

**THE USE OF LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE MEANING IN EXPRESSING
EMOTION IN THE SONG “HER” BY JVKE”.**

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Abstract

This study examines the use of literal and figurative meaning in expressing emotion in the song “Her” by JVKE. The purpose of this research is to identify the types of meaning used in the lyrics and to analyze how these meanings contribute to emotional expression. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on selected lyrics that contain emotional elements. The data are analyzed by classifying them into literal and figurative meanings, interpreting their meanings, and explaining their emotional significance. The findings reveal that figurative meaning is more dominant than literal meaning in the song. Figurative language, particularly metaphor and hyperbole, is frequently used to convey complex emotional experiences such as love, sadness, fear, and vulnerability. Meanwhile, literal meaning provides clarity and supports the overall narrative of the song. The interaction between literal and figurative meaning creates a balanced and effective emotional expression. This study concludes that semantic analysis is useful in understanding how language functions to express emotion in song lyrics.

Keywords: semantic analysis, literal meaning, figurative meaning, song lyrics, emotions

INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a tool for conveying information, but also a medium through which individuals express emotions, attitudes, and personal experiences. In everyday communication, speakers often go beyond the literal meaning of words to convey deeper emotional nuances. This becomes even more significant in artistic forms of language, such as songs, where meaning is often layered, symbolic, and open to interpretation. Through the strategic use of language, songwriters are able to transform simple expressions into emotionally powerful messages that resonate with listeners on both intellectual and affective levels.

In the field of Semantics, meaning is generally categorized into literal and figurative meaning. Literal meaning refers to the direct, surface-level interpretation of words based on their dictionary definitions. It is typically clear, explicit, and does not require additional

interpretation beyond the lexical level. On the other hand, figurative meaning involves a deeper level of interpretation, where words are used in a non-literal sense to convey abstract ideas, emotions, or imagery. Figurative language includes various stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and personification, all of which function to enrich meaning and enhance emotional expression.

The distinction between literal and figurative meaning is particularly important in understanding how emotions are communicated through language. Literal expressions may present emotions in a straightforward and direct manner, making them easy to understand. However, they often lack the depth and intensity that figurative expressions can provide. Figurative language, by contrast, allows speakers and writers to illustrate emotions in a more imaginative and impactful way, enabling listeners to not only understand but also feel the intended emotion. Therefore, analyzing the interaction between these two types of meaning can provide valuable insights into how emotional experiences are linguistically constructed.

Songs, as a form of musical and poetic discourse, offer a rich and dynamic context for exploring the use of literal and figurative meaning. Modern song lyrics frequently address themes such as love, heartbreak, longing, and emotional vulnerability, often combining simple, literal statements with more complex figurative expressions. This combination creates a layered meaning that invites listeners to engage in interpretation while simultaneously experiencing emotional connection. As a result, songs become an ideal object of study for semantic analysis, particularly in relation to emotional expression.

One song that exemplifies this phenomenon is “*Her*” by JVKE. As a contemporary artist known for his emotionally driven songwriting and distinctive musical style, JVKE frequently explores themes of love, heartbreak, and personal reflection in his work. In the song “*Her*,” he presents a narrative of emotional struggle, longing, and unresolved feelings toward a past relationship. The lyrics combine direct statements of emotion with figurative expressions that create vivid imagery and deepen the listener’s emotional experience. This makes the song particularly suitable for examining how literal and figurative meaning function together in expressing complex emotions.

The selection of this song as the object of study is based on the observation that emotional expression in music is rarely conveyed through literal language alone. Instead, songwriters tend to rely heavily on figurative devices to communicate feelings that are otherwise difficult to articulate. By analyzing both literal and figurative meanings in the lyrics

of “*Her*,” this study seeks to uncover how these linguistic elements interact to construct emotional meaning. It also aims to demonstrate that figurative language is not merely ornamental, but plays a central role in shaping the emotional depth and interpretive richness of the song.

Furthermore, this study is grounded in the understanding that language in songs reflects not only individual emotions but also broader patterns of human experience. The emotions expressed in “*Her*” such as love, sadness, regret, and longing are universal in nature, allowing listeners from different backgrounds to relate to the message. By examining how these emotions are encoded through both literal and figurative meaning, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language and emotion in contemporary music.

