

An Analysis of Figurative Languages on Teresa Teng's Song Lyrics

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ABSTRACT

This research was entitled "An Analysis of Figurative languages on Teresa Teng's Song Lyrics". Teresa Teng was a singer from Taiwan who was highly admired in Taiwan and China. During her lifetime, Teresa had popular songs, including 甜蜜蜜 (*tián mìmì*), 月亮代表我的心 (*yuèliàng dàibiǎo wǒ de xīn*), 梅花 (*méihuā*), 你怎么说 (*nǐ zěnmē shuō*), 爱人 (*àirén*), 我只在乎你 (*wǒ zhǐ zàihū nǐ*), 小城故事 (*xiǎochéng gùshì*), 偿还 (*cháng huán*), 再见我的爱人 (*zàijiàn wǒ de àirén*), and 千言万语 (*qiānyán wàn yǔ*). These songs were very popular cross-year songs. Therefore, these songs were analyzed in this research. This research objective was to describe some figurative languages in the lyrics of Teresa Teng's songs by utilizing stylistic theory and contextual semantics. The research method was a qualitative descriptive method. The research data were the lyrics of Teresa Teng's songs. The data sources of this research were ten songs by Teresa Teng. Based on the research results, there were ten types of figurative languages in the Teresa Teng's song lyrics, namely: *Kuāzhāng* 夸张, *Bǐyù* 比喻, *Fǎnfù* 反复, *Jǐngcè* 警策, *Bǐnǐ* 比拟, *Fǎnwèn* 反问, *Fǎnyǔ* 反语, *Huíhuán* 回环, *Dǐngzhēn* 顶真, and *Tònggǎn* 痛感.

KEYWORDS

Teresa Teng; figurative language; song lyrics; Taiwan-China.

INTRODUCTION

The use of language is significant in the process of delivering messages. Functionally, language is defined as a shared tool for expressing ideas. Language is formally defined as all imaginable sentences that can be made according to a grammatical arrangement.

One of the studies of language is figurative language. According to Keraf (2009:13), figurative language, in a rhetorical view, is part of the language in terms of choosing vocabulary or diction used in clauses or sentences to reveal the personality of language users. Currently, there are many ways to express the language used. One of them is through songs. A song is a work of art related to various sounds, has meaning, and is liked by certain people (Djohan, 2016: 8-9). Some dictions or words are selected and assembled into a sentence in the song. The arrangement of these words is the song lyrics. Lyrics are a person's expression in expressing language related to what is experienced, seen, and heard (Aminuddin, 2005: 91). When expressing what is experienced, seen, and heard, the poet or songwriter chooses the right vocabulary or dictions in the song (Fitri, 2017).

From a language perspective, song lyrics can be used as a communication medium to express and reflect the social reality in community groups or as a means to socialize

something and have responsibility value (Prasetyo, 2012). The song's lyrics use language to ensure that the song can be accepted and interpreted by listeners.

The choice of words made by the songwriter is very important. Apart from being an aesthetic value, the choice of words also determines the meaning of the composition of contextual meaning. Thus, one word does not only mean one. The more listeners, the more perceptions of meaning are created. It can make the message or meaning to be conveyed in the song lyrics conveyed. The understanding of word choice or diction is broader than what is composed by the fabric of the words (Keraf, 2009:20). The term diction is not only used to express the words used to express ideas and feelings but also includes the issue of figurative language. Figurative language is an arrangement of words by choosing figures of speech written and spoken by poets or songwriters that can cause deep feelings for listeners (Mulyana, 2005:12).

In Mandarin, there are many figurative languages. According to Huang and Liao (in Angka, 2019:18), figurative languages are divided into 21 types including: 比喻 *bǐyù* (parable), 比拟 *bǐnǐ* (personification), 对比 *duìbǐ* (antithesis), 借代 *jièdài* (metonymy), 夸张 *kuāzhāng* (hyperbole), 双关 *shuāngguān* (paronomasia), 对偶 *duì'ǒu* (parallelism), 反问 *fǎnwèn* (eroticism), and 反复 *fǎnfù* (repetition).

