

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN LINKIN PARK'S SONG LYRICS IN SEEING CHESTER'S SUICIDE IDEATION

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ABSTRACT

A way to understand an author is through an understanding of his works. In this case, Linkin Park has done many albums, but there is one particular year that creates questionable relations. In year 2017, Linkin Park's lead singer died in suicide attempt in the same year the album "One More Light" was released. There might be relations between the ten songs of the album and Chester's suicide act. Therefore, the focus of this study is to understand Chester Bennington's suicide act through his suicide ideation by analyzing Figurative Language in ten of the 2017 released songs by Linkin Park under Semantics study. In which, the writer did the study through library research, qualitative research method, and descriptive approach while doing observation to collect the data. Out of the ten songs analyzed, 56 data of Figurative Language which divided into 12 categories were found. The result amounts show that Figurative Language could uncover many invisible meanings that the author used to describe their feelings, ideas and thoughts. In other hand, through the analysis of Figurative Language, 31 data of the 3 factors of Suicide Ideation were found. This result shows that Chester had a strong suicide Ideation which further leads to his suicide act.

Keywords: Semantics, Figurative Language, Suicide Ideation, Linkin Park, Chester Bennington

ABSTRAK

Salah satu cara untuk mengerti seorang penulis adalah melalui karyanya. Dalam kasus ini ada satu masa dalam karya Linkin Park yang menimbulkan pertanyaan. Pada tahun 2017, penyanyi utama Linkin Park meninggal dalam percobaan bunuh diri di tahun yang sama album "One More Light" dirilis. Disini ada kemungkinan hubungan antara ke-sepuluh lagu dari album tersebut dengan tindakan bunuh diri Chester. Oleh sebab itu, fokus studi ini adalah untuk mengerti tindakan bunuh diri Chester Bennington melalui Suicide Ideation dengan menganalisa bahasa figuratif di ke-sepuluh lagu yang dirilis oleh Linkin Park pada tahun 2017 dibawah studi Semantik. Dimana, penulis melakukannya lewat penelitian pustaka, metode

penelitian kualitatif, dan pendekatan deskriptif selagi melakukan pengamatan untuk mengambil data. Dari ke-sepuluh lagu yang dianalisa, ditemukan 56 data bahasa figuratif yang terbagi menjadi 12 kategori. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa bahasa figuratif dapat menyingkapkan arti yang tersembunyi dimana sang penulis mengungkapkan perasaan, ide, dan pemikirannya. Di sisi lain lewat analisis bahasa figuratif, 31 data dari 3 faktor ideasi bunuh diri ditemukan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Chester memiliki ideasi bunuh diri yang kuat dan yang akhirnya menuju pada tindakan bunuh dirinya.

Kata Kunci: Semantik, Bahasa Figuratif, Ideasi Bunuh Diri, Linkin Park, Chester Bennington

A. INTRODUCTION

Artists create song lyrics with their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Author(s) pour their feelings into ideas and turn those ideas into songs. It could contain happiness, joy, sadness, depression, confusion, pain, hopelessness etc. Analyzing the lyrics of the songs is one way to understand what the author was feeling and thinking.

In 2017, Linkin Park produced an album called *One More Light* that contains 10 songs which were written by the band altogether. In the unfortunate side of 2017, Chester Bennington, the band's lead singer, had died in suicide attempt by hanging. There might be hints of explanations of Chester's suicide act in his lyrics. Therefore, the ten lyrics of Linkin Park are the main object in this study.

Figurative Language as the first theory used is unique and vivid, so it allows the readers to visualize what is being "pictured" by the author(s) and makes the readers get a deeper understanding of what is being conveyed. Meanwhile, semantics is the study of sentence and word meaning with no context to consider. In which, the meaning of a word will give contribution to the sentence meaning. The revealed feelings and thoughts are then analyzed using a theory that indicates the development of suicide ideation of Chester Bennington called the three step theory (3ST) which is rooted from the "ideation to action framework" by Klonsky and May.

