

## **An Analysis of Figurative Languages and Moral Values in Selected Songs of Shawn Mendes**

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### **Abstract**

There are many difficult to understand songs, especially when the lyrics contain a lot of figurative language and moral value within the song lyrics. It is not easy to understand without us analyzing the meaning of the song in depth. This research was conducted to identify the use of figurative language and the moral values contained in two songs by Shawn Mendes; 'Stitches' and 'Believe.' This research applied a qualitative method, and primary data was obtained from the two songs, while secondary data was obtained from journals, theses, books, and other sources on the internet. Data was collected through the documentation method. Based on the data analysis, the researchers found that the two songs contain three of figurative languages and three of moral values. The researchers found the use of 3 types of figurative language in the two songs, including: Hyperbole, Simile, and Symbol. As for the moral values, the researchers found 3 types of moral values in the two songs; Optimism, steadfastness, and love and compassion.

Keywords: figurative language, moral values, song

### **1. Introduction**

The use of communication is essential for humans to interact and maintain their lives. Songs have become a popular means of communication, as they are effective in delivering messages. However, understanding the lyrics of a song can be challenging, especially when they contain figurative language. Figurative language refers to ways of saying something that is not straightforward, and it can include metaphors, similes, personification, and more. In addition to analyzing the use of figurative language in song lyrics, this research also aims to discuss the moral values contained within the songs of Shawn Mendes. The reason to choose Mendes' songs is there are many figurative terms used in them.

The study specifically focused on analyzing the figurative language in the song lyrics of Shawn Mendes' "Stitches" and "Believe," utilizing M.H. Abrams' theory as the basis and supported by Gorys Keraf and Reaske's theories. Additionally, the researchers also examined the moral values conveyed in the songs using Sutarjo Adisusilo's theory and supported by Holdcroft, Castro, Galace, and other relevant sources.

## **2. Method**

The researchers employed a descriptive method, which according to Suryana (2010:14) is a technique to systematically and accurately describe a phenomenon that is the figurative language, specifically metaphor and hyperbole, used in Shawn Mendes' "Stitches" and "Believe" songs, as well as interpret the moral values they convey. This research utilized a qualitative approach to analyze the data, which differs from a hypothesis-driven study that dictates the required form, quantity, and scope of data. Qualitative research aims to develop understanding from the data as the analysis progresses and involves analyzing data in verbal form without utilizing statistical techniques, as explained by Richard (2006:73).

Moleong (2010: 112) explains that data analysis involves identifying and classifying data based on the topic, followed by systematic and detailed analysis to obtain an objective understanding of the lyrics' metaphor, hyperbole, and moral values. The Miles and Huberman model will be utilized for data analysis, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The data reduction process involves summarizing, estimating, focusing on important aspects, and eliminating data. Sugiyono (2013: 339) notes that data reduction requires sensitivity, intelligence, and insight, and involves selecting, abstracting, and transforming the data. The researchers began by identifying keywords containing figurative language in the song lyrics and then categorized their forms. The researchers then abstracted the data by inputting the analysis results into a table. After analyzing the types of figurative language, the researchers examined the moral values conveyed in the song lyrics. Finally, the researchers transformed the data into a descriptive written format. Data display is presented in various forms, such as brief descriptions, charts, category relationships, flowcharts, and others. In this research, the findings of form and meaning were displayed through tables and descriptive narratives.

The researchers used triangulation to ensure the validity of the research findings. Triangulation involves the use of multiple methods or data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena and test validity through the convergence of information from different sources. The objective is to increase confidence in the findings by using two or more independent measures. Triangulation may involve multiple theories, data sources, methods, or investigators within the study of a single phenomenon. It was originally introduced into qualitative research in the 1950s as a means to avoid potential biases from using a single methodology. Studies that use triangulation may include two or more sets of data collection using the same methodology, or two different data collection methods such as qualitative and quantitative. In this research, triangulation was applied in the data collection method by using three steps: finding data, data listing, and data classification. The researchers also used three steps in data analysis: data reduction, data display, and concluding to ensure the validity of the research result.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

After a thorough examination, the researchers found 4 types of figurative language; hyperbole (7), simile (2), and symbol (3) in 'Stitches' and 2 types of figurative language in 'Believe', which are hyperbole (3) and symbol (3). The following is the discussion of them.

