

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

In contemporary music, lyrics can take any form for example, figurative language is especially common within the pop and R&B genres. Figurative devices such as metaphor, symbolism, and personification are frequently used to express complex emotions that cannot be conveyed through literal words alone. These literary elements serve as a bridge between the artist's inner world and the listener's understanding, transforming personal narratives into universal emotions.

Many artists make use of figurative language in their songs to create a stronger emotional connection with listeners. One notable artist who uses figurative language masterfully is NIKI, an Indonesian singer and songwriter. Her 2022 album *Nicole* stands out as a particularly intimate and reflective project. Unlike a typical album, *Nicole* is a reinterpretation of songs NIKI wrote during her teenage years, now reimagined with greater emotional maturity and lyrical depth. The album explores themes such as heartbreak, longing, self-discovery, and nostalgia, all framed through emotionally resonant figurative language.

All of the themes found in NIKI's songs are highly compelling and worthy of academic exploration. Despite NIKI's growing global recognition and critical acclaim, there remains a limited amount of scholarly research that focuses specifically on the literary qualities of her song writing particularly her use of figurative language to convey emotional experiences. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how NIKI employs metaphor, symbolism, and personification throughout her *Nicole* album to articulate themes of love, loss, nostalgia, and emotional transformation. Through this analysis, the research aims to uncover how NIKI's lyrical craftsmanship transforms deeply personal emotions into universally relatable expressions, thereby enriching the listener's emotional engagement and deepening the interpretive meaning of her work.

Given these considerations, this research not only aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on contemporary music analysis but also to provide a deeper understanding of how figurative language functions as an essential artistic tool in shaping emotional expression within song lyrics. By focusing on NIKI's *Nicole* album, this study highlights the intersection between language, emotion, and artistry, emphasizing how lyrical creativity can transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries. Ultimately, the findings of this research are expected to offer valuable insights for literary and linguistic studies, particularly in appreciating music lyrics as a rich and meaningful form of modern literary expression.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem, it can be identified that NIKI, as a singer-songwriter, often embeds figurative language in her lyrics throughout the *Nicole* album. This makes her song writing rich, poetic, and emotionally resonant; however, it also presents a challenge for listeners. Unfortunately, most of her songs are quite difficult to understand, causing the true meanings contained in NIKI's lyrics to remain unclear or not fully conveyed to the audience. In other words, the use of figurative language for example metaphors, personification, and symbolism often blurs the literal meaning of the lyrics, making it difficult for listeners to fully grasp the emotions and messages she aims to express. Based on this, the study seeks to explore how figurative language in her lyrics conveys emotional depth and how it influences listeners' understanding of her songs.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, I limit this research to analysing figurative language and emotional messages found in five selected songs from NIKI's album *Nicole*. The chosen tracks *Backburner*, *The Apartment We Won't Share*, *Anaheim*, *Oceans & Engines*, and *Take a Chance with Me* are selected because these five songs are the most popular among listeners, and I personally like them as well. The reason why only five songs are analysed is due to the limited time available to conduct this research. Although NIKI does not exclusively express sadness in her songs since she also conveys feelings of joy this study focuses on the emotional aspect of her song writing, particularly the expression of sadness, as it is

more frequently found and thus easier to analysing in depth. I chose to analyze figurative language because I want to understand the meanings contained within the lyrics of the songs

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What types of figurative language are used in the selected lyrics in each song of NIKI's album *Nicole*?
2. How does figurative language in the lyrics in each song of NIKI's album *Nicole* convey emotional messages such as love, heartbreak, nostalgia, and self-reflection?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify and explain the types of figurative language used in the selected songs from NIKI's *Nicole* album.
2. To analyses how figurative language contributes to the expression of emotional messages within the lyrics.

1.6 Benefit of the Research

This research provides the following benefits:

1. For students with an interest in semantics, this research can act as a meaningful source of reference to deepen their understanding of how language conveys abstract meanings through figurative expressions. It may also inspire further exploration of similar semantic phenomena in different literary or musical works.
2. For students who wish to analyze figurative language in song lyrics, this study provides a comprehensive and organized framework for identifying, classifying, and interpreting various figurative devices used in music. It can

serve as practical guidance for conducting similar linguistic analyses in future research.

3. For readers and music enthusiasts, this research offers a deeper appreciation of how NIKI uses figurative language to express emotions such as love, heartbreak, nostalgia, and self-reflection. It encourages listeners to engage more critically and emotionally with lyrical content in contemporary music.

1.7 Systematic Organization of the Research

The frame framework of this term paper organization. The researcher organizes it into five parts that consists five chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background, identification, limitation, and formulation of the problem, as well as the objectives, benefits, and structure of the research on figurative language and emotional expression in NIKI's *Nicole*.

CHAPTER 2 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation that supports the analysis of this research. It begins with an explanation of semantics as a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in language, referring to theories by Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), Verhaar (2001), and Dagna, which discuss the relationship between linguistic signs and meaning. The discussion continues with a detailed explanation of figurative language, including its definition, functions, and types, based on theories from Keraf (2009), Peter (2002), and Knickerbocker & Reninger (1963). These theories are used to identify and classify various types of figurative expressions such as metaphor, simile, personification,

hyperbole, and idiom. This chapter also explains how figurative language contributes to emotional meaning, allowing songwriters like NIKI to express feelings of love, heartbreak, nostalgia, and self-reflection in a poetic and creative way.

CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter discusses the research approach and methodology applied by the researcher in carrying out and developing this study.

CHAPTER 4 : ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the analysis of the selected song lyrics, identifying the figurative language used and interpreting the emotional content conveyed through each expression.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings, draws conclusions from the analysis, and suggests areas for further study related to figurative language and emotional themes in song lyrics.