

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that falls under applied linguistics, which studies and analyses the style of language in various types of texts across various genres. In broad terms, stylistics is defined as the linguistic study of style that addresses the relationship between language and the function of artistic expression (Leech & Short, 2007). Stylistics involves discussing aspects of the language, such as phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, or includes the whole discourse. The use of linguistic aspects in stylistics is for the purpose of creating meaning, provoking emotion and accomplishing certain rhetorical purposes.

In terms of style, it refers to various meanings depending on the context in which the term is used. Etymologically, 'style' stems from the Latin word 'elocution,' which means the style, and from the Greek 'lexis' (Ajmal et al., 2024). As time progressed, the word 'style' in language study changed its meaning and became the ability and skill to use words beautifully. Alaghbary (2022) notes that style in language refers to the choice of words and structures to suit the needs of a particular setting. Style can commonly be found in the works of poets or writers who are trying to convey a particular impression to their readers through their beautiful choice of words. Consequently, how something is displayed, written, and presented by a writer is considered the 'style.'

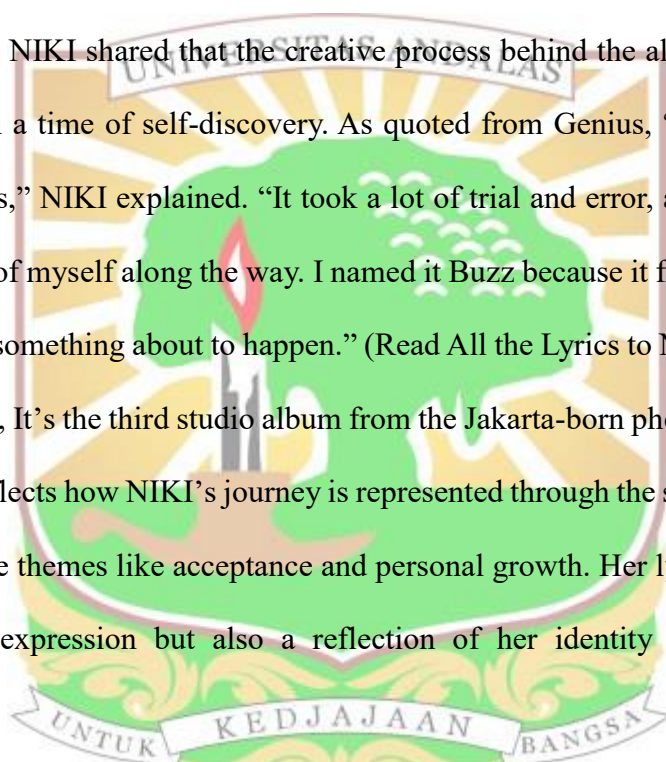
Examining style in language usage is the aim of the linguistic study of style in stylistics. It looks at the ways in which variations in style and meaning are produced through linguistic choices involving sounds, words, syntax, and discourse

structure. Stylistics aims to analyse the linguistic habits of language in order to identify linguistic features, explain their usage, and classify them in light of their function (Crystal & Davy, 1969). With the complexity of communication in literature and non-literature, the study of linguistics in stylistics exists to foster the understanding and expression of the stylistic aspects of language. In other words, stylistics seeks to reveal the reasons behind a writer's tendency to use certain words or phrases to convey a particular message. In short, stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics that focuses on literary language, writing patterns, and linguistic habits of poets, authors, and writers. As a result, stylistics is applicable in investigating the use of specific language styles in different types of language use in texts, like how a songwriter uses certain words and creates special sound effects in the lyrics of a song.

In everyday life, song is a familiar term and can significantly impact a person's life, making it a popular form of entertainment. The collection of beautiful words written by the songwriter and the customized melodies created usually describe many things, such as feelings, emotions, dreams, hopes, culture, identity, religion, social or political issues. As a non-musical element, song lyrics enrich the music and serve as a way of expression that plays an important part in conveying the songwriter's themes, goals, and emotions. Consequently, conducting an analysis of style related to the use of linguistic aspects in song lyrics is interesting because each songwriter's unique feelings and experiences lead to distinct linguistic styles. For this reason, the strategies employed in composing song lyrics can be analysed through linguistic studies in stylistics.