The focus of this study is to analyze the lyrics of the songs using Figurative Language to reveal hidden feelings, thoughts and ideas of Chester. Which then those revealed ideas be indicated using Suicide Ideation theory to find out the possible reason of Chester's suicide act. In doing so, this study is meaningful in understanding Chester Bennington as well as the band and their songs in a new perspective, also in understanding the possible reason of Chester's suicidal act, and in giving future researcher ideas for new researches.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Semantics

Semantics is the study of meaning in descriptive manner of pieces of language. It concerns on the word meaning and sentence meaning, without putting

any context into consideration (Hurford, 2007, p.1). It is the study of the 'toolkit' for meaning with knowledge encoded in the vocabulary of the language and in its patterns for building more elaborate meanings, up to the level of sentence meaning. It is abstracted away from contexts of use and it is a descriptive subject (Griffith, 2006. p. 1).

2. Figurative Language

Figurative Language is words, phrases, or sentences that contain other meanings than its literal meanings. It should not be taken literally. For example, "she is as cold as the north pole." The literal meaning of the example is the 'she' is in a condition where her temperature is below -20°C . In this case, 'as cold as the north pole' is a figure of speech. It could mean she acted coldly, so cold that she could be equal to the North Pole. Basically, figurative language is saying a meaning in a different way than literal language. Perrine differentiate figurative language types into 12; metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, allegory, symbol, paradox, overstatement, understatement, irony, and allusion.

a. Metaphor

Metaphor is as a comparison between two seemingly dissimilar things without the use of 'like' or 'as'. For Example: 'the star of my eyes' this sentence is comparing someone or something as the bright star in the speaker's eyes. (Swerman, 2013, p.2).

b. Simile

Simile also compares things that are essentially unlike. But, the comparison is expressed by the use of word or phrase, such as like, as, than, similar to, etc. (Perrine, 1963, p. 68). For example: "His heart was as soft as cotton balls" this sentence is comparing the person's heart to a cotton ball which explains the person's kindness.

c. Personification

Personification is explained as "giving human characteristics to objects and non-humans." For example: 'the sea is angry' this sentence is a personification since, a 'sea' is an object and it is impossible for an object to show emotions because only human are capable of emotions.

d. Apostrophe

Apostrophe consists in addressing, meaning speaking to, someone absent or dead or something non-human as if that person or thing were present, alive, and able to reply to what is being said, either using second person point of view or third person point of view to show the addressee. For example: in the song *Twinkle Little Stars* "Twinkle, twinkle, little star how I wonder what you are." The song imagines someone talking to a star as if the star could answer back.

e. Metonymy

Metonymy is comparing unlike things with the use of something closely related for the thing actually meant (Perrine, 1963, p. 74). The comparison could be of effect for cause, object for user, substance for form, place for event, person or institution, institution for people/person and vice-versa. For example: the title of a

movie *London Has Fallen* is a metonymy, for the 'London' is substituting the government of London.

f. Allegory

Allegory is a narrative or description that has been defined as a series of metaphors. For example: in the Bible, the story of Pharaoh having a dream about seven fat beautiful cows being devoured by seven very thin and bony cows. The allegory is explained by Joseph that the seven fat cows means seven years of fruitfulness which then will come seven years of famine that was pictured as seven thin cows. (Perrine, 1963, p.97)

g. Symbol

Roughly, it defines as something that means more than what it is. Symbol functions literally and figuratively at the same time. For example: "a stray dog is barking at a cat" this means nothing more than a stray dog and a cat which makes this sentence merely an image; "Got my wallet stolen by some dirty dog at the party" it does not mean a literal dog here and therefore presenting a metaphor; "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" this does not refer to a particular dog but referring to any living creatures of any species and therefore presenting a symbol. (Perrine, 1963, p. 89)

h. Paradox

A statement which is an apparent contradiction that is nevertheless somehow true. For example: Alexander Popes had written "literary critic of his time would damn with faint praise" for how a man could be damn by praising. The paradox statement is not weird to anyone who understands that it means that a too reserved praise may damage an author with the public almost as much as reserved criticism (Perrine, 1963, p. 109).