In line with the background of the study, this research is guided by two primary questions: (1) what types of literal and figurative meaning are identified in the song “*Her*” by JVKE, and (2) how do these meanings function in conveying emotional expression? To answer these questions, a qualitative descriptive approach is employed, focusing on the analysis of selected lyrics that demonstrate significant emotional content and linguistic characteristics.

LITERAL REVIEW

Semantics and Meaning

Semantics is a fundamental branch of Semantics that is concerned with the study of meaning in language, particularly how meaning is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted by speakers and listeners. It examines not only the meanings of individual words, but also how meanings are combined within phrases, sentences, and larger units of discourse. In this sense, semantics plays a crucial role in understanding how language functions as a system of communication, enabling individuals to share ideas, emotions, and experiences.

However, meaning in language is not always fixed, stable, or directly observable. Rather, it is often influenced by a variety of factors, including context, speaker intention, cultural background, and situational conditions. The same linguistic expression may carry different meanings depending on how and where it is used, as well as who is using it. This variability highlights the dynamic nature of meaning, suggesting that understanding language requires more than simply knowing dictionary definitions. Instead, it requires an awareness of how meaning operates within real communicative contexts.

In everyday communication, speakers frequently rely on both literal and non-literal (figurative) meanings to convey their messages effectively. Literal meaning provides clarity and directness, allowing information to be communicated in a straightforward manner. In contrast, figurative meaning allows speakers to express abstract ideas, emotions, and imaginative concepts that may not be easily captured through literal language alone. Through devices such as metaphor, hyperbole, and symbolism, figurative language enriches communication by adding depth, nuance, and emotional intensity.

This complexity becomes even more apparent in creative forms of language use, such as literary texts, poetry, and especially songs. In such contexts, meaning is often layered and open to interpretation, requiring the audience to actively engage in the process of meaning-making. Song lyrics, in particular, frequently combine literal statements with figurative expressions to create a more powerful emotional impact. As a result, semantics provides an essential analytical framework for examining how meaning is constructed in these texts, allowing researchers to explore not only what is being said, but also how and why it is expressed in a particular way.

Therefore, the study of semantics is highly relevant in analyzing song lyrics, as it enables a deeper understanding of how language is used to represent emotional experiences. By examining both literal and figurative meaning, researchers can uncover the underlying messages embedded within the lyrics and reveal how these meanings contribute to the overall emotional and artistic effect of the song.

LITERAL MEANING

Literal meaning refers to the direct, explicit, and surface-level meaning of words or expressions, as commonly found in dictionary definitions. It represents the most basic level of meaning in language, where words are interpreted according to their conventional and widely accepted usage without requiring additional inference or interpretation. In semantic analysis, literal meaning is often associated with denotative meaning, which focuses on the objective relationship between linguistic expressions and the entities or concepts they refer to in the real world.

One of the key characteristics of literal meaning is its clarity and stability. Unlike figurative meaning, which may vary depending on context, interpretation, or cultural background, literal meaning tends to be more consistent and universally understood among

speakers of the same language. This makes it particularly important in situations where precision and accuracy are required, such as in academic writing, legal discourse, and informational communication. Literal expressions allow speakers to convey ideas in a straightforward manner, minimizing the risk of ambiguity or misunderstanding.

However, it is important to note that literal meaning does not exist entirely independent of context. While it provides the foundational layer of meaning, its interpretation can still be influenced by situational factors, such as tone, emphasis, and communicative purpose. In many cases, literal meaning serves as the starting point from which more complex or nuanced interpretations, including figurative meanings, are developed. Therefore, understanding literal meaning is essential before one can fully grasp the deeper or implied meanings within a text.

In the context of song lyrics, literal meaning plays a crucial role in maintaining coherence and ensuring that the audience can follow the basic narrative or message of the song. Even when songwriters employ figurative language to enhance emotional expression, literal meaning often remains present as a structural foundation. It helps listeners identify the subject matter, understand the sequence of events, and interpret the overall theme of the song. Without this element of clarity, the message conveyed through the lyrics might become too abstract or difficult to comprehend.

Furthermore, literal meaning contributes to the balance between accessibility and artistic expression in songs. While figurative language adds depth and emotional richness, literal expressions ensure that the song remains relatable and understandable to a wide audience. In this way, literal meaning functions not only as a communicative tool but also as an essential component in shaping how listeners engage with and interpret the song.

