact since it creates distinctive effects and feelings, which may be seen in pieces of writing and speech, such as song lyrics (Tracy et al. 2021).

The songwriter provides a unique color or impression to the listener by using figurative language in song lyrics. Yunanda et. al (2021) argue that figurative language is required in song lyrics so that songwriters may express messages that demonstrate the beauty and uniqueness of the song to those who hear or read it. However, figurative language in song lyrics might lead to misunderstandings. Furthermore, students can sometimes literally interpret figurative language terms or sentences. Because of this misunderstanding, the meaning or message of the song may not be correctly delivered to the listeners. In line with that, this study intended to analyze the meaning of the figurative language used in Disney movie songs.

Several researchers have mentioned the types of figurative language. Rahmani (2020) outlined various types of figurative language according to their purposes, including hyperbole, personification, metaphor, simile, paradox, assonance, consonance, symbol, idiom, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and repetition. Furthermore, Dewi et. al (2020) also mentioned the types of figurative language such as hyperbole, irony, paradox, personification, repetition, and simile. In this study, the researcher focused on analyzing the five types of figurative language found in song lyrics,

including metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and hyperbole. Metaphor is the device that is usually used in poetry, novels, movies, books and song lyrics to make a comparison between two things. (Jati, 2020). Meanwhile, a simile involves comparing two things using a connective, typically like, as, than, or a verb like resembles, to illustrate their similarity (Siahaan, 2018). Personification is characterized as assigning personal qualities or characteristics to non-living objects or abstract concepts, particularly as a rhetorical figure (Siahaan, 2018). Irony as a type of figurative language which described something with the opposite meaning by giving a little satire (Dewi et. al, 2020). Hyperbole is a figure of speech characterized by exaggeration and the amplification of points beyond factual representation (Burgers et al., 2019).

A number of studies have analyzed the figurative language in the Disney songs movie. A study from Nurcitawati et al., (2019) described the types of figurative language, their functions, and the implied meanings contained in the lyrics of Disney songs from Frozen and Tangled. The result from the study showed there were five types of figurative language including idiom, hyperbole, personification, simile, and alliteration. Furthermore, a study from Nursolihat and Kareviati (2020), whose

aimed to identify the figurative languages found in the lyrics of the song “A Whole New World” from the movie ‘Aladdin’. The findings indicated that the song contained some figurative languages, including alliteration, simile, personification, metaphor, and hyperbole. The study found that metaphor was the dominant figurative language in the song “A Whole New World.” Another study from Tracy et. al (2021), whose intended to depict the figurative language of Speechless Song by Naomi Scott from live-action Disney movie ‘Aladdin’ and the meaning lies behind it. The results revealed that there were three types of figurative language used in that song, namely: metaphor, hyperbole and personification. They also discovered that the song conveys a message related to feminism or the empowerment of women.

Although the previous studies as mentioned above have analyzed the figurative language in Disney movie songs, this present study had differences in terms of the songs and the movies. The researcher took songs from different five Disney movies, including “*Lead the Way*” from *Raya and the Last Dragon*, “*Carried Me With You*” from *Onward*, “*Nobody Like U*” from *Turning Red*, “*Loyal Brave and True*” from *Mulan*, and “*Part of Your World*” from *The Little Mermaid*. Moreover, this study

not only analyzed the figurative languages in Disney movie songs, but also designed and created an infographic as the result of the analysis to make students and teachers understand the figurative language better.

## **METHOD**

Descriptive qualitative research design was employed to analyze the figurative language in this study. According to Taylor et .al (2016), qualitative research generates descriptive data derived from written or spoken language and observable behavior. In addition, Johnson and Christensen (2004) defined qualitative research as research that use documents, photos, or video as the data. Nassaji (2015) stated that the descriptive research aimed to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Because the researcher used documents as the data and explained the figurative language interpretation in Disney movies song lyrics, this method was appropriate for this study.

The sources of data in this study were taken from song lyrics from different five Disney movie songs. The song lyrics were downloaded by the researcher via the internet which can be accessed by the researcher freely. The following table was created to show the song titles from Disney movies used in this study:

**Table 1. The Song Titles from Disney**

**Movies**

Song Titles	Movie Titles	Duration
Lead The Way	Raya and the Last Dragon	3 minutes 48 seconds
Carried Me With You	Onward	3 minutes 37 seconds
Nobody Like U	Turning Red	2 minutes 55 seconds
Loyal Brave and True	Mulan	2 minutes 49 seconds
Part of Your World	The Little Mermaid	3 minutes 35 seconds

To analyze the data, the researcher used some steps. First, the researcher identified the types of figurative language based on the theory. After that, the researcher focused to find out the meaning by analyzing the contextual meaning of the lyrics. The last step were reported the data descriptively and made the conclusion.

