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THE POWER OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN MUSIC: A CASE STUDY OF ARIANA GRANDE'S 'INTRO (END OF THE WORLD)

Yuli Rohmiyati¹

yulirohmiyati@binabangsa.ac.id

Septi Auliyani²

septiauliyani@gmail.com

Abid Abdilah³

abid.dsgn1@gmail.com

Sopyan Zidan⁴

sopyanzidan4@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the use of figurative language in the lyrics of Ariana Grande's song Intro (End of the World), focusing on how these devices contribute to the emotional depth and thematic complexity of the song. These linguistic tools are shown to reflect the singer's emotional struggles and uncertainties about romantic relationships, particularly her doubts about love and commitment. The study highlights how figurative language serves not only to enhance the meaning of the song but also to engage listeners on an emotional level, allowing them to relate to themes of vulnerability, existential questioning, and relational insecurity. The findings emphasize the power of figurative language in music as a means of conveying complex emotions and establishing a connection with the audience. By analyzing the song's lyrics, this research identifies and classifies various forms of figurative language, They are rhetorical questions, repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, and ambiguity.

Keywords: Ariana Grande, Emotional Depth, Figurative Language, Romantic Uncertainty, Song Analysis.

¹ Lecturer of Bina Bangsa University, Jakarta

² Undergraduate student of Bina Bangsa University, Jakarta

³ Undergraduate student of Bina Bangsa University, Jakarta

⁴ Undergraduate student of Bina Bangsa University, Jakarta



A. INTRODUCTION

Meaning in semantics is divided into two main categories: literal and non-literal meaning. Literal meaning refers to the clear, precise definition of a word, with no room for different interpretations. On the other hand, non-literal meaning refers to a word's hidden or figurative meaning (Fak & Co, 2016), which requires a deeper understanding to interpret. In literature, this non-literal meaning is often employed as a style or characteristic of language known as figurative language.

Figurative language refers to the use of words that deviate from their literal meaning to express or convey a more complex meaning. By using figurative language, people can communicate the ideas in a more interesting and expressive manner. Figurative language is often employed by musicians (Simanjuntak & Lumingkewas, 2022), fiction writers, and other artists to create more creative works. In literature or songs, figurative language makes the narrative more dynamic and dramatic, replacing straightforward language that only expresses factual statements.

Various linguists have explained the meaning and definition of figurative language. Figurative language is the type of language used by people in certain contexts (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020) for particular purposes, in their own unique ways or a way to express an idea in implicit way (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020). Meanwhile, Figurative language as language used in a manner that deviates from the usual arrangement of words to achieve a figurative beauty. In general, figurative language aims to enrich the impression (Aminah & Akmal, 2021) and atmosphere of communication by making words more expressive and impactful.

Music, in general, is one of the forms of communication that can convey messages or ideas, both directly and indirectly. Through music, a person can express their thoughts and emotions to others (Yunanda et al., 2021). Music creates an interactive and emotional space, where listeners not only hear the melody (Suryanti et al., 2023) but also absorb the message being conveyed through the lyrics of songs. The song reflects the singer's personal experiences, with lyrics that express doubt and question whether she is in the right relationship.



Many musicians pour their emotions and life experiences into the songs they create. Songs often become a medium for expressing ideas, experiences, and emotions (Rahmadhanti et al., 2022), whether romantic, melancholic, or full of hope. In this sense, song lyrics become an art form that evokes emotions and creates a bond between the creator and the listener.

This study aims to analyze the use of figurative language in the lyrics of Intro (End of the World) by Ariana Grande. This song has a unique meaning, with deep intonations that are enhanced by the melody and rhythm. This research will identify how these figurative elements function to enrich the song's meaning and how they contribute to conveying emotional messages and ideas within the context of romantic relationships.

The contribution of this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of figurative language in music, as well as enrich the study of the relationship between literature and music, emphasizes the power of figurative language in shaping the listener's emotional engagement with music and its potential to reflect universal human concerns.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive survey design to analyze the use of figurative language in the lyrics of the song "Intro" by Ariana Grande. This design was chosen because it allows the collection of numerical data that describes the frequency and distribution of the types of figurative language used in the song's lyrics.

Data will be collected by conducting a content analysis of the lyrics of the song "Intro" by Ariana Grande. The song lyrics are explained and each sentence or phrase containing figurative language is identified and classified based on its type.