FIGURATIVE MEANING

Figurative meaning involves the use of language in a non-literal way to express ideas, emotions, and imagery that go beyond the surface interpretation of words. Unlike literal meaning, which relies on direct and dictionary-based definitions, figurative meaning requires interpretation, as it often conveys implied or symbolic messages. In semantic studies, figurative meaning is closely related to what Geoffrey Leech (1974) refers to as connotative and affective meaning, where language is used not only to convey information but also to express attitudes, emotions, and personal perspectives. This suggests that meaning in language is not merely about what is said, but also about how it is felt and interpreted.

One of the primary functions of figurative meaning is to overcome the limitations of literal language. While literal expressions are effective for delivering clear and precise information, they are often insufficient for conveying complex emotional experiences. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphor is not simply a stylistic device, but a fundamental mechanism of human thought that shapes how people understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences. This perspective highlights that figurative language, especially metaphor, is deeply embedded in human cognition and plays a crucial role in how individuals conceptualize emotions such as love, loss, and fear.

Among the various types of figurative language, **Metaphor** is one of the most widely used in song lyrics. A metaphor involves describing one concept in terms of another, allowing speakers to create associations that enrich meaning. For example, expressions such as “I’m lost without you” or “dead inside” do not refer to literal conditions, but instead represent emotional states. These metaphors function by mapping abstract feelings onto more concrete experiences, making them easier to understand and more emotionally impactful.

Hyperbole, which refers to intentional exaggeration used to emphasize a feeling or idea. Hyperbolic expressions, such as “I’ve run for many miles” or “scared to death,” are commonly found in songs to intensify emotional expression. As noted by Perrine (1992), hyperbole is an effective literary device that enhances emotional intensity by stretching reality beyond its normal limits, thereby drawing attention to the speaker’s emotional condition.

In addition, **Personification** and **Simile** are also significant forms of figurative language. Personification involves attributing human characteristics to non-human entities or abstract concepts, making them more relatable and vivid. Simile, on the other hand, makes explicit comparisons using connectors such as “like” or “as,” helping listeners visualize and understand emotions more clearly. Although these devices may vary in frequency, they all contribute to the richness and depth of meaning in a text.

Furthermore, figurative meaning often works in combination with other semantic and stylistic elements to create layered interpretations. In songs, figurative expressions are not merely decorative, but serve as a central tool for emotional communication. They allow songwriters to transform personal experiences into universally relatable messages, enabling listeners to connect with the lyrics on a deeper level. As emphasized by Abrams (1999), figurative language is essential in literary and artistic texts because it expands the expressive capacity of language beyond its literal boundaries.

In the context of song lyrics, figurative meaning plays a dominant role in shaping emotional expression. It allows songwriters to convey complex and often abstract emotions in a way that is vivid, memorable, and impactful. Therefore, analyzing figurative meaning is essential for understanding not only the linguistic structure of a song, but also the emotional and psychological dimensions embedded within it.

Language and Emotion in Songs

Songs are widely recognized as a powerful medium for emotional expression, as they combine linguistic elements with musical components such as melody, rhythm, and tone. This integration allows songs to communicate meaning on multiple levels, not only through the words themselves but also through the emotional atmosphere created by the music. As a result, songs are capable of expressing complex emotional experiences in ways that are often more impactful than ordinary spoken or written language.

From a semantic perspective, song lyrics represent a form of creative discourse in which meaning is carefully constructed to evoke emotional responses. According to Geoffrey Leech (1974), language used in artistic texts frequently emphasizes affective and connotative meanings, which are closely related to the expression of emotions and personal attitudes. In songs, these types of meaning are often realized through the combination of literal and figurative expressions, creating a layered structure of meaning that invites interpretation.

The use of figurative language in songs plays a central role in enhancing emotional depth. Through devices such as metaphor and hyperbole, songwriters are able to represent abstract emotional states in more vivid and imaginative ways. As proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphor is a fundamental mechanism through which humans conceptualize abstract experiences, including emotions. This explains why emotional expressions in songs are frequently conveyed through figurative language rather than literal statements alone.

At the same time, literal meaning remains an important component in song lyrics, as it provides clarity and helps listeners follow the core message or narrative of the song. Without literal meaning, the lyrics might become too abstract or ambiguous. Therefore, the interaction between literal and figurative meaning is essential in shaping how emotions are communicated and understood in songs.