**DISCUSSION**

There are five songs used from different Disney movie songs in this study. The researcher displayed the findings based on the title of each song. The results of analysis are presented as follows:

**“Lead The Way” from Raya and The Last Dragon movie**

In this song, the researcher found 13 figurative languages, which consist of 6 metaphors, 1 simile, 2 personifications, 0 irony, and 4 hyperboles. The dominant

figurative language found in this song was metaphor which consists of 6 lines. The more detailed explanation of each figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics found in this song can be seen as follows:

**Metaphor:**

*“We have a choice to build or destroy To fight or to come together”*

In these two sentences, the words "build" and "come together" and the words "destroy" and "fight" have the same meaning even though they are literally different. In these two sentences, the audiences are given an illustration that the people of Kundra can choose between making peace to build a better Kundra or going to war and destroying Kundra.

*“Love is a bridge”*

The meaning of love in this sentence is a tool to unite people who are not getting along. The meaning of "Love" is related to the meaning of "bridge" which means connecting two things. The word "love" connects people who are at war, while "bridge" connects two places.

*“Trust is a gift”*

We can understand "trust" as something that given to someone special. It has something in common with the meaning of a gift given to a special person and a special occasion.

*“There's an energy in the water”*

This line tells us about something strong

there is in the water. But the truth is when someone look at the water that the reflection will appear. This line compares about the reflection of the body with an energy. *"There is magic deep in our heart"* Like in the previous line, this line compares between "magic" and the spirit that we have.

*"Learn from life this time"  
We can start brand new"*

The phrase "brand new" is a synonym form of new life. We can see it from the previous sentence "This time".

#### **Simile:**

*"I see you as myself"*

There is a comparison between "me" and "you" personally. In addition, the used word "as" in comparing two people can be categorized as a simile.

#### **Personification:**

*"There's a legacy that we honor"*

In this sentence, the audience is presented with an image of a legacy that we deserve to respect like a person. For this reason, the sentence "a legacy that we honor" gives us an image of an honorable object.

*"Put the past behind"*

This sentence gives the impression that the "past" is a tangible object and can be touched so we can put it behind.

#### **Hyperbole:**

*"When we bring the light to the dark"*

This sentence does not really mean to illuminate a dark place, but the word "light" means truth or belief, and "dark" means a state of evil or doubt.

*"Can never tear us apart"*

This sentence gives the impression of exaggeration. The real meaning conveyed is that nothing will separate us if we are together and trust each other.

*"We become stronger than ever"*

*When we just trust"*

These lines give the impression that trust can strengthen us. The exaggeration in this sentence

is contained in the word "just trust". Because to be strong "trust" must exist between us, but it is not the only thing that must exist.

*"When you're broken"*

The word "broken" in the sentence gives an exaggerated effect. The real meaning conveyed is the state of someone who is sad and disappointed.

#### **"Carried Me With You" from Onward movie**

In this song, the researcher found 9 figurative languages which consists of 2 metaphors, 1 simile, 1 personification, 0 irony, and 5 hyperbole. The dominant type of figurative language in this song was

hyperbole, which consists of 5 lines. The more detailed explanation of each figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics found in this song can be seen as follows:

**Metaphor:**

*"You're the soul who understands"*

In this sentence, the word "soul" is an intangible object different from the human condition which has a form. But the word "you" as a human means can understand a situation like "soul".

*"The scars that made me who I am"*

Still, in the same context, this sentence describes someone who has something in common with "scars". Sometimes someone who wants us to change for the better gives us an uncomfortable feeling like what "scars" gives.

**Simile:**

*"Like a lighthouse in a storm  
You were always guiding me"*

By using the word "like" which is characteristic of similes, this sentence describes someone who always helps us in any situation. Like a lighthouse that helps the skipper to determine direction and warn of dangerous places.

**Personification:**

*"Through the drifting sands of time"*

The phrase "the drifting sands" gives the impression that "sand" can move like a

human, which is impossible.

**Hyperbole:**

*"'Cause you carried me with you  
From the highest of the peaks  
To the darkness of the blue"*

In this sentences, "the highest of the peak" and "the darkness of the blue" are exaggerated forms of the happiest and the saddest state.

*"And when my head was in the clouds"*

The sentence "My head was in the clouds" is an exaggerated form of a bad situation. In this sentence, the audience is presented with a picture of a very chaotic state of mind.