The research procedures involved several key steps, they are:

- a. Lyrics Collection: The lyrics of the song "Intro" were obtained from official sources and verified for accuracy.
- b. Identification of Figurative Language: Each sentence or phrase in the lyrics was analyzed to identify the presence of figurative language. Classification and Coding: The figurative language identified is classified and coded using a coding system



based on relevant figurative language theories. The coded data was then entered into a worksheet for further statistical analysis.

This finding would be counted by using the frequency of cumulative formula (Ibrahim et al., 2019), it could be seen as follows:

$$FK \text{ rel } FK / (\sum F) \times 100\%$$

FK = Frequency of cumulative

$\sum F$ = Frequency of total

FK rel = Frequency of relative cumulative

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the lyrics in Ariana Grande's song Intro (End of the World) revealed a rich use of figurative language, including metaphors, hyperbole, personification, and rhetorical questions. These figurative devices were identified in various parts of the song, contributing to the emotional depth and thematic complexity of the lyrics. This data highlights how these linguistic tools function to convey the themes of relational uncertainty, emotional introspection, and existential questioning. Below, the categorized figurative language is presented.

No	Song Lyric	Figurative language	Frequence
1	How can I tell if I'm in the right relationship?	Rhetorical Questions	3
2	Aren't you really supposed to know that shit?		
3	Feel it in your bones and own that shit?		
4	Would I still be your lover?	Repetition	3
5	Would you want me there?		
6	Would I be the one on your mind? Your mind? Your mind?		
7	I don't care	Contrast of Emotion	3
8	I'd rather tell the truth		



9	Than make it worse for you		
10	Feel it in your bones and own that shit?	Hyperbole	2
11	Wonder if he's judging me like I am right now?		
12	If the sun refused to shine, Baby, would I still be your lover?	Metaphor	2
13	If the moon went dark tonight		
14	If the sun refused to shine, Baby, would I still be your lover	Personification	2
15	If the moon went dark tonight		
16	Wonder if he's thinking 'bout it too and smiling	Ambiguity	2
17	Wonder if he knows that that's been what's inspiring m		
Total			17

Table1. The result of Figurative Language in Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) by Ariana Grande

After identifying Figurative Language in Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) by Ariana Grande. The reserachers examine the distribution of these values in terms of their frequency and percentage. The following table presents the frequency and percentage of each Figurative Language In Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) By Ariana Grande .

No	Moral Value	Frequency	Percentage
1	Rhetorical Questions	3	17.6%
2	Repetition	3	17.6%
3	Contrast of Emotion	3	17.6 %
4	Hyperbole	2	11.8%
5	Metaphor	2	11.8%
6	Personification	2	11.8%
7	Ambiguity	2	11.8%
Total		17	100%

Tabel 2. The Percentage of Figurative Language In Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) By Ariana Grande



In addition to the frequency and percentage data presented in the tables, the following chart visually illustrates the distribution of Figurative Language In Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) By Ariana Grande.

