CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Language's function is not limited to daily communication but also includes a means of artistic expression. One form that extensively uses language is music, primarily through its song lyrics. Song lyrics contain literal meanings and utilize various linguistic devices to convey messages profoundly and touch listeners' feelings.

Given the central role of language in song lyrics, it is crucial to examine how meaning is constructed and interpreted. This is where the study of semantics comes into play. Semantics focuses on how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning and how the listener or reader understands those meanings. In this context, the meanings produced by language are not always literal but can also be figurative, depending on how the language is used. Semantics also studies how social and cultural contexts influence the interpretation of meaning. Therefore, understanding semantics is crucial in understanding how language, especially in song lyrics, can convey various layers of meaning, both literal and figurative.

The distinction between literal and figurative meaning is an important aspect of semantics. Speakers and writers often use indirect expressions to create vivid imagery, enhance meaning, or evoke stronger emotions. This use of language, known as figurative language, involves words or phrases that go beyond their conventional definition. By using figurative expressions, individuals can communicate abstract concepts or complex emotions in a more nuanced and impactful way, thus allowing for deeper interpretation and emotional engagement.

One of the most prominent and widely studied forms of figurative language is metaphor. Metaphors are linguistic devices that implicitly compare two seemingly unrelated concepts to provide new perspectives and deeper insights. Lakoff and Johnson (2003), in Metaphors We Live By, argue that metaphors are not just rhetorical or literary devices but rather fundamental cognitive tools that shape human thinking and perception. Through metaphorical expression, individuals can connect abstract ideas with concrete experiences, facilitating a clearer and deeper understanding of complex concepts.

Given the importance of metaphor in shaping meaning, it is no surprise that music, one of the most influential art forms, often uses metaphorical language in its lyrics. Song lyrics serve not only as a form of storytelling but also as a medium to convey the emotions, personal experiences, and perspectives of the songwriter. Through metaphors, songwriters can express deep and complex emotions that may be difficult to articulate directly. In addition, metaphors enhance the emotional resonance of a song, making its message more vivid, relatable, and highly impactful for listeners.

The use of metaphorical language in music is a common feature of musical expression across various genres. Singers and songwriters from disparate cultural backgrounds and musical genres frequently employ metaphorical language to express more profound sentiments or convey complex meanings. For example, in popular music, metaphors are frequently employed to portray sentiments such as love, sadness, and joy more imaginatively. In rock music, metaphors are often used to convey rebelliousness, anger, or life's challenges. Even in genres like rap and hip-hop, metaphors are utilized to articulate social critique or the experience of homelessness.

The use of metaphors has been demonstrated to enrich the semantic content of lyrics, however, extant studies on the role of metaphors in contemporary music are limited in scope. One contemporary artist who effectively incorporates metaphors into his songwriting is Keshi, an American singer, songwriter, and music producer. As metaphorical language plays an important role in shaping lyrical depth and emotional resonance, Keshi exemplifies this artistic approach through his evocative and introspective compositions. Born Casey Luong, Keshi is known for blending lo-fi, R&B, and pop elements while exploring themes of love, loneliness, and longing. His emergence on the international scene is marked by emotionally rich songs such as *Like I Need U, Drunk,* and *Limbo,* which showcase his ability to craft highly metaphorical and emotionally engaging lyrics.

Keshi's music is known not only for its simple yet emotional sound but also for the deep and meaningful lyrics, which often include figurative language such as metaphors. Keshi is recognized for his poetic and personal songwriting style, expressing themes like sadness, heartbreak, and love. In his album *Requiem,* Keshi often uses metaphors to describe these emotions, adding layers of meaning to his lyrics. This makes the songs more than just emotional, but also rich in interpretation, allowing listeners to connect with them more deeply. These qualities make *Requiem* a strong and interesting subject for metaphor analysis.

The writer finds this research important because of its unique and consistent use of metaphors and Keshi's distinct musical identity. His style combines lo-fi, R&B, and indie sounds with meaningful, metaphorical lyrics. Compared to other studies that often analyze songs from various artists or albums, this research focuses on one complete album by a single artist. This provides a more detailed and focused view of how metaphors are

used across multiple songs with connected themes. By analyzing all 13 songs in *Requiem* using Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson, this research fills a gap in previous studies and offers a deeper understanding of how Keshi uses metaphor to express emotion and create a consistent message or feeling throughout the album.

Metaphorical expression in song lyrics, especially in Keshi's *Requiem* album, is an important linguistic tool to express complex emotions such as love and loss. This highlights the importance of understanding what metaphors are and how they function in lyrics. To interpret the meaning of the metaphors, the author uses Wittgenstein's Use theory, which states that the meaning of a word depends on how it is used in a particular context. This approach helps researchers understand metaphorical expressions based on how they are used in the lyrics, rather than relying on their literal meaning. Since music is widely listened to across different ages and cultures, the ability to understand metaphors is crucial to help listeners understand the messages that songwriters want to convey. Therefore, this study provides useful insights for students, educators, and general audiences interested in language and music.