*"You picked my heart up off the ground"*

This sentence has an exaggerated impression because it gives an image to the audience of someone who brought the subject out of their difficult time figuratively as if lifting or picking up a heart that lying on the ground.

*"We know how to brave the stormy weather"*

The word "stormy weather" is an exaggerated form of someone's downtime. Stormy weather that we know is quite a chaotic situation with strong winds accompanied by lightning and heavy rain, just like the human condition that is bad and full of problems.

*"And we're never giving up without a fight"*

This sentence describes an effort in the word "fight". It gives an exaggerated

impression of a situation that is faced without giving up and is still faced even though it feels very difficult and full of risks.

### **“Nobody Like U” from Turning Red movie**

The researcher found 6 figurative languages from this song, which consists of 2 metaphors, 0 simile, 0 personification, 0 irony, and 4 hyperboles. The dominant type of figurative language in this song was hyperbole. The more detailed explanation of each figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics found in this song can be seen as follows:

#### **Metaphor:**

*“Let’s call it what it is, it’s a masterpiece”*

The word “it” refers to their friendly relationship. While the word “*masterpiece*” describes the friendship that they build is very valuable.

*“Tonight is the place to be”*

There is a similarity in character between “tonight” and “place”. Both are statements for something to happen.

#### **Hyperbole:**

*“But they don’t turn my tummy the way you do”*

This sentence describes the closeness of a friend who is very close to doing things that no one else does.

*“You’re never not on my mind, oh my, oh my”*

This sentence carried the impression of being exaggerated because he always thought of his best friend. *“I’m never not by your side, your side, your side”*

Like the previous sentence, this sentence gives the impression that he is always there for his best friend by exaggerating his existence.

*“I’m never gon’ let you cry, oh cry, don’t cry”*

This sentence gives the impression that he always takes care of his best friend's feelings and will not let his best friend be sad.

### **“Loyal Brave and True” from Mulan movie**

The researcher found this song contains 8 figurative languages with 3 metaphors, 0 simile, 1 personification, 1 irony, and 3 hyperboles. The dominant figurative languages in this song were metaphor and hyperbole in each of the 3 lines. The more detailed explanation of each figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics found in this song can be seen as follows:

#### **Metaphor:**

*“I am a tiger’s fool”*

This sentence shows us subject thinks of himself as a “*tiger’s fool*”. It means someone

who is brave but acts stupid.  
“Cold is the morning”

In this sentence, “cold” and “morning” have the same situation. As we know that every morning the temperature will feel colder.

“Warm is the dream”

The word “Warm” is a state that makes the heart condition happy. It's the same as a “dream” that just imagining it can make us happy.

#### **Personification:**

“Chasing the answers”

This sentence looks like an answer is moving. So, we have to catch it. For this reason, this sentence is included in personification.

#### **Irony:**

“The kindest of whispers are cruel”

In the movie, Mulan as the main character, gets a whisper or an invitation from a witch to ally with her opponent, but this is only a trap for Mulan from the enemy. As this sentence describes, sweet whispering is a cruel thing.

#### **Hyperbole:**

“Over my shoulder I see a clearer view”

In this line, there is an element of exaggeration. To get a clearer view, we cannot look over someone's shoulder. “Clearer view” here describes a better future.  
“All for my family,

*Reason I'm breathing”*

This sentence contains exaggeration because it gives other people a reason to breathe. As if that person were gone, then he would not breathe.

“Should I ask myself in the water”

When we look into the water, we do see our own reflection in the water. But that does not mean the shadow can speak and answer our questions. There is an element of exaggeration because the subject looks confused to determine what he should do. So, he thought to ask his reflection in the water.

#### **“Part of Your World” in The Little Mermaid movie**

In this song, the researcher found 7 figurative languages which consists of 0 metaphor, 0 simile, 0 personification, 2 irony, and 5 hyperboles. While the dominant type of figurative language in this song was hyperbole with 5 lines. The more detailed explanation of each figurative language and the meaning of the lyrics found in this song can be seen as follows:

#### **Irony:**

“Wouldn't you think I'm the girl  
The girl who has everything?”

This sentence seems to convince the audience that Ariel has everything. It

supported by the previous lyrics that Ariel has all the good stuff. But that doesn't mean Ariel has it all. As we know, Ariel is a mermaid who wants to have legs and live on land. That's what Ariel doesn't have as a mermaid.

*"Looking around here you'd think  
Sure, she's got everything"*

This line explains that Ariel has abundant treasures to convince the audience that Ariel gets everything. But she did not get what she wants. She wants a pair of legs and a life in the sea.