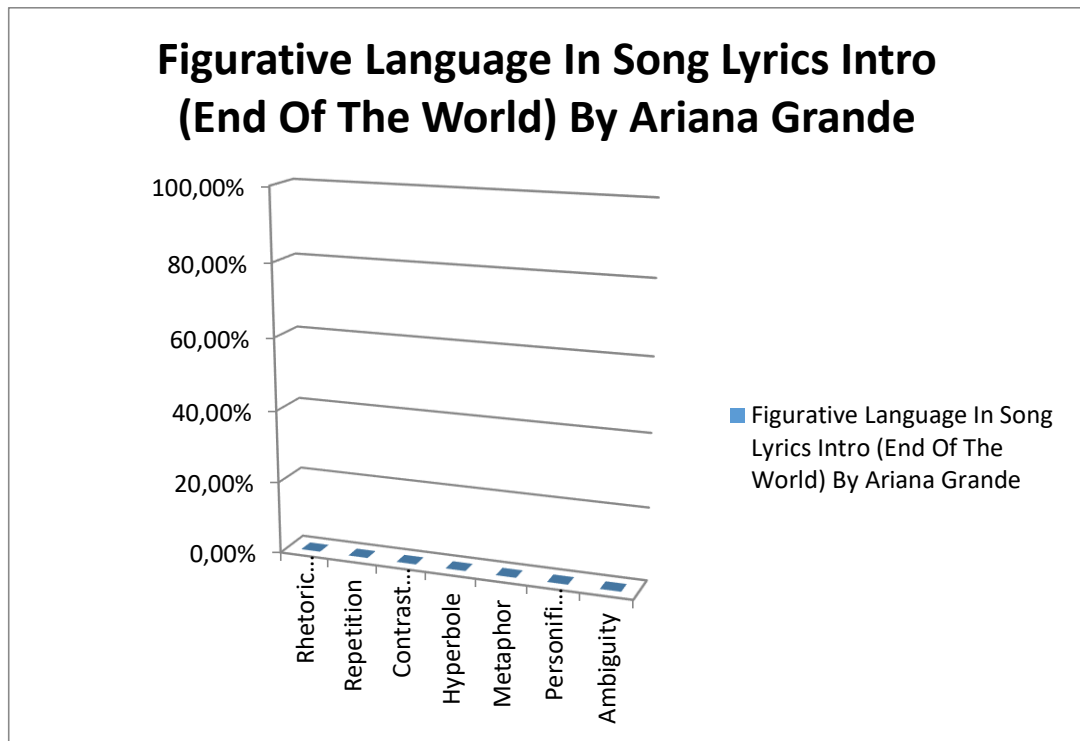


Diagram 1 The Percentage of Figurative Language in Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) by Ariana Grande.

Based on the above findings, there are 7 kinds of different kinds of Figurative Language in Song Lyrics Intro (End Of The World) by Ariana Grande, They are Rhetorical Questions, Repetition, Contrast of Emotion, Hyperbole, Metaphor, Personification and Ambiguity.

Rhetorical Questions: Expression of Doubt and Uncertainty

A rhetorical question is a question that is asked not to elicit an answer, but to make a point or to persuade. These questions are often used in speech or writing to emphasize a point, engage the audience, or provoke thought (Moezzi et al., 2017). The answer is usually implied or obvious, so the speaker or writer doesn't expect a response. Rhetorical questions are questions to which both or neither of the parties know the answer. The speaker or writer already assumes the answer.

"How can I tell if I'm in the right relationship?". This question expresses confusion and doubt about the singer's romantic situation. The word "how" emphasizes



the struggle to find clarity—it's not just about whether the relationship is right, but about how one is supposed to know or recognize that it is right. The question also conveys insecurity, as the singer seems unsure about what "rightness" even looks like in a relationship. In love and romance situation, people often feel a strong sense of certainty when they are in a relationship that feels right for them, but this question reveals that the singer is missing that confidence. The ambiguity of the relationship is troubling, as she cannot grasp whether she's experiencing something real and stable or whether she's caught in a situation of doubt and indecision.

"Aren't you really supposed to know that shit?". The use of the word "aren't" makes this question feel more like an internal accusation or self-reflection. This rhetorical question challenges the singer's own expectations, as if she believes that she should have some innate understanding of whether her relationship is right or wrong. The phrase "really supposed to know" indicates that the singer feels there is a standard or expectation that comes with being in a relationship—that one should inherently know if it's the right relationship for them. Its lyric as if she's trying to convince herself that she should already have the answer, that understanding and clarity about love should come naturally.

"Feel it in your bones and own that shit?". This rhetorical question further emphasizes the emotional conflict between the ideal and the reality of relationships. In a perfect world, love would be something you feel so clearly that there is no ambiguity. But the singer is struggling to experience that clarity, which deepens the sense of disorientation and uncertainty in the lyrics.

Repetition

Repetition is when lyric repeat the same word, phrase, or structure more than once in a sentence, paragraph, or speech (Swarniti, 2022). It's like saying something over and over again to make sure people hear it clearly or to make it stand out. In writing or speaking, repetition is used to drive home a point, make something feel more powerful, or help people remember an idea.

"Would I still be your lover?". It expresses a sense of emotional uncertainty and internal questioning. The singer is wondering whether their romantic partner would continue to love them if certain circumstances change. This question reflects vulnerability



and doubt, as the singer seeks reassurance about their relationship's stability and whether their love would remain under different conditions.

"Would you want me there?". It expresses a feeling of uncertainty and longing for validation. The singer is questioning whether their presence would be desired or welcomed by the person they are addressing. It reflects a sense of vulnerability, as they are unsure of their importance or value in the other person's life. This question suggests emotional insecurity and a desire for reassurance about their place in the relationship. The lyric emphasizes the singer's internal conflict about whether they are wanted or needed, further highlighting themes of doubt and emotional confusion.

