

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the main forms of communication is language. Language is simply a passive element in the learning process but an active participant in the semiotic cycle (Halliday, 2016). The language may represent the explicit and implicit feelings and thoughts (Hariyanto, 2017). It is important for those who communicate through language to understand and recognize clearly what they are discussing in order to have effective communication. Despite the fact that language is used in every communication, it is still possible for the speaker to make an ambiguous statement to the listener. (Robinson, Segal, & Smith, 2015) Stated that sometimes when we say one thing, the other person hears something else, and misunderstandings, frustration, and conflicts ensue because language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates (Hall R. A., 1968). Therefore in this case, meaning is important for the speaker and the listener to create an effective communication.

Communication is so pervasively important in all walks of life that every branch of the social sciences is concerned with it, studies it, and adds to the general fund of knowledge about it (Miller, 1951). Communication is about more than just exchanging information (Robinson, Segal, & Smith, 2015). We can make the person we spoke to feel heard and understood if we pay careful attention to what is being said during the conversation. But all too often, what we try to

communicate gets lost in translation despite our best intentions (Robinson, Segal, & Smith, 2015).

There are several ways to communicate; one of the examples is through song lyrics. Song lyrics are an example of written literary works. Song lyrics are not only the arrangement of words into sentences, but also the representation of the composer's emotion and intention to describe their feelings such as love, struggle, trouble, jealousy, peace, antisocial, feeling etc. (Setyowati, 2008). Song lyrics are poetry, a short poem that be sung in a number of verses set to music ('Ain, 2013) (Arifah, 2016). Song lyrics are quite similar to poetry because most of them are aesthetically written and may contain implicit meaning. This implicit meaning has the ability to express how the song writer is feeling at the time. The song writer may express themselves in a unique and unusual manner. It's almost impossible to understand it literally. It showed that there must be a role of figurative language used in most of them by the song writer.

Linguists have recently focused a lot of attention on figurative language in the study of literature because figurative language has the essence of style and beauty ('Ain, 2013). In addition, Arifah (2016) defined figurative language is part of the semantic which refers to words that express more than one meaning (Meranggi, Santika, & Juniarta, 2021). Figurative language, also known as figure of speech, is a manner of expressing anything different than its literal meaning. There are twelve common types of figurative language, some of them are; personification, metaphor, simile, alliteration, and hyperbole. All these types of figurative

language can be commonly found in several artists' song lyrics, including song lyrics from Album SOS by SZA is no exception.

Solána Imani Rowe, better known as SZA is an African-American singer and songwriter. She started recording music in the early 2010s and has released two studio albums and four extended plays (EP), in total there is 6 albums until 2022. See.SZA.Run become her first extended play in 2012, followed by S in 2013 as her second extended play, Z in 2014 as her third extended play, and Gahdamn! in 2015 as her fourth extended play featuring Donnie Trumpet and Shelley FKA DRAM. Meanwhile her first studio album ever was Ctrl (pronounced "control") in 2017, followed by SOS in 2022 as her second studio album. Most of her songs are in R&B genre. R&B is one of the genres included in the Western music industry. Rhythm & blues (R&B) is most clearly viewed as a broad range of popular music primarily created by and for black Americans (Ripani, 2006). All of her songs are very *earcatching*, has deep meaning, and definitely contain a lot of figurative languages especially in her recent album, SOS. There are twenty-three songs in this album and the duration for each song varies, ranging from 1 to 4 minutes.

SOS album was chosen to be the corpus of this research due to the album spends four straight weeks on top of the Billboard 200 albums chart, having spent the entire holiday season at the pinnacle (Montgomery, 2023). SOS by SZA is also the first R&B album by a woman to spend four weeks on top since As I Am by Alicia Keys and remarkably, it's the first R&B album by a woman to spend four straight weeks at number-one since Janet by Janet Jackson in 1993 (Montgomery, 2023). SOS by SZA has earned 128,000 equivalent album units in

the U.S. in the last week of 2022 according to Luminate (Caulfield, 2023). Moreover, Kill Bill, one of the songs from this album has become the most used sound on TikTok with approximately 975.000 videos making this album the most heard and discussed album in recent times.