**Hyperbole:**

*"Wouldn't you think my collection's  
complete?"*

Ariel is proud of her complete collection of human goods. Ariel exaggerated as if she had all the items needed.

*"Look at this trove, treasures untold  
How many wonders can one cavern hold?"*

In this sentence, hyperbole is used to describe abundant Ariel's treasure. The phrase *"treasure untold"* means a huge number of treasures until they fill the cave hole.

*"You want thingamabobs?"*

*I've got 20"*

Ariel offers an unnamed item to Flounder, Ariel's fish best friend. Ariel wants to say that she has a lot of similar items by saying that she has 20 of them.

*"Up where they walk, up where they run  
Up where they stay all day in the sun  
Wandering free"*

These sentences explain how Ariel wants to be part of the mainland population. By citing human activities that she cannot do, Ariel exaggerates the freedom and pleasures of living on land.

*"Bright young women, sick of swimming  
Ready to stand"*

Ariel describes how she wants to live on the water in this sentence. This sentence is exaggerated in that it makes us sure about Ariel's desire to live on land by explaining how bored she is of swimming.

After analyzing the figurative language in Disney Movie songs, one of the researchers created an infographic in order to make it easier for students in understanding the figurative language. The following figure shows the infographic:



**Figure 1. Infographic: Types of Figurative Language in Disney Movie Songs**

This study was aimed to analyze figurative language in five different Disney movie songs. Based on the findings, the researcher found that teachers can use modern songs as teaching media. Using modern music as a media in teaching has advantages, especially for learning English. Students become more enthusiastic to study. Music made the classroom atmosphere more comfortable. Furthermore, Students may have fun while simultaneously comprehending the material presented by the teacher.

The data source for this study was five different Disney movie songs. The song was chosen from five Disney movies that were released from 2020 until 2023. The researcher chose the songs deliberately

because the movies had an Asian background, which has a culture that is not much different from Indonesia, and the movies also had messages for the student about family. There are many types of figurative language; however, in this study, the researcher only focused in analyzing the five types of figurative language that students learned, such as metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and hyperbole.

Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things to show similarities. According to Kövecses (2010), metaphor is used to explain one domain in terms of another. Not much different from metaphor, simile also compares two things, but it marked with words “as” and “like” (Syarifah et al., 2020). At first glance, a simile has the same meaning as a metaphor, but a simile and a metaphor have significant differences. As a metaphor is a covered comparison, a simile is the overt one that clearly and precisely explains the object. Different from metaphor and simile, personification was not about the comparison things, it was about giving human attribute like emotions, behavior, and verbs to the inanimate objects. Personification provides emotions ‘an intelligible shape’ by giving them bodies; it makes meaning of emotions by immersing them firmly in the world of the senses (Flannery, 2016). Irony is an expression to

describe a situation and emotion opposite to the listeners' or readers' expectations. In using irony, the writer must lead the readers or listeners to understand and believe in things or circumstances that should have happened. Singh (2012) says that there is a lot of irony in satire. The last type of figurative language that used in this research is hyperbole. Hyperbole is figurative language that used to exaggerate something. According to Altikriti (2016), the basic function of hyperbole is to regulate or modulate a person's state or reaction to an object. In finding the researcher found 43 figurative languages, consists of 13 metaphors, 2 similes, 4 personification, 3 ironies, and 21 hyperboles. The findings described that the most figurative language that found in five Disney movies song was hyperbole.

There are two previous studies have analyzed the figurative language from Disney songs, such as Nurcitawati et al., (2019) and Nursolihat & Kareviati (2020). From these two studies, they believe that music can also be a learning media to learn English and understanding figurative language was important to figure out human feeling. However, the researcher chose newest songs from five different Disney movie including "*Lead the Way*" from Raya and the Last Dragon, "*Carried Me With*

*You*" from Onward, "*Nobody Like U*" from Turning Red, "*Loyal Brave and True*" from Mulan, and "*Part of Your World*" from The Little Mermaid.

## CONCLUSION

The primary goal in this research was to identify the figurative language in five songs from different five Disney movies. Based on the findings, there are five types of figurative language in each of the song lyrics, including metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and hyperbole. From this study, the researcher obtained the results of the metaphors contained in the songs as many as 13, 2 simile, 4 personifications, 3 irony, and 21 hyperbole. As a result, the total of the figurative language obtained in this study were 43 data. It can be concluded that hyperbole was the dominant figurative language in Disney movie songs. From this study, the researchers hope that the findings can be useful for the readers, and also can as a reference for future researcher with similar topic. In addition, using other types of figurative language with various data sources can help the future researcher to find more specific topics, so that data can be identified more deeply.

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