"Would I be the one on your mind? Your mind? Your mind?". It emphasizes intense emotional insecurity and longing. The repetition of the phrase *"your mind"* highlights the singer's obsessive questioning and uncertainty about their significance in the other person's thoughts. They are desperately wondering if they hold a meaningful place in the other person's heart and mind, reflecting feelings of doubt, vulnerability, and emotional neediness. The repetition reinforces the idea that this question is consuming the singer's thoughts, underscoring their internal conflict and desire for affirmation and reassurance in the relationship.

Contrast or emotion

Contrast and emotion are two important elements that often work hand-in-hand in figurative language to deepen meaning (Simanjuntak & Lumingkewas, 2022) and create a more engaging experience for the reader or listener. In figurative language, this contrast can enhance the impact of metaphors, similes, or other figures of speech by drawing attention to the differences between two elements in a way that makes one stand out or feel more significant.

"I don't care". It could be an emotional defense mechanism. When facing uncertainty, doubt, or emotional turmoil, people sometimes distance themselves from their feelings as a way of avoiding pain or the possibility of rejection. The speaker may be attempting to mask their true feelings of fear, uncertainty, or hurt behind a facade of indifference.

"I'd rather tell the truth". This line suggests a strong commitment to honesty and transparency, even if the truth is painful or uncomfortable. It implies that despite any



feelings of detachment or indifference, the speaker values honesty above all else and would rather face the difficult reality than avoid it.

"Than make it worse for you". This final phrase deepens the emotional contrast by introducing concern for the other person. The speaker's willingness to be truthful is not motivated by selfish reasons but by a desire to protect the other person from further harm. There's a sense of emotional sacrifice here: the speaker is willing to be vulnerable or confront difficult truths in order to prevent causing more harm to the person they care about.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is when people say something much bigger or more extreme than it actually is, just to make a point. It's not meant to be taken literally—it's just for emphasis or to get across how strong a feeling or situation is. Hyperbole is often used to make things sound more dramatic or funny (Abidarda, 2010). It can also help show strong emotions, like excitement or frustration. It's like turning up the volume on a feeling or situation to make it stand out.

"Feel it in your bones". It is an emotional intensity of a feeling is exaggerated for effect. Literally, when we say we *"feel something in our bones,"* it suggests that the sensation is so deep, so profound, that it penetrates into the very core of our being. It's an exaggeration meant to convey an emotional certainty that is not just superficial or intellectual but felt physically at a primal level. The phrase suggests that the feeling of being "right" or "true" in a relationship should be as intrinsic and obvious as a physical sensation. If you truly "know," it should be something you feel deeply—something that transcends doubt and makes everything about the relationship feel aligned and natural.

"Wonder if he's judging me like I am right now", this lyric is another example of hyperbole, though this time the exaggeration revolves around the singer's self-consciousness and insecurity. The exaggeration here reflects how intensely the singer feels as though she is being judged, even when there is no clear evidence to support that judgment.

In relationships, especially those that involve emotional uncertainty, it's common to project feelings of judgment onto others. The singer, in this line, is suggesting that she is experiencing such a high level of self-awareness and self-criticism that it almost feels



as though she's judging herself to the same extreme that she imagines her partner might be. The exaggeration of this judgment reflects the internal conflict she's going through. The phrase amplifies the feeling that she is constantly evaluating herself—questioning whether she is doing things right, whether she's good enough, whether she measures up to her partner's expectations.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things without using "like" or "as". It states that one thing is another thing (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020), even though they are not literally the same. By doing this, a metaphor helps to create a deeper meaning or image to convey a specific idea, emotion, or concept in a more vivid or powerful way (Akbar et al., 2023). In simple terms, a metaphor describes one thing by saying it is another thing, to draw attention to shared qualities or make the description more meaningful.

"If the sun refused to shine, Baby, would I still be your lover?". This line uses the metaphor of the sun refusing to shine to symbolize the foundational elements of life and love. The sun is often seen as a universal symbol of life itself—it's the source of light, warmth, and energy that sustains all living beings on Earth. In a broader sense, the sun is a metaphor for certainty, continuity, and stability in our lives. It's something we expect to always be there, and its reliable presence is often associated with the essential, enduring aspects of life.

This metaphor emphasizes the fragility of love—it implies that love may not be as enduring or unconditional as it might seem if it cannot withstand challenges, disruptions, or existential shifts. It's a test of commitment, asking whether love is deep enough to survive even the most catastrophic, world-altering changes.