In this paper, the researcher wanted to analyze the lyrics of Teresa Teng's song. She was also often referred to as Deng Lijun, born on January 29, 1953. Her clear and sweet voice and heart-rending love songs were very popular in the 1970s and 1980s. She was known throughout East Asia, including Japan, for approximately 30 years. In addition to Chinese songs, Teresa Teng has sung songs in Hokkien, Cantonese, Japanese, English, and Indonesian. On May 8, 1995, Teresa passed away due to asthma. Teresa passed away while on vacation in Thailand when she was 42 years old. During her lifetime, Teresa had famous songs, including 甜蜜蜜 (*tián mì mì*), 月亮代表我的心 (*yuèliàng dài biǎo wǒ de xīn*), 梅花 (*méihuā*), 你怎么说 (*nǐ zěnme shuō*), 爱人 (*àirén*), 我只在乎你 (*wǒ zhǐ zài hū nǐ*), 小城故事 (*xiǎochéng gùshì*), 偿还 (*cháng huán*), 再见我的爱人 (*zài jiàn wǒ de àirén*), and 千言万语 (*qiānyán wànyǔ*). These were very popular cross-age songs, especially for people who understood Mandarin. One of them was in the lyrics 甜蜜蜜 as follows:

Data 1:

你笑得多甜蜜
(*nǐ xiào de duō tián mì*)

好象花儿开在春风里
(*hǎo xiàng huā ér kāi zài chūn fēng lǐ*)

In the lyrics, some lyrics used the figurative language 夸张 (*kuāzhāng*), namely the hyperbola on sentence 好象花儿开在春风里 (*hǎo xiàng huā ér kāi zài chūn fēng lǐ*), meaning: "Like a flower that blooms in spring." The first lyric 你笑得多甜蜜 (*nǐ xiào de duō tián mì*), explained that there was someone, whose a sweet smile. Meanwhile, the second lyric showed that that person's smile was like a flower that bloomed in spring, so the researcher analyzed that the figurative language used in the first and second lyrics was 夸张 (*kuāzhāng*), or hyperbole. This research used ten songs by Teresa Teng across ages from 1970 to 1989. The selection of the ten songs resulted from the researcher's observations of the songs that Teresa Teng has sung and had a variety of figurative languages.

RESEARCH METHODS

The term method comes from two syllables, “metha” and “hodas”, which means a way to achieve a goal. In the research title ‘*An Analysis of Figurative Languages on Teresa Teng’s Song Lyrics*’, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive research method.

A qualitative research method is intended to get a general understanding of social reality or describe the state of the research object based on facts (Moleong, 2008:6).

Data is a real object that can be used as a reference for studies, especially in research such as analysis or conclusions (Moleong, 2021). Data sources are everything as a reference or a place where the data is obtained. In this research, researchers used data sources from the YouTube site, namely ten Teresa Teng songs entitled 甜蜜蜜 (*tiánmì mì*), 月亮代表我的心 (*yuèliàng dài biǎo wǒ de xīn*), 梅花 (*méihuā*), 你怎么说 (*nǐ zěnmē shuō*), 爱人 (*ài rén*), 我只在乎你 (*wǒ zhǐ zài hū nǐ*), 小城故事 (*xiǎochéng gùshì*), 偿还 (*cháng huán*), 再见我的爱人 (*zài jiàn wǒ de ài rén*), and 千言万语 (*qiānyán wàn yǔ*). Meanwhile, data from ten songs included words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the song lyrics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the dominant type and language styles in the lyrics of Teresa Teng’s song, the results obtained were as follows:

Table 1. Data of Figurative Languages

No	Types of Figurative Languages	Amount of Data
1	<i>Kuāzhāng</i> 夸张	10
2	<i>Bǐyù</i> 比喻	8
3	<i>Fǎnfù</i> 反复	6
4	<i>Jǐngcè</i> 警策	4
5	<i>Fǎnyǔ</i> 反语	2
6	<i>Bǐnǐ</i> 比拟	2
7	<i>Fǎnwèn</i> 反问	2
8	<i>Huíhuán</i> 回环	1
9	<i>Dǐngzhēn</i> 顶真	1
10	<i>Tònggǎn</i> 痛感	1

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the dominant type of figurative language in Teresa Teng’s song lyrics was the *Kuāzhāng* figurative language 夸张, which consisted of 10 data, *Bǐyù* 比喻 as many as 8 data, *Fǎnfù* 反复 as many as 6 data, *Jǐngcè* 警策 as many as 4 data, *Bǐnǐ* 比拟 as many as 2 data, *Fǎnwèn* 反问 as many as 2 data, *Fǎnyǔ* 反语 as many as 2 data, *Huíhuán* 回环 as many as 1 data, *Dǐngzhēn* 顶真 as many as 1 data, and *Tònggǎn* 痛感 as many as 1 data.

Teresa Teng used the *Kuāzhāng* figurative language 夸张 in the songs intended to give a beautiful impression in the song lyrics. In addition to the beauty effect, the song lyrics also gave a dramatic impression.

