

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research, encompassing the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research significance, and definitions of key terms. The aim is to establish a comprehensive understanding of the research context, motivations, and focus, as well as to introduce the principal concepts employed in the analysis. Through this chapter, readers will gain insight into the rationale and importance of the study, which explores the use of figurative language as a medium of self-expression in NIKI's album *Nicole*. By examining the intricate relationship between language, music, and cultural discourse, this research seeks to contribute to the broader field of language and literature studies, particularly in understanding non-Western artists' contributions to popular music.

1.1 Research Background

Music has long been recognized as one of the primary mediums for self-expression and emotional communication. Since ancient times, humans have used music to express their feelings and experiences, both in the context of religious ceremonies, celebrations, and other forms of art. In the modern era, popular music has taken a central role in global culture, becoming a platform through which artists can convey personal and collective narratives to a wide audience. According to Frith (1996), popular music is not only a means of entertainment, but also an important medium for expressing personal and social identity. Through lyrics and melodies, artists can articulate their life experiences, creating a strong emotional connection with listeners.

Music has the unique ability to create deep emotional resonance. Research by Meyer (1956) shows that musical structures, including melody, harmony, and rhythm, can evoke strong emotional responses in listeners. This is due to music's ability to imitate emotional patterns that humans experience in everyday life. For

example, changes in tempo or dynamics in a song can reflect fluctuations in emotion, from joy to sadness. Thus, music can be a mirror of the writer's emotional state, allowing the listener to feel and identify the feelings expressed by the artist.

Furthermore, Sloboda and Juslin (2001) emphasized the importance of musical elements such as dynamics, tempo, and harmony in influencing and reflecting the emotional states of both artists and listeners. Music not only conveys emotions directly, but is also capable of evoking deep emotional memories and associations. For example, a song that reminds listeners of a cherished past experience may evoke feelings of nostalgia or happiness. In this context, song lyrics become a key element that can enrich emotional narratives, allowing artists to convey their personal stories and experiences in a more profound and complex way.

Through lyrics, artists have the opportunity to express themselves more explicitly. Lyrics can serve as a medium for expressing thoughts, feelings, and stories that may be difficult to express through ordinary words. By using figurative language such as metaphor, simile, and personification, lyrics can enrich the meaning and deepen the emotional impact of a song. Therefore, in this study, focused to the analysis of the lyrics in the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI, to understand how figurative language is used as a powerful tool of self-expression.

Figurative language has a very important role in music lyrics because it is able to convey a deeper and more complex meaning than literal language. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors are important tools in human thinking that help bridge abstract concepts with concrete experiences. By using figurative language such as metaphors, similes, and personification, lyrics can create powerful mental images and trigger more intense emotional responses from listeners. For example, metaphors can change a listener's understanding of the message in a song in a more creative and engaging way. Figurative language also allows artists to convey feelings and experiences that may be difficult to express through ordinary words, giving a new dimension to the lyrical narrative. The choice of figurative language in this research is based on its ability to enrich the narrative

and deepen the emotional impact of the lyrics, making it an effective tool for complex and multi-dimensional self-expression.

NIKI, a singer and songwriter from Indonesia who has achieved international popularity, is an artist known for her deep and emotional lyrical abilities. Her latest album, *Nicole* (2022), stands out for its lyrics rich in the use of figurative language, which not only express NIKI's personal feelings and experiences, but also offer insight into her emotional journey and identity. This research aims to explore how figurative language in NIKI's lyrics functions as a medium for complex and multi-dimensional self-expression.

The album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI has received widespread attention from both music critics and fans, especially for the honesty and emotional depth displayed in its lyrics. According to Thurner (2023), the lyrics on this album reflect NIKI's life journey, from experiences of love and loss to the search for identity. The use of figurative language such as metaphors and similes in her lyrics provides a deeper layer of meaning and allows the listener to connect with the story and emotions conveyed.

This research was also motivated by the lack of in-depth study of NIKI's lyrics in the context of the use of figurative language and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Most existing research on popular music and lyrics tends to focus on Western artists, while there are relatively few studies on artists from Asia, especially Indonesia. According to Setiawan (2022), there is an urgent need to expand the scope of popular music research to include more artists from various cultural and geographical backgrounds, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how music and lyrics are used as a means of self-expression throughout the world.

In addition, the use of CDA according to Fairclough (1992) allows the author to understand how the lyrics in the album *Nicole* (2022) not only reflect NIKI's personal expression but also interact with a wider social and cultural context. This includes how the lyrics can reflect and challenge social, cultural and gender norms.

Therefore, this research are not only identify the types of figurative language used in lyrics, but also analyze the construction and socio-cultural implications of the use of this language.