In the process of writing this research, several previous researches analyzing the figurative language used in song lyrics from several music industries were found, ranging from Western industry to K-Pop industry. The first previous research is (Figurative Language Analysis In Celine Dion's Song Lyrics *Falling Into You* Album, 2020). This research was conducted by Ardhyanti & Supriyatiningih. Using qualitative descriptive for its method. Ardhyanti & Supriyatiningih chose two songs from *Falling Into You* album; *Fly* and *Falling into You*. They did find that from *Fly* song lyrics there were four metaphors, and one symbolism. Meanwhile, *Falling into You* song lyrics there were two metaphors, one symbolism, two imageries, two similes, and one personification. They also did find that *Fly* told about parents who express the depth of sadness at the loss of their child. While, *Falling into You* told about someone who shows his/her feelings to someone they loved.

The second previous research is (Analysis of Figurative Language in "Easy On Me" Song Lyrics, 2022). This research was conducted by Swarniti. Using qualitative for its method and figurative language from Miller and Greenberg as the theory. Swarniti chose one song entitled *Easy On Me* from the British singer and songwriter, Adele. Swarniti later found that there were four personifications,

three hyperboles, two litotes, one paradox, one allusion, two ellipses, two metonymies, and eight symbols.

The third previous research is (Language Style Used In Blackpink's Song Lyrics "The Album" Records 2020, 2022). This research was conducted by Jannah, Sudirman, & Qomar. Using descriptive qualitative for its method. They chose one album entitled *The Album* from the successful Korean girl group called BLACKPINK. This previous research resulted in thirty-three rhetorical, nine hyperboles, one litotes, one paradox, ten similes, eight metaphors, two metonymy, and two allegories.

The fourth previous research is (Figurative Language In Selected Shawn Mendes Album Song Lyrics, 2020). This research was conducted by Nur Annisa Safira. Using descriptive qualitative for its method and Christopher Russell Reaske's figurative language theory. Safira chose selected Shawn Mendes album song lyrics. Safira later found that there were five different types of figure of speech: metaphor, hyperbole, personification, simile, and repetition. Hyperbole is the most popular figurative language found in selected Shawn Mendes' album song lyrics.

The fifth previous research is (Type and Meaning of Figurative Language of Most Popular Football Anthem Song From English Premier League Club, 2020). This research was conducted by Ihsan Muhamad Shodiq. Using descriptive qualitative for its method and Christopher Russell Reaske's figurative language theory, as well as using Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory. Shodiq chose the lyrics of anthem songs from selected football clubs in the English premier league.

Shodiq later found that there were 6 types of figurative language including metaphor 36,36%, repetition 4.45%, hyperbole 31.81%, simile 9.09%, personification 13.66%, and synecdoche 4.54%. Shodiq also found connotative meaning 59.10%, affective meaning 36.36%, and reflected meaning 4.54%.

The sixth previous research is (Figurative Language Used In Saudi News Headlines Related To Coronavirus (Covid 19), 2021). This research was conducted by Fadi Maher Al-Khasawneh. Using descriptive qualitative for its method and Laurence Perrine's theory of speech figures. Al-Khasawneh chose the news headlines from Saudi Press Agency (SPA) that are related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) published from the period from February 15 to March 31, 2020. Al-Khasawneh later found that there were seven speech figures used in his study including personification, hyperbole, understatement, paradox, synecdoche, apostrophe, and metonymy with Personification was the speech figure that was most frequently applied, whereas metonymy was the least frequent. Each of these speech figures had a specific purpose, such as to deepen meaning, provoke strong emotions, or convey a lot of information in a small amount of time.

The seventh previous research is (Figurative Language in Describing Pain and Lifestyle Impact, 2020). This research was conducted by Stephen J. Disney. Using Lakoff & Johnson (2008) and Brodwin's (1992) definition of metaphor as his research reference. The main role of metaphors in this study is making the unknowable understandable by connecting the former to something familiar or imaginable. Disney chose 2.3 million words of sheer volume that reference to pain from a publicly accessible online website forum, painsupport.co.uk. Disney's

research first explains how individuals express pain and discuss coping with it by using a variety of unique and common metaphors. Disney later found that pain can be thought of as the consequence of a process, like burning, or as the result of an enemy's action, like being stabbed. The individuals usually lines up their depiction of real pain with an imaginary pain.