i. Overstatement

Perrine (1963) defines hyperbole and overstatement as the same thing. It is simply exaggeration in the service of truth, merely adding emphasis to what is being said. For example: "a feather knocked me down" for it is ridiculous and absurd to have the lightest thing known to make a person down.

j. Understatement

Understatement is saying less than what one means. Perrine (1963) gave explanation through an example "It's the end of the world, and I feel fine." Where the person knowing it is the end of the world should feel worried and crazy instead of just feeling fine.

k. Irony

According to Swerman (2013), irony are words that express a meaning that is opposite of the intended meaning. For example; 'can you go any slower?' when faster is what is wanted.

l. Allusion

Carla Swerman (2013) described allusion as a reference to a famous person, place, event, art work, song, character, etc. For Example, 'My uncle is our family's Dr. Phil' where Dr. Phil is a known motivator figure in America.

3. Suicide ideation

Suicide is an act or a reaction to certain stimulus in the brain system in reaction from the defense mechanism of the body. Klonsky divided suicide theory into two separate processes; (a) suicidal Ideation and (b) ideation to attempts. This framework is explained in terms of four factors: pain, hopelessness, connectedness, and suicide capacity (Klonsky, 2015, p. 115).

a. Pain

Klonsky (2015) believed the first step toward suicidal ideation begins with pain. human are shaped by behavioral conditioning, behavior that are rewarded will be performed and behavior that are punished will be avoided. If a person's day-to-day experience of living is characterized by pain, the person is essentially being punished for living, which may decrease the desire to live and initiate thoughts about suicide.

Klonsky does not specify the nature of pain. Because just as different sources of punishment can shape behavior, different sources of pain can shape the first step of suicidal ideation. the sources could be from loud noises, noxious odors, social exclusion, social isolation, burdensome, low belongingness, defeat, entrapment, negative self-perception, aversive stimulus, aversive thoughts, aversive emotions, aversive sensations, aversive experiences, and phisycal suffering. The first step of suicidal ideation begins with pain regardless of its source

b. Hopelessness

Pain is the first step of suicidal ideation. However, if a person living in pain has hope that the situation can improve, the person likely will focus to obtain a future. For this reason, Klonsky and May (2015) explained that hopelessness is required for the development of suicidal ideation.

Klonsky and May believe If a person feels pain but has hope for a better future, he or she will not consider suicide, as well as a person who has no hope for the future but is not living in pain will not consider suicide. The combination of pain and hopelessness is what cause suicidal ideation (Klonsky, 2015, p. 117).

c. Connectedness

This is the second step to suicidal behavior. Connectedness means connection to other people, one's attachment to a job, project, role, interest, or any purpose or meaning that keeps one invested in living. Connectedness matters, because if one is experiencing pain and hopelessness but their connection to life is bigger than the pain, the person will unlikely to do suicide. Connectedness protects a person against escalation of suicidal ideation to suicidal attempts, if a person is living in day-to-day pain with no hope but still have connection to another, it will result in moderate ideation rather than a strong one.

d. Suicide capacity

After pain combined with hopelessness with no attachment to life to avoid a person from suicide, the only key determinant to suicide behavior is whether the person has the capability to make a suicide attempt. Klonsky and May categorizes three variables that contribute to suicide capacity: dispositional, acquired, and practical. Basically, suicide capacity is the variables of the person related to their

capability, genetical conditions, experiences, and situations in doing a suicide (Klonsky, 2015, p. 119).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is done by using qualitative research method. In doing this research, descriptive approach was used by observing, classifying, labeling, and interpreting the data to find conceptual patterns. The main objects of this research are ten song lyrics by Linkin Park that was released in 2017 with album entitled *One More Light*, and therefore this research is a library research.

The data source of this research is the ten song lyrics of 2017 in an album called *One More Light*. There were: Nobody Can Save Me, Good Goodbye, Talking to Myself, Battle Symphony, Invisible, Heavy, Sorry for Now, Halfway Right, Sharp Edges, and White Noise. The data that were taken are words, phrases and sentences of the song lyrics that used figurative language.