### **'Stitches'**

#### a. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is one of the most widely used figurative language. Hyperbole has an easy characteristic to identify. According to Mora (2009:10), hyperbole can be defined as "a form of extremity, an exaggeration that either magnifies or minimizes some real state of affairs". Perrine (1977:110) states that hyperbole is simply exaggeration out in the service of truth. In traditional semantics and rhetoric studies, hyperbole is a figure of speech, and it is used in a figurative or nonliteral sense. Here are some lyrics from 'Stitches' song that uses figurative language of hyperbole:

#### a) Your words cut deeper than a knife

The sentence is an example of hyperbole since the author describes something exaggeratedly. It is forms from the basic several of jokes is used as way for insult, or simply is used to dramatize a situation. Logically, it is impossible for words to cut something since 'words' is an abstract thing. The author used the sentences to dramatize a situation when a word can hurt people's heart, as if it is sharper than a knife.

#### b) Now I need someone to breathe me back to life

This sentence is also an example of hyperbolic expression since it is impossible for a person to bring people back to life. Only God can live a human being. This sentence is used by the author or singer to describe how he want his lover to come back to him and fix their relationship.

#### c) You watch me bleed until I can't breathe

This sentence is also a hyperbolic expression which is used to dramatize a situation when someone is desperate because of his heart break. It feels like he will bleed until he cannot breathe.

#### d) I'm shaking falling onto my knees

This is also a form of hyperbolic expression which is used to dramatize a heartbreak situation until someone feels like he is shaking and falling into his knees. In the real world, maybe the heartbreaking will not make a person experience these effects. Maybe someone will look like a normal person meanwhile his heart is broken.

#### e) And now that I'm without your kisses

This expression is used to dramatize the situation when someone lose his lover, it is described by '..without your kisses' which means he has to live without his love.

#### f) I'll be needing stitches

The sentence is an example of hyperbole since the author describes a situation exaggeratedly. This sentence describes a situation when someone feels a broken hearth, it feels like he will die so, he will need stitches to fix his condition.

#### g) I'm tripping over myself

The sentence is the example of hyperbolic expression since it used to describe someone who tripping over his self. It does not make any sense when a person is tripping due to his self. So,

this sentence is used to describe when someone is trapping in his own feelings, he cannot set his free from his misery due to his heartbreak.

b. Simile

According to Perrine (1977:65), simile and metaphor genuinely have an identical definition. Both of them compare two things that are absolutely different. Simile is the comparison of two things, by the use of some words or phrase such as like as, than, similar to, or resemble. Keraf in Hutahuruk (2017:47) stated that simile is comparison that have an explicit character. Based on the theory, simile is a direct comparison of two things, which are unlike in their sense. Here are some lyrics from 'Stitches' song that uses figurative language of simile:

a) Your words cut deeper than a knife

The lyric included simile because the lyric uses word 'than'. The author compares between the word 'words' and 'knife'. The meaning of this lyric is that words can sharper even than a knife and someone's words can hurt the other people's hearth.

b) Just like a moth drawn to a flame

The lyric included simile because the lyric uses word 'like' to compare a person with a moth drawn to a flame. The lyric is used to describe when someone's hearth is broken, his heart is break into ruins as and as if he will die because of it, just like a moth drawn to a flame.

c. Symbol

Perrine (1977:82) states that symbol is defined as something that means more than what it is. It means that a symbol uses a word or phrase which is familiar in society and has one meaning. A symbol is a character, an action, a setting, or an object representing something else. A symbol is something that is itself and also stand for a particular objective reality. In a literal sense a symbol combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract as suggestive aspect. Symbolism is when the writer uses an object or reference to add deeper meaning to a story. A writer may repeatedly use the same object to convey deeper meaning or may use variations of the same object to create an overarching mood or feeling. Here are some lyrics from 'Stitches' song that contains figurative language of symbol:

a) Just like a moth drawn to a flame

This sentence is used by the author to add deeper meaning to a story using an object or reference. The author used symbol, which is moth that drawn to a flame, to describe a situation when someone's hearth is broken.

b) Needle and the thread gonna wind up dead

'Needle and the thread gonna wind up dead' is an example of symbol since it is used as a symbol to describe a situation when

c) Needle and the thread gotta get you out of my head

This sentence is an example of symbol since it used to symbolize a situation when someone's heartbreaking lead to a wound and he feels that needle and thread will heal him. Of course, it is just a symbol of his misery because of a heart broken.