This interaction is particularly evident in contemporary pop songs, where emotional experiences such as love, heartbreak, fear, and longing are expressed through a combination of direct statements and imaginative expressions. Songwriters often use literal language to establish the situation or context, while figurative language is employed to intensify emotional impact and create deeper resonance with the audience. As a result, meaning in songs is not constructed through a single type of expression, but through the dynamic interplay between literal and figurative elements.

Based on this perspective, it becomes important to examine how these two types of meaning function together in a specific song. In the case of “*Her*” by JVKE, the lyrics present a rich combination of literal and figurative expressions that reflect the speaker’s emotional journey, including feelings of love, confusion, fear, and emotional vulnerability. Therefore, the next section of this study focuses on analyzing selected lyrics from the song in order to identify the types of meaning used and to explain how they contribute to the expression of emotion in a more systematic and detailed manner.

Research on Literal and Figurative Meaning in Songs

Research on literal and figurative meaning in songs has become an important area of study within linguistics and literary analysis, particularly in relation to how language is used to express emotion. Many scholars have emphasized that song lyrics are not merely a form of entertainment, but also a complex linguistic medium through which meaning is constructed and interpreted. In this context, the analysis of both literal and figurative meaning is essential for understanding how emotional experiences are communicated through language.

Several studies have investigated the use of figurative language in song lyrics, focusing on identifying types such as metaphor, hyperbole, simile, and personification. These studies generally reveal that figurative meaning is more dominant than literal meaning in songs, especially those that explore emotional themes such as love, heartbreak, and personal struggle. Figurative expressions are often used to intensify emotional impact, allowing songwriters to convey feelings in a more vivid and imaginative way. This supports the view of Geoffrey Leech (1974), who argues that language in artistic texts frequently emphasizes affective and connotative meanings rather than purely conceptual meaning.

In addition, the theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) further explains the importance of figurative meaning, particularly metaphor, in understanding human

thought and emotion. According to their perspective, metaphor is not only a linguistic feature but also a cognitive tool that enables individuals to conceptualize abstract experiences, such as love and emotional pain, in more concrete terms. This theoretical framework has been widely applied in analyzing song lyrics, where metaphors are frequently used to represent emotional states.

Furthermore, previous research has also highlighted the role of literal meaning in maintaining clarity and coherence within song lyrics. While figurative expressions enhance emotional depth, literal meaning provides a foundation that allows listeners to follow the narrative or situation described in the song. As a result, effective song lyrics often involve a combination of both literal and figurative meanings, creating a balance between clarity and emotional intensity.

However, despite the significant number of studies focusing on figurative language in songs, many of them tend to emphasize classification rather than interpretation. In other words, they often identify and categorize types of figurative expressions without deeply examining how these meanings function in expressing emotion or how they interact with literal meaning within a single text. This indicates a gap in the existing research, particularly in terms of exploring the relationship between literal and figurative meaning in a more integrated and contextualized manner.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by analyzing both literal and figurative meanings in the song “*Her*” by JVKE. Unlike previous studies that focus mainly on identifying types of figurative language, this research emphasizes how these meanings function together in expressing emotion. By adopting a semantic approach, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language is used in song lyrics to represent emotional experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the use of literal and figurative meaning in the song “*Her*” by JVKE. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because this study focuses on interpreting meanings and understanding how language expresses emotion rather than measuring data numerically. Through this method, the researcher is able to explore the depth of meaning in the lyrics and explain how both literal and figurative expressions contribute to emotional communication.

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design, which aims to describe and interpret the types of meaning found in the selected data. The focus of the research is not on statistical analysis, but on understanding how literal and figurative meanings function within the context of song lyrics. Through this approach, the researcher is able to examine the relationship between language and emotion in a more comprehensive and interpretative manner.

Data Source

The data source of this study is the lyrics of the song “*Her*” by JVKE. The lyrics are used as the primary data because they contain various linguistic expressions that reflect emotional experiences. As a form of written discourse, song lyrics provide rich material for semantic analysis, particularly in examining how meaning is constructed and conveyed through language. In this study, the focus is placed on selected lines within the lyrics that demonstrate the use of literal and figurative meaning.

The song “*Her*” is chosen as the object of analysis because it presents a strong emotional narrative related to themes such as love, heartbreak, confusion, and vulnerability. These themes are expressed through a combination of direct statements and figurative expressions, making the song relevant for analyzing the interaction between literal and figurative meaning. In addition, the language used in the song reflects contemporary usage, which allows the analysis to be more relatable and applicable to modern listeners.