In collecting the data, a close reading on the lyrics was executed while underlining and making notes next to the data. After that, the analysis of the data was executed in several steps, as follows:

1. The writer read and reread the lyrics thoroughly when finding the data
2. The writer underlined the data in the work sheet.
3. The writer categorized the data according to the 12 types of Figurative Language categories.
4. Then, those data were categorized by the writer into the 3 factors of Suicide Ideation.
5. The writer of the study identified, analyzed and described the data.
6. The writer of the study put codes next to the data according to the number of songs, lines, and type of figurative language to make it easier to recheck and be understood by readers.
7. The writer of the study found a connection between the patterns and categories of cause and effect relationship to be discussed and make a conclusion.

The analysis of the data also uses triangulation which defined as a process of combining data from different source to study a particular phenomenon. It can reinforce the validity and credibility of a finding. This research uses two theories of Figurative Language from different books, which complements each other, to analyze the selected song lyrics, and Klonsky's Suicide Ideation, added with further explanation given by several other books, to analyze the figurative's analysis.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Figurative Language Found

a. Metaphor

Mp. S2. L55 : Goodbye to the *cold roads*

The metaphor is within the phrase *cold roads*, which means the person's old life that he described as cold. It may refer to hard life experiences. The line means the person is in a step to leave his old, cold, hard life into a new and possibly a better one.

b. Simile

Si. S2. L28 : *Every day was like a hail date*

This line is comparing *day* to *hail date* which means the person's day feels like always trying to prepare for an upcoming hailstorm. Feeling uneasy, worried, etc

c. Personification

P. S1. L14 : *For answers yet to come*

This line is using personification, since it makes it seem that *the answer* is the one that comes to the person. This line means the person is yet to find answer for his problems despite effort he has put out.

d. Apostrophe

Ap. S2. L14 : *Longer than you've been alive, you idiot*

This line is using apostrophe, since the person is speaking to the enemy as if the enemy could answer right away, while addressing the enemy using second person point of view in a mocking way. It is shown in phrase *you idiot*. The line means the person had been mocked by the enemy.

e. Metonymy

My. S6. L18 : *But I'm pretty sure the world is out to get me*

The metonymy of this line is the word *world*, for it does not literally mean the world, universe, or this earth, but it means the people of the world as in the person's enemy, might not only be people, it could also be time, condition, universe, etc.

f. Allegory

Al. S1. L1-5 : *I'm dancing with my demons*
I'm hanging off the edge
Storm clouds gather beneath me
Waves break above my head
Headfirst Hallucination

This stanza is an allegory because it is a series of metaphors and in the end of the stanza it is explained by the phrase *headfirst hallucination*. For the meaning, each line contains different meanings but it is somehow related with each other. The phrase *headfirst hallucination* is an explanation that he feels and seeing those things as if they were real. Overall, this stanza means that the person was having a breakdown as if they were real but for a fact that it was just a hallucination.

g. Symbol

Sy. S9. L2 : *Don't you run with Scissors, son*

This line is a famous symbol for being careful. The literal meaning is that when running with scissors one might get hurt. The figurative meaning is that to not do something reckless or dangerous willfully. In other hand it means to be

careful when doing something, to think it through first. In this case with the song titled *Sharp Edges*, the line means to think before doing anything reckless especially if connected to 'sharp edges'.

h. Paradox

Pa. S2. L5 : *Good goodbye*

This phrase is a paradox statement because goodbyes are not supposed to be good. But in this case, the goodbyes are good for the person

i. Overstatement

O. S2. L2 : Pack it up and *disappear*

This line uses overstatement in the word *disappear*. In the song entitled Good Goodbye, the word *disappear* meant leave. Meaning the person was telling someone to pack his or her stuff and then leave and to not ever return.

j. Understatement

U. S10. L14 : *Who cares if one more light goes out*
Well I do

This first line is an understatement meaning no one would care if a star were to die in the sky of a million stars. It is used to have an effect of shock which creates gap of emotion then be relieved with the truth, for a fact that the line afterward is saying he does care. So, it means that the person actually cares if any bad thing were to happen.