Based on the previous explanation, this research focuses on the song lyrics of an album composed by one of Indonesia's singer-songwriters, Niki Zefanya,

popularly known by her stage name NIKI. She is a talented Indonesian R&B singer who has reached the international charts with her songs, which are also her creations. NIKI has monthly listeners reaching 11,138,921 on Spotify (accessed on October 7, 2024). Besides the fact that NIKI has international recognition, this study is driven by curiosity about NIKI's linguistic creativity at different language levels, especially at the level of phonology and lexico-semantic as a means of presenting her style and conveying messages through her songs. In an earlier press release for her latest album, *Buzz*, NIKI shared that the creative process behind the album was personal, coming from a time of self-discovery. As quoted from Genius, "I went through an identity crisis," NIKI explained. "It took a lot of trial and error, and I just stumbled upon pieces of myself along the way. I named it Buzz because it feels like I'm on the precipice of something about to happen." (Read All the Lyrics to NIKI's New Album 'Buzz,' 2024, It's the third studio album from the Jakarta-born phenom, para. 2). The statement reflects how NIKI's journey is represented through the stories in her lyrics, which feature themes like acceptance and personal growth. Her lyrics are not only a medium of expression but also a reflection of her identity and ever-evolving creativity.



When it comes to song lyrics, the primary element that builds them is the creative arrangement of words and the ways in which those words create memorable sounds. By combining harmonious sound elements and creative word choices filled with meaning, song lyrics are able to convey messages, create nuances, and evoke emotions. In stylistics analysis, focusing on phonological and lexico-semantic features as stylistic device is valuable for understanding how a songwriter's creative choices are accomplished. The phonological devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, and

assonance, are instrumental in creating an attractive appeal to the listeners, enabling the lyrics to be easily memorized and emotionally emphasizing the underlying message. At the same time, focusing on word choice and meaning, lexico-semantic features provide context, emotion, narrative, and a sense of depth to the lyrics. The analysis of these two features is important because they complement each other in shaping the listener's experience of listening to a great song. Sound choices can build an emotional connection with the listener through musicality. In contrast, meaningful word choices support the narrative being told, which affects how the listener perceives and feels about the song. Hence, analysing phonological and lexico-semantic features is important as it brings to light how writers creatively work with these elements to convey emotions, stories, and messages to their listeners.

The data are taken from song lyrics in Niki Zefanya's latest album, *Buzz*, which was released in August 2024. The album consists of 13 songs, which are (1) *Buzz*, (2) *Too Much Of A Good Thing*, (3) *Colossal Loss*, (4) *Focus*, (5) *Did You Like Her In The Morning?* (6) *Take Care*, (7) *Magnets*, (8) *Tsunami*, (9) *Blue Moon*, (10) *Strong Girl*, (11) *Paths*, (12) *Heirloom Pain*, and (13) *Nothing Can*. Since this album mainly contains the lyrics she wrote herself, a personal account of her life, her songs will have her characteristics as songs are usually about everyday life and are written creatively.

Regardless of the number of studies that use songs as data, linguistics analysis in stylistics has not been widely discussed. Accordingly, this research intends to examine song lyrics based on phonological and semantics levels as stylistic features. Other than that, the researcher's reason for studying this is that deviation can occur due to the writer's creativity, which is part of the style. In stylistics, the deviation is

closely related to the use of style because it is an idea that can lead to being different from what should be the norm or standard in the context of language use in a particular genre or writing. Deviation can be in the form of variations in pronunciation, sound patterns, or ways of conveying meaning that are not standard in usage. An example can be seen in the lyrics of *Focus* by NIKI.

You're a complicated puzzle

In this instance, the lyric is considered a lexico-semantic deviation because it involves metaphorical language, which uses a word in a way that deviates from its literal or dictionary meaning to create a new or poetic meaning. In the literal definition, a puzzle is an object that consists of separate pieces that must be arranged to form a complete picture or shape. However, in the lyrics, *you* as the subject is not a puzzle, but the songwriter compares it to a *puzzle* to show that you are difficult to understand or complicated. As a result, the word *puzzle* here is not a standard or literal use of language, but rather a deviation that occurs due to the transfer of meaning from the object (*puzzle*) to the human (*you*), creating a metaphor. Nevertheless, this deviation, particularly through metaphor, reflects the songwriter's creativity in conveying abstract emotions and complex thoughts. The lyrics achieve smoothness and poetic quality by employing figurative expressions that enrich the overall meaning.