### **'Believe'**

#### a. Hyperbole

Here are some lyrics from 'Believe' song that uses figurative language of hyperbole:

##### a) I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

This lyric is also an example of hyperbolic expression called repetition, when the author used the word 'I believe' so many times to highlight the messages in the lyrics. Actually, the author wants to encourage people to believe in themselves through this song.

##### b) Everything is possible

This sentence is also a hyperbolic expression since the sentence says that there is nothing impossible in this world. Meanwhile, in reality, not all the things can be possible since certain limitation of ourselves or our condition.

##### c) It's nothing we can't do

This sentence is also a hyperbolic expression since the sentence says that there is nothing we cannot do. Meanwhile, in reality, we cannot do anything since certain limitation of ourselves or our condition.

#### b. Symbol

Here are some lyrics from 'Believe' song that contains figurative language of symbol:

##### a) Let your dreams take flight

'Let your dreams take flight' is an example of symbol which this sentence is used as a symbol of motivation for people to not afraid to dream big and believe that their dreams will come true.

##### b) And your heart ignite!

This sentence is also an example of symbol since this sentence is used to symbolize that someone has to be brave and keep his/her spirit to reach the dreams. '...your heart ignite!' is a symbol of a spirit and courage.

##### c) It's a wild and beautiful fire

'It's a wild and beautiful fire' is a symbol of a spirit and courage to chase dreams. It is a motivation for people to be courage, just like wild and beautiful fire.

### **Analysis of Moral Value in 'Stitches'**

#### 1) Optimism

According to Carver, Scheier, and Segerstorm, (2010: 1) Optimism is an individual difference variable that reflects the extent to which people hold generalized favorable expectancies for their future. Optimists expect good outcomes, even when things are hard. This yields a relatively positive mix of feelings Carver, Scheier, and Segerstorm (2010: 2). Thus, the definition of optimism is positive expectations about future outcomes. It presumes that when a goal is important, the person will act to reach the desired goal, hoping for positive results. The characteristic of optimism according Behestifar & Norozy (2013: 69) there are: optimism is a characteristic that is the basis of positive thinking. optimism is an individual belief about the

likelihood of obtaining positive outcomes in the future, and it is the tendency for an individual to believe in the best possible outcomes in the face of uncertainty. Here are some analysis results of moral value of optimism conducted by the researchers.

a) Got a feeling that I'm going under

But I know that I'll make it out alive

The lyrics describe about people who suffer a misery because of broken heart, but on the other hand, he also knows that he will be able to get through it. The lyric contains moral value of optimism where there is a believe that he will be alright. Besides trying to describe the situation of broken heart, the lyric also tried to encourage the listeners to always be optimist that no matter how deep a misery, there will always a hope to a new and better day.

b) Needle and the thread

Gotta get you out of my head

Needle and the thread

Gonna wind up dead

The lyrics describe about a chance for someone to heal from a broken heart. This is implied an optimism within the lyric. The author said that optimism is needed for people to be strong and have enough courage to move on.

## 2. Steadfastness

According to Fawziah K. Al-Ammar, Ahmed and Nordin, (2012: 121), steadfastness is a characteristic that show special qualities of moral character. Steadfastness is a process that aims to strengthen faith and make people believe is able to survive trouble with patience (Ma'rifah, Siti 2020).

Quoted from a journal about the concept of patience from Subandi (2011: 222-224) that the characteristics of steadfastness including; First, survive in difficult situation. It consists of various forms of behavior, among others: be patient, withstand trials, stand tall, survive when get into a disaster, not grumbling, can hold back pain, refrain in uncomfortable situations. Second, accept the fact. It consists of various forms of behavior, among others, accept God's decision, accept the situation, accept the reality, accept the fate, sincere, positive thinking, willing to accept and face trials. Here are some analysis results of moral value of steadfastness conducted by the researchers (Ma'rifah, Siti 2020).

a) If I quit calling you my lover

Move on

This lyric implied about steadfastness, which tells people to forget about their bad past, including broken heart, to move on. The author did not only talk about the situation of broken heart but also a value that should be learnt by the listeners. People must learn to move on from the past no matter how hard it is, because life must go on. That what is trying to be conveyed by the author through the lyric.