1. Hyperbole Figurative language

In Teresa Teng’s song entitled 月亮代表我的心 (*yuèliàng dài biǎo wǒ de xīn*), some lyrics had a hyperbole, namely the lyrics:

轻轻的一个吻
qīng qīng de yīgè wěn
A soft kiss

已经打动我的心
yǐjīng dǎdòng wǒ de xīn
Has melted my heart

In the lyrics of the song above, there was the word 轻轻的一个吻 (qīng qīng de yīgè wěn), which meant a soft kiss, interpreted as a gentle kiss that could melt someone's heart. Hence, the lyrics of the song could be called hyperbole figurative language. According to Huáng and Liào, hyperbole 夸张 (Kuāzhāng) was a style of language used to exaggerate or minimize certain objects that could be directed at living or non-living things.

2. Parable Figurative language 比喻 (Bǐyù)

In Teresa Teng's song entitled 我只在乎你 (wǒ zhǐ zàihū nǐ), some lyrics had a parable figurative language, such as:

不知道会不会也有爱情甜如蜜
bù zhīdào huì bù huì yěyǒu àiqíng tián rú mì

In the song lyrics above, the song lyrics 不知道会不会也有爱情甜如蜜 (bù zhīdào huì bù huì yěyǒu àiqíng tián rú mì), had a figurative language with parables. In the song lyrics, there was the word 爱情甜如蜜 (àiqíng tián rú mì), which meant love as sweet as honey. It was a parable of the feeling of love being in love. It was the same as the characteristic of the parable figurative language, namely 比喻 (bǐyù). According to Huáng and Liào, a parable is a figurative language that compares an original object with other objects with different images but similarities from the parable's point of view.

3. Repetition Style 反复 (Fǎnfù)

Teresa's song entitled 爱人 (àirén) had a repetition style in the lyrics, namely:

请爱着我请再爱着我
qǐng àizhe wǒ qǐng zài àizhe wǒ

In the data above, in the lyrics 请爱着我请再爱着我 (qǐng àizhe wǒ qǐng zài àizhe wǒ), there was a figurative language used, namely repetition. In the lyrics, the words 请爱着我 (qǐng àizhe wǒ) were repeated twice. It was the same as the characteristic of the repetition figurative language, namely: 反复 (fǎnfù), as a figurative language with the method of repeating vocabulary in terms of sound or speech that is considered to have value, and the repetition is under the context of the sentence (Huáng and Liào, 1991).

4. Irony Figurative language 反语 (Fǎnyǔ)

In Teresa Teng's song entitled 偿还 (cháng huán), there was a lyric that had an ironic figurative language, namely:

破碎的心灵
pòsuì de xīnlíng

In the data above, the song lyrics explained that her soul was shattered into pieces. The word had the meaning of being heartbroken. Figurative language 反语 (*fǎnyǔ*) or better known as irony, is a figurative language that aims to explain in a figurative or satirical way (Huáng and Liào, 1991)

5. *Personification Figurative language 比拟 (Bǐnǐ)*

In the lyrics of the song ‘Goodbye My Love’, there were sentences that showed the personification figurative language, namely in the song lyrics:

那醉人的歌声，怎能忘记这段情
nà zuìrén de gēshēng, zěn néng wàngjì zhè duàn qíng

In the data above, in the lyrics 那醉人的歌声，怎能忘记这段情 (*nà zuìrén de gēshēng, zěn néng wàngjì zhè duàn qíng*), there was figurative language, namely personification. In the lyrics of the song, there was the word 那醉人的歌声 (*nà zuìrén de gēshēng*), which means that singing that intoxicates people is a personification style in which the subject is ‘singing’ as if someone is doing something that makes him drunk. It was the same as the characteristic of the personification, namely: 比拟 (*bǐnǐ*). According to Huáng and Liào, personification is a figurative language used to draw an object that is lifeless or inanimate as if it has properties like living things.

6. *Eroticism Figurative language 反问 (Fǎnwèn)*

Eroticism Figurative language 反问 found in one of the lyrics of Teresa Teng’s song, namely in her song entitled 爱人 (*àirén*)

再也不愿多说 为什么我是如此的冷漠?
zài yě bù yuàn duō shuō wèishéme wǒ shì rúcǐ de lěngmò
I do not want to talk much anymore, why am I so ignorant?

The song’s lyrics showed that she asked someone a question that did not require an answer. It was the same as the characteristic style of eroticism, as the figurative language given in an interrogative sentence was often used during an oration or speech to emphasize without accepting the answer to the question (Huáng and Liào 1991).