1.2 Research Question

This research aims to analyze the metaphorical expressions found in the lyrics of Keshi's songs from the album *Requiem*, focusing on the types of metaphors used and their meanings. To guide the study, two research questions are proposed:

1. What types of metaphors does Keshi use in his lyrics in the album *Requiem*?
2. What are the meanings of the metaphors found in the lyrics?

To answer the research question, the study uses Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson, which groups metaphors into three main types: ontological, orientational, and structural. This theory helps identify and classify metaphors based on how people understand abstract ideas through more concrete experiences.

Furthermore, the study applies the Use theory by Ludwig Wittgenstein, which explains that the meaning of a word depends on how it is used in context. This theory is used to interpret the metaphorical expressions in the lyrics by looking at how they function in the song, rather than only relying on their literal meanings.

1.3 The Objective of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify types of metaphors used by Keshi in his album *Requiem.*
2. Discover the meaning of the metaphors found in the lyrics.

Understanding the context of the song is essential for interpreting metaphors. By applying Use Theory by Wittgenstein and Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the author categorizes types of metaphors and analyzes the meaning of metaphors based on lyrical themes and emotions.

1.4 Focus of the Research

This study focuses on analyzing metaphors in the album *Requiem* by Keshi, which consists of 13 songs: *Amen, Say, Night, Soft Spot, Like That, Texas, Dream, War, Bodies, Requiem, Euphoria, Just To Die,* and *Id*. The analysis includes the identification of types

of the metaphors and interpretation of their meanings in the lyrics using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Use Theory by Wittgenstein. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant because it emphasizes how metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but are fundamental to human cognition and thought processes. By applying this theory, the study can uncover how Keshi's lyrics conceptualize abstract emotions and experiences through metaphorical language. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson classify three types of metaphors: orientational, ontological, and structural. This allows for a systematic analysis of how metaphorical expressions shape the overall themes and emotional depth of Keshi's lyrics.

1.5 Methods of the Research

This research employs a qualitative method with a semantic analysis approach, specifically using Use Theory by Wittgenstein to interpret the meanings of metaphorical expressions in the song lyrics from Keshi's *Requiem* album. According to Lakoff and Johnson in the book *Metaphors We Live By*, metaphors are not just figures of speech, but fundamental cognitive structures that influence the way humans think. This analysis is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Through Use Theory, this research investigates how metaphorical language in the lyrics conveys meaning, focusing on three categories of conceptual metaphors: orientational, ontological, and structural.

The qualitative approach enables an in-depth interpretation of these metaphors within the context of the songs, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Keshi's lyrics construct meaning through figurative language.

1.5.1 Data Collection

In this research, the data are the song lyrics from the album *Requiem* by Keshi, which contain metaphorical expressions.

The source of the data is the officially published song lyrics, which were collected from the reliable platform Genius.com, where lyrics are provided by the artist or verified sources. The platform ensures the accuracy and authenticity of the lyrics used in the analysis.

The data collection process begins with selecting *Requiem* as the focus of the research. The album is selected because it represents an artistic work that makes it possible to examine in detail the metaphorical patterns that Keshi uses. The writer's reason for analyzing all 13 songs from the album *Requiem* is to maintain consistency and ensure a comprehensive examination of Keshi's metaphorical language. Focusing on a single album allows for a more structured and thematic analysis, making it easier to identify patterns in the use of metaphors and how they contribute to the overall message of the song.

After selecting the album, the writer collects all the lyrics of 13 songs: *Amen, Say, Night, Soft Spot, Like That, Texas, Dream, War, Bodies, Requiem, Euphoria, Just To Die,* and *Id* from a website called genius.com.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The writer analyzes the lyrics using several steps. First, the writer analyzes the song lyrics that contains metaphors.

Next, the writer categorizes metaphors into three types based on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory: orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, and structural metaphors. This classification serves as the foundation for the research.

Next, the writer analyzes their meaning within the context of the lyrics. To achieve this, the writer applies semantic analysis, specifically using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, which helps uncover how metaphors contribute to the overall meaning of the song based on context. The analysis is grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, allowing for a deeper exploration of how abstract concepts are represented metaphorically.

Furthermore, the author visualizes the findings into a table that shows the frequency of the 3 types of metaphors found in the 13 song lyrics in the album 'Requiem' and the total metaphors found.

Finally, the author summarizes the results, outlines the study's limitations, and provides suggestions for future research.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Figurative Language**

    Figurative language means using words in a way that is different from their usual meanings or typical order to create special meanings or effects. (M. H. Abrams, 1999: p.132)

2. **Metaphor**

Metaphor is a process where one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another, not just a feature of language but a fundamental mechanism of thought, influencing how we think and act. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: p.5).