"If the moon went dark tonight". Similarly, the metaphor of the moon going dark evokes the idea of something that is traditionally constant and guiding in our lives suddenly disappearing. The moon is often a symbol of constancy in the night sky, providing light in darkness and a sense of rhythm (e.g., with its phases). It represents guidance, calm, and stability, especially during times of uncertainty or confusion.



This lyric implies the disappearance of an essential presence, much like the sun and moon's relationship to the Earth. The question "If the moon went dark" challenges the idea of enduring love, asking whether it can withstand unimaginable changes, or even total collapse.

Personification

Personification is a literary device in which non-human things (such as objects, animals, or abstract concepts (In et al., 2016) are given human qualities or agency. This device allows the non-human to take on human-like attributes such as feelings, desires, actions, or consciousness.

"If the sun refused to shine". The sun is personified because it is given agency, implying that it can make a conscious decision to refuse to shine. Normally, the sun is a constant and predictable presence, and the idea of it "refusing to shine" is an act that requires intentionality—something that the sun, as a natural, non-human entity, obviously doesn't possess.

The sun is imagined as a conscious being with the ability to choose, in this case, to refuse to shine. This human-like quality emphasizes the gravity of the emotional question being asked. The refusal to shine represents an existential crisis—the idea that something foundational and reliable, like love, might not continue under extreme conditions, just as the sun would not be able to sustain life if it ceased to shine. The phrase adds a layer of uncertainty to the question of love, implying that the love may not be enduring if it is not supported by the fundamental forces of the universe (symbolized by the sun's light).

"If the moon went dark tonight". Similarly, the moon is also personified, as it is imagined to have the ability to go dark, a process that is typically beyond its control. The moon goes through phases naturally, but the idea of the moon actively "going dark" is a human-like action—choosing to cease to exist in its full form.

The moon is granted the power of choice—it has agency and can "go dark" as if it were consciously deciding to withdraw its light. This human-like ability to make a decision imbues the moon with an emotional weight. The phrase represents the possible loss or absence of something once constant and reliable in a relationship. Just as the moon's phases can bring light in the darkness, love is supposed to provide guidance and



stability. The personification of the moon going dark suggests that love, too, could cease to provide that guidance if certain conditions (uncertainty, doubt, etc.) take over.

Ambiguity

In literature and songwriting, ambiguity refers to the use of language or phrasing that is intentionally vague, open to multiple interpretations, or lacking in clear, definitive meaning. This creates a sense of uncertainty and incompleteness in the message, reflecting situations where answers are unclear, and emotions or intentions are hidden or obscured.

"Wonder if he's thinking 'bout it too and smiling": The singer wonders if her partner is having the same thoughts and emotions that she is. She doesn't know if he is thinking about the same thing, and the use of "wonder" expresses her lack of certainty. The word "smiling" adds another layer of uncertainty—does his smile signify happiness, affection, or something else? The smile could be interpreted in many different ways, but the singer remains unsure.

"Wonder if he knows that that's been what's inspiring me": Here, the singer questions whether her partner is even aware of how his actions or presence have impacted her. The use of "wonder" again emphasizes lack of clarity—she is unsure whether her partner realizes the significance of his influence on her. There's also a sense of emotional vulnerability, as the singer might be hoping for acknowledgment or validation but doesn't know if that recognition is mutual.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

CONCLUSION

This study shows how figurative language in Ariana Grande's song "Intro (End of the World)" adds emotional depth and complexity to the lyrics. The use of devices like rhetorical questions, repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, and ambiguity helps express the singer's internal struggles and uncertainty about her relationship. These figurative elements make the song more than just words set to music—they allow listeners to connect emotionally by reflecting on feelings of doubt, vulnerability, and existential questioning. For example, metaphors like the sun and moon going dark symbolize the fragility of love, while rhetorical questions create a



sense of confusion and insecurity. Overall, these figurative devices make the song richer and more meaningful.

However, the study has some limitations. It only focuses on one song by Ariana Grande, so the findings may not apply to all her music or to other artists. Figurative language can be interpreted differently by different listeners, and a broader range of songs would provide a more complete picture of how figurative language is used in popular music. Future research could expand by analyzing more songs from different genres or looking at how figurative language varies across different cultures and musical styles. Despite these limitations, this study highlights the importance of figurative language in music and how it helps create emotional connections with listeners.

SUGGESTION

For future studies, it would be helpful to analyze a wider variety of songs from different artists and genres to see how figurative language is used across different musical styles. Also, it would be interesting to explore how figurative language in songs affects listeners' emotions through surveys or experiments, to better understand how these devices impact the way people connect with music.



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