With the relationship between music and language, it offers a vast space for stylistic analysis, especially in song lyrics. Song lyrics serve as the form for poetic expression set to music, employing various language levels like phonological (sound) and lexico-semantic (meaning) in creating beauty, evoking emotion, and conveying meaning. The two levels are significant as they interact and contribute to the overall

artistic effect of the songs. This research studies the use of sound (phonological) and meaning (lexico-semantic) as stylistic devices feature in NIKI's *Buzz* album.

1.2 Research Questions

The background of the study reveals several issues identified by the researcher, including the following questions:

1. What are the phonological level features as stylistic devices used by NIKI?
2. What are the lexico-semantic level features as stylistic devices used by NIKI?
3. What are the goals of using the phonological and semantic level features as stylistic devices used by NIKI?

1.3 The Objectives of the Research

Related to the research questions problem above, there are three research objectives that the researcher wants to accomplish, which include:

1. To identify the phonological level features as stylistic devices in the *Buzz* album by NIKI.
2. To identify the lexico-semantic level features as stylistic devices in the *Buzz* album by NIKI.
3. To describe the songwriter's goals of using phonological and lexico-semantic level features as stylistic devices in the song lyrics.

1.4 Focus of the Research

To minimize the scope of the discussion, it is necessary to focus on the selected data for the analysis in order to avoid complexity and difficulty in the discussion. Therefore, this research is limited in scope to keep the discussion focused and specific, focusing on analysing the use of stylistic features and finding the purpose of their use. Considering these factors, this research will focus on

phonological features such as the use of alliteration, assonance, and rhyme, as well as lexico-semantic features such as the use of tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, and irony) as stylistic devices found in the song lyrics from the album *Buzz* by Niki Zefanya.

1.5 Method of the Research

As a tool or mechanism, an instrument functions to collect and record information to come to a decision and understanding in conducting a study. This research used content analysis as an instrument, as Wilkinson & Birmingham (2023) state that content analysis serves to understand the attitudes of speakers or writers from the content of their messages. Furthermore, North et al. explained that collecting, analysing, and systematically drawing conclusions from existing messages are common steps used in various research techniques (as cited in Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 68). In conducting content analysis in this study, a qualitative approach is used with the objective of revealing the meaning and complexity of style within the song lyrics. According to Mills & Gay (2016), a deeper understanding of how things happen, why they happen, and how individuals perceive these occurrences is the goal of qualitative research. Therefore, based on the data analysis of the selected song lyrics, conclusions will be drawn to reveal the style of the language used.

1.5.1 Data Collection

Data is all forms of information that are essential for conducting research. It includes numbers, symbols, text, or other information collected, observed, generated, or created to answer research questions and support interpretation in a study. In addition to the data itself, the data source is also an important aspect to

consider in research. In this study, the data source comes from the official Spotify platform, which publishes song lyrics through the Musixmatch service. The data used in this research consists of song lyrics from the *Buzz* album by NIKI (Niki Zefanya), which contains thirteen tracks: (1) *Buzz*, (2) *Too Much Of A Good Thing*, (3) *Colossal Loss*, (4) *Focus*, (5) *Did You Like Her In The Morning?* (6) *Take Care*, (7) *Magnet*, (8) *Tsunami*, (9) *Blue Moon*, (10) *Strong Girl*, (11) *Paths*, (12) *Heirloom Pain*, and (13) *Nothing Can*. The data included linguistic elements in the form of words, phrases, and sentences in the selected song lyrics.

In the data collection process, the researcher follows a series of steps to obtain accurate and relevant data aligned with the research objectives. The description of the procedure must be presented clearly and informatively so that readers can understand the steps undertaken. In this study, data collection was conducted through several steps, including listening to, reading, and taking notes on the song lyrics from the *Buzz* album, which were accessed via Spotify as the official platform.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis includes a structured procedure for investigating and organizing the data to enhance the researcher's understanding of the data and how the research results can be conveyed to others. After the data is collected, it is analysed and classified into linguistic level analysis in stylistics, covering the phonological and the lexico-semantic levels. The phonological level analysis includes devices such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme, as Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) mentioned. Meanwhile, the lexico-semantic level analysis focuses on using tropes based on the tropes proposed by Leech and Short (2007).