Data Collection Technique

The data in this study are collected using a documentation technique, which involves obtaining and analyzing written materials as the primary source of data. In this case, the researcher collects the lyrics of the song “*Her*” by JVKE from a reliable and accurate source to ensure the validity of the data. After obtaining the lyrics, the researcher reads them repeatedly and carefully in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content, context, and emotional tone of the song.

During this process, the researcher identifies specific lines or phrases that contain emotional expressions and are relevant to the focus of the study. These selected lyrics are then noted and organized systematically to facilitate further analysis. The selection is based on their potential to represent either literal or figurative meaning, as well as their significance in

conveying emotional experiences such as love, sadness, fear, and longing. By using this technique, the researcher ensures that the data collected are both relevant and sufficient to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis in this study is conducted through a series of systematic steps in order to ensure clarity and consistency. First, the selected lyrics are carefully examined and identified to determine whether they contain literal or figurative meaning. This initial classification is important as it forms the basis for further analysis. Each lyric is then categorized accordingly to distinguish between direct and non-literal expressions.

Second, for the lyrics that are identified as containing figurative meaning, the researcher determines the specific type of figurative language used, such as metaphor or hyperbole. This step helps to provide a more detailed understanding of how meaning is constructed in the lyrics. Third, each lyric is interpreted in its context to explain its meaning more comprehensively, taking into account the overall theme and emotional tone of the song.

The researcher analyzes the emotional significance of each lyric by explaining how the identified meaning contributes to the expression of emotion in the song. This includes examining how certain expressions intensify feelings, create imagery, or reflect the speaker's emotional state. Through these steps, the analysis provides a clear explanation of the relationship between language and emotion, as well as how literal and figurative meanings function together in the song.

FINDING

Overview of Data

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis of literal and figurative meaning in the song "*Her*" by JVKE. The data consist of selected lyrics that contain emotional expressions and are relevant to the focus of this study. Each lyric has been analyzed and classified into either literal meaning or figurative meaning based on its linguistic characteristics.

Based on the analysis, a total of **22 data** were identified from the lyrics. These data include both literal and figurative expressions that contribute to the emotional message of the song. Among these, figurative meaning appears more frequently than literal meaning,

indicating that the songwriter tends to use non-literal language to express emotions more vividly and effectively.

The figurative expressions found in the song mainly include metaphor and hyperbole, which are used to intensify emotional experiences such as love, sadness, fear, and longing. Meanwhile, literal expressions are used to provide clarity and to support the overall narrative of the song. The combination of these two types of meaning creates a balanced and meaningful emotional expression throughout the lyrics.

Data Analysis

The following table presents the analysis of literal and figurative meaning found in the song:

No.	Lyrics	Type	Figurative Device	Meaning	Emotion
1.	Look me dead in my eyes	Figurative	Hyperbole	Looking very intensely and seriously	Intensity
2.	'Til the day that I die	Figurative	Hyperbole	For a lifetime / forever	Devotion
3.	Dead inside	Figurative	Metaphore	Feeling emotionally empty	Emptiness
4.	I just wanna feel alive	Literal	-	Wanting to feel alive again	Longing
5.	With you, I'm alive	Figurative		The presence of someone gives meaning to life	Love
6.	Fell in love, but it left me lonely	Figurative	Paradox	Love resulting in loneliness	Heartbreak
7.	Tried to trust, but it burned me slowly	Figurative	Metaphor	Trust leading to gradual emotional pain	Pain

8.	I didn't know what I was looking for	Literal	-	Feeling uncertain or confused	Confusion
9.	'Til I found her	Literal	-	Finding someone meaningful	Hope
10.	Without her, I'm a mess	Figurative	Metaphor	Being emotionally unstable	Instability
11.	Nothing 'bout that love made sense	Literal	-	The relationship was confusing or illogical	Confusion
12.	I was stressed	Literal	-	Experiencing emotional pressure	Anxiety
13.	I've run for many miles trying to find love	Figurative	Hyperbole	Making great efforts to find love	Struggle
14.	Woman that could love me and never leave my side	Literal	-	Desire for a stable relationship	Desire
15.	I've run for many miles trying to get away	Figurative	Hyperbole	Trying hard to escape from problems	Fear
16.	The things I'm afraid of	Literal	-	Personal fears	Fear
17.	You say that we're already done	Literal	-	The relationship has ended	Sadness
18.	What does that even mean?	Literal	-	Expressing confusion	Confusion
19.	Open my eyes	Figurative	Metaphor	Becoming aware of reality	Realization
20.	Thank God it was just a dream	Literal	-	Feeling relieved that something is not real	Relief