k. Irony

Ir. S6. L4-5 : *I wanna let go but there's comfort in the panic*

On this line it said that the person wants to let go but somehow he feels comfort in the panic which means he did not actually want to let go. The word *panic* may refer to crowds, chaotic situations, or the state of his own mind which is panic. In addition, the word *comfort* means that he is familiar with that 'panic' feeling.

l. Allusion

Au. S7. L22 : *The best things come to those who wait*

This line is an allusion or reference to a famous proverb "Good things come to those who wait" which originated from Lady Currie in her poem saying "all things to those who wait". It means that people who are patient and loyal will reach their goal or good favor will be in their hand.

2. Factors of Suicide Ideation Found

a. Pain

Mp. S3. L7 : *All the walls that you keep building*

Using metaphor to mean that the lover was building space or barrier between them, it means that the person is being ignored intentionally. In which, this line is indicated as a data of pain that sourced from social exclusion.

b. Hopelessness

P. S1. L19 : *Watch the ground giving way now*

The line used personification which meant the person was falling. The way these words were put out makes it seem that the person has given up and just lets the ground gave a way to his fall. Therefore, it can be seen that the person has no hope of not falling, so he just let the ground to give a way.

c. Connectedness

Si. S9. L14 : *Loved you like a house of cards
Let it fall apart*

This line used simile that meant the person have loved someone but then the love was broken like a house of cards, and the love was let fallen apart. The person has had connection with someone but then it was disrupted by something leaving the person in pain.

3. Discussion

Perrine (1963) divided Figurative language to 12 types. In which, the writer of this study found all 12 types of figurative language were used in 10 songs of Linkin Park that was produced in 2017. The writer found that metaphor has 12 data, simile 6 data, personification 8 data, apostrophe 5 data, metonymy 2 data, allegory 1 data, symbol 2 data, paradox 3 data, overstatement 7 data, understatement 3 data, irony 2 data, and allusion 3 data.

After the analysis of types of Figurative Language used in the songs were found and explained, it was used to be the data for the second question which is to explain Chester's suicide ideation. Klonsky (2015) has ideation-to-action framework. The writer found 25 data which were totaled from different sources of pain. The creation of suicidal ideation is the combination between pain and hopelessness. The writer found 2 data of hopelessness. Which means, at this point Chester has already created his suicidal ideation.

After suicide ideation is created, the thing to look for is the growth of the ideation. If the pain and hopelessness is greater than the connectedness, it will result in a strong suicide ideation. On the contrary, if the connectedness is greater than the pain and hopelessness, it will result in a moderate suicide ideation. The writer of this study found 3 data of connectedness. Chester had many evidence of pain that comes from different sources combined with several case of hopelessness, with the findings of connectedness, it can be seen that his connectedness is not greater than his pain combined with hopelessness. Therefore, it can be stated that Chester has a strong suicide ideation.

After the development of suicidal ideation is completed the next process of suicide is ideation to attempt. In this study, the writer did not look for the evidence of the fourth factor by Klonsky (2015) which is suicide capacity. It was stated that suicide capacity is the process of ideation to attempt. Since this study focuses on the text itself and not on the real-life context of Chester Bennington, the suicide capacity was not found because it cannot be explained through the lyrics of the songs in this study.

In contrary with this study, there was one research by Hamdan that focused in finding symbols of hope in one of Linkin Park's albums. He concluded that the album *A Thousand Sun* can be perceived as a symbol of hope. Meanwhile this study

discovered that album *One More Light* reveals the idea of Chester Bennington having strong Suicide Ideation.

E. CONCLUSION

Overall this study, it can be concluded that Linkin Park's album *One More Light* that consist of 10, 2017 released songs, contains all 12 types of Figurative Language categorized by Perrine. Also, it can be said that Chester Bennington had a strong suicide ideation. In other hand, the writer of this study cannot conclude if the strong suicide ideation is the main cause for his suicidal act. For, to complete the process of suicidal act the analysis of ideation to attempt needs to be done, which what this study is limited to do.

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