Furthermore, based on the results of the analysis at both levels, the stylistic goals are described by referring to the theory by Hamawand (2023).

To analyse the data, several steps are taken in line with the linguistic level analysis in stylistics, including phonological and lexico-semantic analysis. At the phonological level, the first step was to divide the lyrics into lines. The researcher listened to the song attentively while identifying recurring sounds, both consonant and vocal sounds; after that, each repetition of sounds was marked, along with rhyme patterns that appeared at the beginning, middle, or end of the lines. Meanwhile, at the lexico-semantic level, the first step was to understand the context of each song to identify the use of tropes. Next, the song lyrics were divided into units such as phrases, lines, or couplets that are considered to contain certain tropes. Then, those units were analysed and classified into tropes according to determined categories. Furthermore, tables are used to systematically present the analysis findings, including each stylistic device's total number of occurrences. Based on these findings, the stylistic goals of using phonological and lexico-semantic devices are explained descriptively in the data analysis section.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, there are some key terms related to this research:

- Stylistics:** A discipline that studies how style is used in a text (Simpson, 2004)
- Phonology:** Phonology is the study of sounds in spoken language and how words are pronounced (Simpson, 2004)

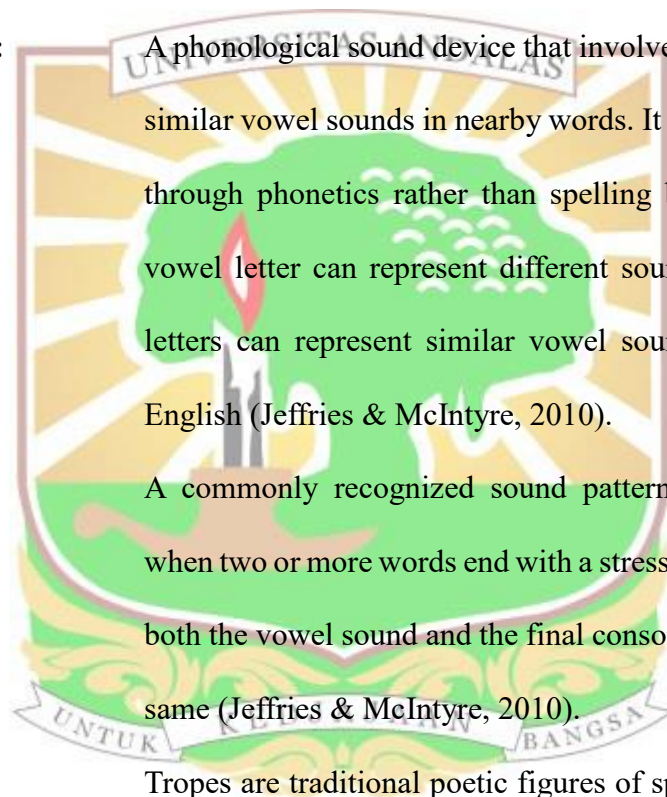
Alliteration: It is a pattern that involves repeating the same consonant sound at the beginning of nearby words. Although it is often associated with words starting with the same letter, alliteration is actually based on sound rather than spelling. Therefore, alliteration is more accurately understood, depending on how words sound (phonemes), not how they are written (letters) (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

Assonance: A phonological sound device that involves the repetition of similar vowel sounds in nearby words. It is best understood through phonetics rather than spelling because the same vowel letter can represent different sounds, and different letters can represent similar vowel sounds, especially in English (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

Rhyme: A commonly recognized sound pattern typically occurs when two or more words end with a stressed syllable, where both the vowel sound and the final consonant sound are the same (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

Tropes: Tropes are traditional poetic figures of speech that include metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, and irony (Leech & Short, 2007).

Metaphor: It is defined as a process that links the target domain (the concept being described) with the source domain (the concept used as a comparison) (Simpson, 2004)



Metonymy: It is a process of substitution between concepts that are closely related within the same conceptual area, which results in substitution, such as a part for the whole, a producer for the product, or an institution for its location (Simpson, 2004).

Synecdoche: It is a form of substitution that is considered a type of metonymy and functions as a device in which a part is used to represent the whole (Simpson, 2004).

Paradox: A trope in which a statement appears to contradict the facts (Keraf, 1991).

Irony: A figure of speech in which the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning of the expression (Keraf, 1991).