21.	Scared to death they'll leave	Figurative	Hyperbole	Being extremely afraid of abandonment	Anxiety
22.	Never leave	Literal	-	A promise of staying together	Love
23.	I found her	Literal	-	Successfully finding someone meaningful	Joy / Relief
24.	Without her	Figurative	Ellipsis / Implicit Meaning	Feeling incomplete or lacking something essential	Emptiness
25.	I'm a mess	Figurative	Metaphor	Being emotionally disorganized or unstable	Distress

DISCUSSION

The Use of Figurative Meaning in Expressing Emotion

Based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, it is evident that figurative meaning plays a dominant role in expressing emotion in the song “*Her*” by JVKE. The analysis shows that the songwriter frequently employs figurative language, particularly metaphor and hyperbole, to convey complex emotional experiences. These figurative expressions allow the speaker to communicate feelings in a more vivid, imaginative, and impactful way compared to literal expressions.

One of the most prominent types of figurative language found in the song is metaphor. For instance, the expression “*dead inside*” represents a state of emotional emptiness rather than a literal condition. This metaphor effectively conveys the depth of the speaker’s emotional pain, making the feeling more intense and relatable. Similarly, the phrase “*I’m a mess*” illustrates the speaker’s emotional instability, suggesting a loss of control and inner chaos. These metaphors function by transforming abstract emotional states into more concrete and understandable images.

This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), who argue that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device, but a fundamental aspect of human cognition. According to their perspective, individuals understand abstract experiences, such as emotions, by relating them to more concrete concepts. In this case, emotional suffering is conceptualized through physical or tangible conditions, allowing listeners to better grasp and feel the speaker's experience.

In addition to metaphor, hyperbole is also widely used in the song to intensify emotional expression. For example, the phrase "*I've run for many miles*" does not literally refer to physical distance, but instead emphasizes the extent of the speaker's effort in searching for love or escaping emotional pain. Likewise, the expression "*scared to death*" exaggerates the speaker's fear of being abandoned, highlighting the intensity of this emotion. These hyperbolic expressions function to amplify emotional impact, making the feelings more dramatic and noticeable.

Furthermore, the use of figurative language in the song reflects what Geoffrey Leech (1974) describes as affective meaning, where language is used to express the speaker's emotions and attitudes rather than simply conveying factual information. In this context, figurative expressions are not only decorative elements, but serve as essential tools for emotional communication. They allow the songwriter to present personal experiences in a way that resonates with listeners on a deeper level.

Overall, the dominance of figurative meaning in the song indicates that emotional expression is more effectively conveyed through non-literal language. By using metaphor and hyperbole, the songwriter is able to create a more powerful and engaging emotional narrative.

The Role of Literal Meaning in Supporting Emotional Expression

Although figurative meaning is dominant, literal meaning also plays a crucial role in the song. Literal expressions provide clarity and help establish the context of the narrative, allowing listeners to understand the situation being described. Without literal meaning, the lyrics might become too abstract or difficult to interpret.

For example, the line "*I didn't know what I was looking for*" clearly expresses the speaker's confusion in a direct and straightforward manner. This literal expression helps to establish the emotional background of the song, making it easier for listeners to follow the development of the narrative. Similarly, the phrase "*you say that we're already done*" directly

communicates the end of a relationship, providing a clear context for the emotional struggle that follows.

Literal meaning also serves as a foundation upon which figurative expressions are built. It provides the basic structure of the message, while figurative language adds emotional depth and intensity. This relationship between literal and figurative meaning reflects the idea that effective communication often requires a balance between clarity and creativity.

In addition, literal expressions contribute to the authenticity of the song. By including direct and relatable statements, the songwriter is able to create a sense of realism that enhances the emotional impact of the lyrics. Listeners are more likely to connect with the song when they can clearly understand the situation being described.

Therefore, although literal meaning may appear less expressive than figurative meaning, it remains an essential component of emotional communication in the song. It ensures that the message is accessible and understandable, while supporting the overall emotional narrative.