Figurative language is the use of words or expressions that go beyond their literal meaning to convey a deeper, creative, or emotional meaning. Types of figurative language include metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, and symbolism. A metaphor is an implicit comparison between two different things without using the words "such us" or "as if", while a simile is an explicit comparison using these words. Personification gives human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract concepts. Hyperbole is the use of exaggerated language for dramatic effect. Alliteration is a consonant sound that is made repeatedly in two or more words in one sentence, and symbolism uses objects or actions to represent broader ideas or concepts.

Figurative language plays an important role in enriching the narrative and meaning of music lyrics. By using figurative language, songwriters can create powerful mental images and trigger more intense emotional responses from listeners. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated that conceptual metaphors are the basis of human thinking and influence the way we understand the world and experience. In the context of music lyrics, figurative language can deepen the listener's understanding of the emotions and experiences conveyed by the artist, as well as adding a more complex layer of meaning to the song.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach to studying texts and language used in social and political contexts. According to Fairclough (1992), CDA aims to reveal the relationship between language, power, and ideology in society. CDA considers that language is never neutral and is always related to a specific social and cultural context. Therefore, discourse analysis focuses not only on the text itself but also on how the text interacts with broader social forces.

In song lyric analysis, CDA helps understand how the lyric text not only reflects the artist's personal expression but also relates to a broader social and cultural

context. For example, song lyrics can reflect the artist's worldview, their social experiences, and their responses to social or political issues. By using CDA, the author can analyze how figurative language in song lyrics functions to articulate identity, resistance, or conformity to social norms. This approach allows the writer to understand song lyrics as a form of discourse that has the power to influence and be influenced by social and cultural dynamics.

CDA is also relevant in analyzing NIKI's lyrics in the album *Nicole* (2022) because it allows the author to explore how NIKI uses figurative language to express her personal experiences in a broader context. This analysis can reveal how the lyrics not only reflect NIKI's feelings and experiences but also respond to and interact with existing social and cultural norms. Thus, CDA provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity and depth of meaning in song lyrics.

Much research has been conducted on figurative language, one of which is the seminal study by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) which introduced the concept of conceptual metaphor. In their book, *Metaphors We Live By*, they argue that metaphors are not just rhetorical devices, but also an integral part of the way we understand and experience the world. Conceptual metaphors help understand abstract concepts through more concrete terms, and they apply in a variety of contexts, including music lyrics. For example, the use of metaphors in song lyrics can change the way listeners perceive and interpret the message conveyed by the artist.

Research on music and self-expression also has a strong basis in academic literature. Simon Frith (1996) in his book *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* explains that popular music functions as an important medium for expressing personal and social identity. According to Frith, through music, artists can articulate their life experiences, creating narratives that resonate with their audiences. Music is not only entertainment, but also a means of understanding and communicating identity.

In addition, Meyer (1956) in *Emotion and Meaning in Music* discusses how musical elements such as melody, harmony and rhythm can cause strong emotional responses in listeners. Music can reflect and manipulate emotional states, making it a powerful tool for self-expression. Meyer demonstrated that musical structures can mimic emotional patterns experienced in everyday life, allowing listeners to feel and identify the feelings expressed by the music.

Research by Sloboda and Juslin (2001) in *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research* expands the authors' understanding of how music influences emotions. They emphasize that musical elements such as dynamics, tempo, and harmony play a crucial role in influencing the emotional response of both the artist and the listener. Music is capable of evoking deep emotional memories and associations, which in turn enriches the listening experience and provides a way for artists to express themselves.

Another relevant research is the study conducted by Zbikowski (2002) in his book *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis*, where he examined how figurative language is used in music to build meaning and cognitive structure. Zbikowski found that figurative language, such as metaphor, is very important in how listeners understand and interpret music. He highlights how the use of metaphors not only helps in conveying emotional and narrative messages, but also in creating musical structures that are more accessible and understandable to listeners. This study shows that figurative language is a powerful tool in music, which not only influences listeners' perceptions and experiences but also enriches the meaning and complexity of the musical work itself.

However, although there is a wealth of research on figurative language and self-expression in music, there is still a gap in the literature that combines figurative language analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches in the context of music lyrics, especially the work of non-Western artists such as NIKI. Most studies tend to focus on Western artists, while in-depth research on artists from Asia, especially Indonesia, is still limited. Setiawan (2022) emphasized the importance of expanding the scope of popular music research to include more perspectives from

various cultural and geographical backgrounds. This is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how music and lyrics are used as a means of self-expression around the world.