The eighth previous research is (Broadly reflexive relationships, a special type of hyperbole, and implications for metaphor and metonymy, 2018). This research was conducted by John Barnden. Barnden wrote this as a continuation from his previous research in 2015 and 2017. This article looked into reflexive hyperbole. Barnden later found that reflexive hyperbolic interpretation can help one comprehend that a strong likeness is meant without having to search for or recover a specific similarity, as required by pre-existing metaphor theories. However, it may also be employed in conjunction with conventional metaphorical interpretation to increase the amount of perceived resemblance and/or to draw attention on the target/source likeness itself rather than just the target's message in general. While one may classify the latter as a specific kind of metonymy, the conventional idea of whole-for-part metonymy does not by itself generate reflexive hyperbole regarding part-importance. Such hyperbole and whole-for-part metonymy serve to highlight the many types of part-importance that each involves.

The ninth previous research is (Critical Discourse Analysis of Figurative Language in the Selected Poems by Langston Hughes, 2019). This research was conducted by Snoor Ismael Mahmood and Media Rafiq Majeed. Using

Holmgreen's (2006) definition of metaphor, Charteris-Black's (2011) definition of personification, Beard's (2000) definition of rhetorical question, as well as Fairclough's (1992) model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and Van Dijk's (2001) CDA theory. Mahmood and Majeed chose four selected poems: Mother to Son, Dreams, A Dream Deferred, and Still Here by Langston Hughes. Mahmood and Majeed later found that there were seven speech figures used in selected poems by Langston Hughes including symbolism, simile, metaphor, rhetoric, hyperbole, personification, and repetition.

The tenth previous research is (How to Attract Viewers through Advertisement Slogans? A Case on Figurative in Semantic Study, 2022). This research was conducted by Ridwin Purba, Nguyen Van Thao, Herman, Damaris Rossi Sitohang, and Pham Thi Quynh Trang. Using Kennedy's (1983) theory of figurative language. Purba *et. al* chose 15 English slogan of advertisement from internet, newspaper and television. Purba *et. al* later found that there were four speech figures used including metaphor 33,33%, personification 26,66%, hyperbole 26,66%, and symbol 13,33%.

These previous studies are crucial for the writer's understanding of figurative language as well as for aiding in the search for relevant references for this study. In particular, this research will analyze the figurative language used in selected song lyrics from SOS album by SZA using the theory of figurative language from Knickerbockers & Reninger and Perrine to find out the actual meaning behind the album. The aim of this research is to analyze the kinds of figurative language used

in SOS album. Then, find out the meaning behind the album by examining its implied meaning.

1.2 Research Questions

This research focused on the following questions:

1. What kinds of figurative language are used in selected song lyrics from the SOS album by SZA?
2. How does the figurative language reveal the actual meaning behind the album?

1.3 Research Purpose

This research aims to:

1. Identify the kinds of figurative language based on Knickerbocker & Reninger and Perrine' theory in selected song lyrics from SOS album by SZA.
2. Convey the implicit meaning behind SOS album revealed through implicit meaning theory by Larson.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on analyzing selected song lyrics from an album by SZA entitled SOS using the figurative language theory based on Knickerbocker & Reninger and Perrine, as well as implicit meaning theory by Larson. The album consists of 23 songs. The selected song titles are as follows: Kill Bill, Love

Language, Used (feat. Don Toliver), Gone Girl, Conceited, Special, Far, Open Arms (feat. Travis Scott), Good Days.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This research only focuses on analyzing the selected 9 song lyrics from SOS album by SZA. The selected song lyrics will be adopted from Spotify.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to be useful for those who are interested in the analysis of the figurative language and songs of the previously mentioned singer. This study is meant to increase students' understanding of figurative language in the English Literature Study Programme.