The Interaction Between Literal and Figurative Meaning

The analysis also reveals that the emotional expression in the song is not constructed through a single type of meaning, but through the interaction between literal and figurative meaning. These two types of meaning work together to create a layered and dynamic interpretation of the lyrics.

In many cases, literal expressions are used to establish the context, while figurative expressions are used to intensify emotional impact. For example, a literal statement may describe a situation, such as the end of a relationship, while a figurative expression conveys the emotional response to that situation. This combination allows the listener to both understand and feel the message of the song.

This interaction can also be seen as a balance between clarity and emotional intensity. Literal meaning ensures that the message is clear and accessible, while figurative meaning enhances the emotional depth and artistic quality of the lyrics. Together, they create a more complete and meaningful form of expression.

Moreover, this finding supports the idea that language in songs is inherently multidimensional. As suggested by Geoffrey Leech (1974), meaning in language extends beyond the conceptual level to include affective and expressive dimensions. The combination

of literal and figurative meaning in the song reflects this complexity, demonstrating how language can be used to convey both information and emotion simultaneously.

In conclusion, the interaction between literal and figurative meaning plays a crucial role in shaping the emotional expression of the song. Rather than functioning independently, these two types of meaning complement each other, resulting in a richer and more impactful lyrical composition.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the use of literal and figurative meaning in expressing emotion in the song “*Her*” by JVKE. Based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that both literal and figurative meanings play important roles in conveying emotional expression within the song.

The analysis shows that figurative meaning is more dominant than literal meaning in the lyrics. The songwriter frequently uses figurative language, particularly metaphor and hyperbole, to express complex emotional experiences such as love, sadness, fear, and emotional vulnerability. These figurative expressions allow abstract feelings to be represented in a more vivid and imaginative way, making the emotional message of the song more powerful and engaging.

At the same time, literal meaning also contributes significantly to the overall interpretation of the song. Literal expressions provide clarity and help establish the context of the narrative, enabling listeners to understand the situation and emotional background of the speaker. Without literal meaning, the lyrics might become too abstract and difficult to interpret. Therefore, literal meaning serves as a foundation that supports the use of figurative language.

Furthermore, the study finds that the interaction between literal and figurative meaning creates a balanced and effective form of emotional expression. While literal meaning ensures clarity, figurative meaning enhances emotional depth. This combination results in a richer and more meaningful interpretation of the song. The findings of this study support the theories proposed by Geoffrey Leech as well as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, which emphasize the importance of affective meaning and metaphor in understanding human emotions.

In conclusion, the use of literal and figurative meaning in the song “*Her*” demonstrates how language can be effectively used to express complex emotional experiences. The combination of these two types of meaning not only enhances the clarity of the message but

also deepens the emotional impact of the lyrics. Therefore, semantic analysis proves to be a valuable approach in understanding how meaning and emotion are constructed in song lyrics.

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APPENDIX A:

Look me dead in my eyes
(Dead in my) 'til the day that I die
(Dead inside) I just wanna feel alive
(With you, I'm alive) with you, I'm alive
Fell in love, but it left me lonely
Tried to trust, but it burned me slowly
I didn't know what I was looking for
'Til I found her
I found her
Without her
I'm a mess (I'm a mess)
There was nothing 'bout that love that made sense, I was stressed
'Til I found her (oh, oh)

I've run for many miles trying to find love
From a woman that could love me and never leave my side
And I've run for many miles trying to get away from
The things I'm afraid of and everything inside
You say that we're already done (done)
But what does that even mean?
You tell me to open my eyes
Thank God it was just a dream
I guess that's how you know that it's love
When you're scared to death they'll leave
Just say that you'll never leave, never leave
look me dead in my eyes
(Dead in my) 'til the day that I die
(Dead inside) I just wanna feel alive
(With you, I'm alive) with you, I'm a-, uh
Fell in love, but it left me lonely
Tried to trust, but it burned me slowly
I didn't know what I was looking for
'Til I found her
I found her
Without her
I'm a mess (I'm a mess)
There was nothing 'bout that love that made sense, I was stressed
'Til I found her (oh, oh)
'Til we found her
I'm a mess (I'm a mess)
There was nothing 'bout that love that made sense, I was stressed
'Til I found her (oh, oh)
'Til I found her
Ooh-ooh-ooh