This research aims to identify and analyze the use of figurative language in the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI, as well as understand how figurative language functions as a medium for self-expression. First, this research was identified the types of figurative language used in the album's lyrics, including metaphor, simile, personification, and other relevant types. Second, this research was analyzed the function of figurative language in expressing NIKI's personal feelings and experiences, as well as how these elements enrich the lyric narrative.

In addition, this research was uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach developed by Norman Fairclough to understand how the lyrics on the album *Nicole* (2022) not only reflect NIKI's personal expression but also interact with a wider social and cultural context. Thus, this research not only aims to explore the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of these lyrics, but also to reveal deeper socio-cultural implications. It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to the study of popular music and expand understanding of how artists from various cultural backgrounds use lyrics as a means of self-expression. Therefore, from all the descriptions above, the researcher chose the title 'Figurative Language as a Medium of Self-Expression in NIKI's Album *Nicole* (2022)'.
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1.2 Statement of the Problem

Music and lyrics are often the primary medium for artists to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences. Through the use of figurative language, lyrics can convey complex emotions and deep meanings that may be difficult to express in everyday language. Therefore, this research attempts to answer the following questions related to the use of figurative language in the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI.

1. What types of the figurative language are presented in the lyrics of NIKI's album *Nicole* (2022)?
2. How self-expression in music constructed in figurative language of NIKI's album *Nicole* (2022)?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the statement of problem that has been formulated, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To know about the types of the figurative language contained in the lyrics of the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI. This objective focuses on the classification and description of various forms of figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, etc., used in the album's lyrics.
2. To explore the construction of the figurative language in the lyrics of the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI. This objective aims to understand how figurative language is used by NIKI to express her personal feelings and self-experiences, as well as how these elements enrich the meaning and emotional impact of song lyrics.

1.4 Research Significance

This research provides an important contribution to the field of language and literature studies, especially in the analysis of figurative language in music lyrics. By identifying and analyzing the use of figurative language in the lyrics of the album *Nicole* (2022) by NIKI, this research can add insight into how figurative language is used in the context of popular music as a medium for self-expression. Through this approach, this research also enrich our understanding of the creative ways artists express their emotions and experiences, as well as how listeners can respond and interpret these lyrics in more depth.

The use of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach in this research was to enrich understanding of how music lyrics not only reflect the artist's personal expression but also interact with a wider social and cultural context. This CDA approach allows us to see how these lyrics can reflect or even influence the social dynamics and ideologies that exist in society. This could open up opportunities for future research to apply CDA in the analysis of other musical texts, creating a more holistic and in-depth analytical framework.

It is hoped that the results of this research can be a reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring the use of figurative language in music lyrics, especially in the context of non-Western artists. This research may also inspire further studies on the use of figurative language in a variety of musical genres and different cultures. By providing a clear theoretical and methodological framework, this research provides an important foundation for the development of further studies focused on the relationship between language, music, and culture.

By analyzing the lyrics of the album *Nicole* (2022) in depth, this research can help listeners and music fans to better understand and appreciate the complexity and depth of emotions conveyed through the lyrics. This research may provide a new perspective on how figurative language enriches the music listening experience. By understanding the linguistic techniques used in the lyrics, listeners can experience the music on a more personal and in-depth level, and better appreciate the skill and creativity of the artist.

The results of this research can be a guide for songwriters and musicians in using figurative language to express themselves. By understanding the different types of figurative language and their functions, artists can develop their songwriting skills and create richer, more meaningful lyrics. This guide will be especially useful for songwriters who want to explore new and innovative ways of expressing their emotions and stories through music.

This research can also be used as teaching material in music and language education, helping students understand how linguistic and musical elements can be

combined to express emotions and stories. It can enrich the curriculum and provide concrete examples of the application of linguistic theories in creative practice. Thus, this research not only contributes to the academic field, but also has a significant practical impact in the world of music and education.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

This section provides clear definitions of the key terms used throughout this research. Understanding these terms is essential for comprehending the scope and focus of the study. By defining these concepts, the research ensures that readers have a precise and consistent understanding of the terminology related to figurative language, self-expression in music, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). These definitions form the foundation for analyzing the lyrics of NIKI's album *Nicole* and interpreting the findings within the broader context of language and literature studies.

a. Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions that deviate from their conventional meanings to convey complex and nuanced meanings. It includes various literary devices such as metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, and symbolism.

b. Self-Expression in Music

Self-expression in music is the conveyance of personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences through musical elements and lyrics. It allows artists to articulate their inner emotional states and connect with their audience on a deeper level.

c. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to studying language as a form of social practice. It examines the ways in which

discourse (spoken or written language) reflects, reinforces, and challenges power dynamics, ideologies, and social structures.