### 3. Love and Affection

Love is any of a number of emotions and experiences related to a sense of strong affection. Love is a part that is contained in the moral values. Love that are not only shared between two human beings, but patriotic love, spiritual love, love of God, love for humanity, sharing, giving, honesty, and trust, is the characteristic or the part of love and affection. It can be said that love is a sign of expression of heart. Love gives and forgives. It includes sincerity, kindness, sympathy, tolerance, friendship, patriotism and devotion humanism. Here are some analysis results of moral value of love and affection conducted by the researchers.

And now that I'm without your kisses

I'll be needing stitches

The lyric fragment in the song 'Stitches' is categorized into the type of love and affection because there is the word 'kisses' which means love in the line 1. In the lyrics of this song, it says when asked about love, and what the lyric says that what is meant by love is lover. The lyric talks that people cannot life without love, especially, according to the lyric, is love from someone they loved. That is how the power of love play a central role for everyone's life.

#### **Analysis of Moral Value in 'Believe'**

##### 1) Optimism

Here are some analysis results of moral value of optimism conducted by the researchers:

a) I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

The lyrics of the song describe about an optimism that people should have. The use of word 'I believe' was repeated so many times by the author to highlight a kind of optimism within the lyrics. The lyrics is trying to give positive energy by its rhythm and melody which when the listeners listen to it, it is hoped that they will be motivated to always be optimist with themselves and with their dreams.

b) Let your dreams take flight

And your heart ignite!

The lyrics contains moral value about optimism. The author tried to motivate people to dream big and keep their spirit to reach the dreams. No matter that happened, people should be optimist that their wishes and dreams will come true if they believe in it and do it.

c) Did you know that it's true

Everything is possible

It's nothing we can't do

It's a wild and beautiful fire

And I believe in you

The lyrics is also contained moral value about optimism. This lyric says that there is nothing impossible in this world because there is nothing people cannot do. This lyric is also tried to motivate that if people are optimist and believe in themselves, they will be able to be and to do anything in their life.

d) I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

I believe, I believe, I believe, hey

'Cause I believe in you

The lyrics of the song also describe about an optimism that people should have. The use of word 'I believe' was repeated so many times by the author to highlight a kind of optimism within the lyrics. The lyrics is trying to encourage the listeners to be optimist, confident, and believe in themselves.

## 2) Steadfastness

Here are some analysis results of moral value of steadfastness conducted by the researchers.

a) Everest is only a mountain

A pyramid is just a shape

Doesn't have to hold you back

Doesn't have to pin you down

This lyric contains moral value about steadfastness which the author tells people to never give up no matter the situation, people must survive in easy and difficult situation to reach their dreams. The word 'Pyramid' and 'Everest' was the symbol of challenge and hard situation that is trying to test people. To get rid of it, people must survive and face the situation, and it needs a value called steadfastness.

b) Don't be afraid to be who you are

Just dream out and shout and follow the stars

This lyric also contains moral value about steadfastness. This lyric tried to motivate people be confident and be themselves. Then, people should be brave to dream high and reach their dreams.

c) Forget about the past that it's over

We are the young ones our way is forward

Who keeps tabs on stupid mistakes?

We all mess up but that's just the way

This lyric tells people to move on from the past and think about the future. The author believes that people do not have to waste their time to regret their mistakes in the past. Indeed, forgiving themselves and forget the past is not easy. But people should not trap and just regretting their



past, people must learn from it and get through the difficult time. Therefore, this lyric contained moral value of steadfastness.

d) We learn how to get back up

We learn how to turn the page

So we will let our dreams take flight

And your heart ignite!

This lyric is also containing moral value of steadfastness. Which this lyric tells that people must move on from the past and then dream as high as possible. People should believe that they can and they must never give up with their dreams.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The researchers found that all the songs within the album contain figurative language. The researchers analysed that there are 3 types of figurative languages contained in 'Stitches' song, they are Hyperbole, Simile, and Symbol. While in 'Believe' song, there are 2 types of figurative languages namely Hyperbole and Symbol. Based on the researchers' analysis, there are 3 types of moral values contained in 'Stitches' song, they are moral value of Optimism, Steadfastness, and Love and Affection. While in 'Believe' song, it contains 2 types of moral values, namely Optimism and Steadfastness.

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