7. *Figurative language 警策 (Jǐngcè)*

In addition to hyperbole, in the song 月亮代表我的心 (*yuèliàng dàibiǎo wǒ de xīn*), there was also a figurative language 警策 (*Jǐngcè*) in one of the lyrics, namely:

你去想一想
nǐ qù xiǎng yī xiǎng

你去看一看

nǐ qù kàn yī kàn

In the two lyrics of the song above, there was the word *xiǎng yī xiǎng*, which meant to think, and also 看一看 (*nǐ qù kàn yī kàn*), which meant take a look. The purpose of these two words was to invite people to look at the moon and reflect on their feelings if they were still unsure and did not believe in them. It could be seen that the lyrics of the song used the figurative language 警策 (*jǐngcè*). Figurative language (警策) *jǐngcè* is a style of language that aims to help readers to understand a sentence that has deep meaning and philosophical values (Huáng and Liào 1991).

8. *Figurative language 回环 (Huíhuán)*

The song entitled 你怎么说 (*nǐ zěnmē shuō*) had song lyrics with a figurative language meaning 回环 (*Huíhuán*).

我没忘记，你忘记我
wǒ méi wàngjì, nǐ wàngjì wǒ
I did not forget you, but you forgot me.

In the data above, the lyrics of the song contained the words 忘记 (*wàngjì*, which was repeated twice. However, the word had a different meaning. The first 我没忘记 (*wǒ méi wàngjì*), meant I did not forget you, while the next lyrics 你忘记 (*nǐ wàngjì wǒ*) meant you forgot me. It was the same as the characteristic of figurative language 回环 (*huíhuán*).

Figurative language 回环 (*huíhuán*) repeats or duplicates the vocabulary used in a sentence with different descriptions of the sentence (Huáng and Liào, 1991).

9. *Figurative language 顶真 (Dǐngzhēn)*

Teresa Teng's song entitled 偿还 (*cháng huán*) had a figurative language 顶真 (*Dǐngzhēn*) in one of the lyrics of the song.

你可以去找心底恋情
nǐ kěyǐ qù zhǎo xīndǐ liànqíng
You can find a new love relationship

也可以不留一点音讯
yě kěyǐ bù liú yīdiǎn yīnxùn
And can leave no message

In the song lyrics, the lyric sentence of the first song contained the word 'keyi', which in the second sentence also contained the word "可以, thus making the first and second sentences continue. It was similar to the characteristic figurative language (*dǐngzhēn*) that uses the ending of the vocabulary in the initial sentence and duplicates the ending of the word into the second sentence, which is placed at the beginning of the sentence (Huáng and Liào, 1991).

10. *Figurative language 痛感 (Tònggǎn)*

In the song entitled 爱人 (*àirén*), there are also other figurative languages, namely figurative languages 痛感 (*Tònggǎn*).

甜蜜的感觉 吸引我
tiánmì de gǎnjué xīyǐn wǒ
The sweet feeling is getting closer to me

In the data above, in the song lyrics 甜蜜的感觉吸引我 (*tiánmì de gǎnjué xīyǐn wǒ*), there was a figurative language, namely 痛感 (*tònggǎn*). The lyrics explained that his feelings were happy. The word 甜蜜 (*Tiánmì*), or sweet, could be interpreted as a pleasant or happy experience. Furthermore, the lyrics of the song used the sense of taste. It was the same as the hallmark of stylistics 痛感 (*tonggǎn*). Figurative language 痛感 (*tonggǎn*), according to Huáng and Liào, is used to explain the relationship of an object or event that is related to the human senses.

CONCLUSION

After the researchers analyzed the types of the figurative language contained in the lyrics of Teresa Teng's songs, the researchers concluded that there were ten types of figurative language in the lyrics of Teresa Teng's songs, namely: *Kuāzhāng* 夸张, *Bǐyù* 比喻, *Fǎnfù* 反复, *Jǐngcè* 警策, *Bǐnǐ* 比拟, *Fǎnwèn* 反问, *Fǎnyǔ* 反语, *Huíhuán* 回环, *Dǐngzhēn* 顶真, and *Tònggǎn* 痛. The figurative language that was most widely used in the lyrics of Teresa Teng's songs included: *Kuāzhāng* 夸张 as many as 10 data, *Bǐyù* 比喻 as many as 8 data, *Fǎnfù* 反复 as many as 6 data, *Jǐngcè* 警策 as many as 4 data, *Bǐnǐ* 比拟 as many as 2 data, *Fǎnwèn* 反问 as many as 2 data, *Fǎnyǔ* 反语 as many as 2 data, *Huíhuán* 回环 as many as 1 data, *Dǐngzhēn* 顶真 as many as 1 data, and *Tònggǎn* 痛感 as many as 1 data.

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