

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, problems, the objectives, the significance, and limitation of the study.

1.1. Background

Music has always played an important role in people's lives: it is everywhere, it surrounds us, and it is widely appreciated all over the world. With music, people can express their emotions through rhyme and color since music is part of an art form that can bring amusement or happiness. In daily life, people can use music and songs as their own behoves, and they may simply listen to music at any time and at any place (Kuśnierek, 2016). According to Engur (2020), Music is an aesthetic whole that processes and expresses emotions, thoughts, designs and impressions with sounds combined with a specific purpose and method and with a precise understanding of beauty.

There are many different genres of music, and one of them is Country Music, which has become an interesting phenomenon around the world (Malone & Laird, 2018). Thus, country music is not just American culture. The term "country" is not a reference because it was adopted from the recording industry in 1949 to replace the derogatory label hillbilly music. In current times, country music is known as "country" or "western". The genre was originally called 'hillbilly music, which was used by the print media in New York in the 1900s, which wrote "*a Hill-Billie is a free and untrammelled white citizen of Alabama, who lives in the hills, has no means*

to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him” (Flippo, 2010).

Country music was first produced commercially through the Victor Records label in 1922 by Eck Robertson. However, many historians argue that 1927 was the year that country music was created when Victor Records signed Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. The modern style of country music is a musical tradition throughout the southern and southwestern United States. Country music was feared to be disappearing since country music fans are mostly adults; this is evidenced by the data that shows there are around 51% of adult listeners who listen to this genre (Country Music Association, 2021). However, according to Newman, (2023) Grammy voters are disinclined towards country music, even though the genre is popular with a few loyal listeners, especially among US adults. Data shows that “Of the current 12,000-plus voting members, less than 10% identify with the country genre, according to the academy, compared with pop (23%), jazz (16%), rock (15%), R&B (15%), American roots (13%), alternative (10%), and classical (10%)”.

Nevertheless, during the later decade in the 20th century, country music experienced spectacular growth, and was criticized by some people for its changes, especially traditionalists, and a song selected in 2000 was declared the International Bluegrass Music Association’s (IBMA) Song of the Year and the Country Music Association’s Recorded Event of the Year, which was recorded by George Strait and Alan Jackson at that time. The existence of country music is expected to be maintained even though this type of music is attached to the lifestyle of Americans.

Alan Jackson is a country music singer from Georgia who has enthusiasm for supporting country music, as evidenced by the instrumentals in his songs (Malone, 2018). Moreover, his vocal style and voice are believable, with a winning southern lilt and twang. "34 Number Ones" is a compilation album release that contains Alan Jackson's first Top Ten hits, which round up the greatest of his blockbusters. There are 37 songs on the album. Most of Alan Jackson's songs on the album "34 Number Ones" tell about love and contain deep rhythms and lyrical meanings that will make listeners feel emotionally carried away.

The use of figurative language in Alan Jackson songs were explored to determine how it affects the conveying of messages about the theme of love in the song lyrics. Song lyrics are made to combine with the music tone and create an aesthetic effect on the song using a distinctive language (Neisya *et al.*, 2023). Since the song lyrics were someone's expressions from within about something that has been seen, heard or experienced (Aprilia *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, music has a powerful way of conveying a wide range of emotions and messages. The message contained in a song lyric can be delivered depending on how the researcher puts the words in the lyrics (Yuningsih, 2018). In a song, lyrics have an important role in conveying a clear message (Aprilia *et al.*, 2023). The message conveyed through song lyrics is an implied expression by using non-literal words that contain hidden meaning behind them, which is known as figurative language.

People use figurative language all the time, even in daily conversation or in media such as songs and movies. According to Abrams (2012), figurative language is mostly used in poetic situations or in literature because figurative language is the first thing that might be preferred and used when reading or composing poetry.

According to Perrine, in Neisya (2010), there are some reasons of effectiveness of saying in figurative language such as: afford as imaginative pleasure, as a way of bringin additional imagery, as a way of adding emotional intensity, and it is a means of concentration.

There were some types of figurative language, such as Metaphors, similes, hyperbole, and personification, that are commonly used by the writers to create clear imagery that can visualize the description from the writers, engage their readers to make a reading experience interesting and enjoyable, and also increased the depth of meaning in their writing. Figurative language is the use of descriptive words, phrases, and sentences to convey a message that means something without saying it directly (Neisya *et al.*, 2022).

The researcher was interested in conducting this study so that listeners, especially country music fans, could easily understand the meaning of figurative language in the Alan Jackson songs and to avoid misunderstanding the meaning. The use of figurative language in country music might be traced back to the genre's start in folk music. Folk songs frequently use figurative phrases to express messages about significant subjects such as love and loss. This practice of employing figurative language has remained in country music, and it is one of the things that distinguishes and appeals to the genre.

Figurative languages were found in many Alan Jackson songs, which makes it difficult for listeners to understand the meaning of the song lyrics. Although the figurative meanings in Alan Jackson's songs can be easily found on the internet, there were numerous types of figurative meanings that could not be found on the internet because no one has discussed them before. However, there were rarely

previous studies that specifically categorized figurative language using love-themed songs in country music. Thus, the researcher chose songs in the “34 Number Ones” album based on love-themed songs because many of Alan Jackson’s songs are about love, disappointment, and heartbreak. And also, the love songs that Alan Jackson has recorded are songs that were categorized as popular; some of them were on the album “34 Number Ones” such as *Here in the Real World*, *Remember When*, *Livin’ on Love*, and so on. Although most of Alan Jackson’s songs had happy expressions, some of them were sad, but the songs were still about love. In an article, Alan Jackson once argued that “to me, country music’s about being in love, having your heart broken, drinking and partying, living and dying, family, and where you grew up,” which the majority of the statement referred to as love. Additionally, Alan Jackson’s songs were not very popular to discuss in research.

Some studies that also discussed the topic of figurative language in a song included Astariani & Bhuana (2021), the study showed that there were five figurative languages in the songs, such as hyperbole, rhetoric, repetition, personification, and paradox. Hyperbole and repetition were the dominant forms used. In another study conducted by Ardhyanti & Supriyatiningih (2020), the figurative languages found in this study were six metaphors, two symbolisms, two imageries, two similes, and one personification. In the *Fly* song, there were four metaphors and one symbolism. Besides, in the *Falling into You* song, there were two metaphors, one symbolism, two imageries, two similes, and one personification. Based on these studies, the researchers of these studies also discussed songs about love. The researcher concluded that some of the related studies above have different objects from the figurative language that the researcher

analyzed because this study only discussed figurative languages in country music, especially in Alan Jackson's songs. Based on the explanation, it is clear that the author was interested in discussing this topic by choosing 18 selected songs about love entitled "*Figurative language in selected songs in the album '34 Number Ones' by Alan Jackson*" which has never done before by any other researchers.

1.2. Problems of the Study

Based on the background, the problems of the study formulated with the following questions:

- a. What were the types of figurative language found in the 18 selected love-themed song lyrics in the album "34 Number Ones" by Alan Jackson?
- b. How was the impact of the figurative language used on the meaning of the 18 selected love-themed songs in the album "34 Number Ones" by Alan Jackson?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem, the objectives of the study were:

- a. To identify the types of figurative language used in the 18 selected love-themed song lyrics in the album "34 number ones" by Alan Jackson.
- b. To describe how the use of figurative language impact on the meaning of the 18 selected love-themed songs in the album "34 Number Ones" by Alan Jackson.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study was expected to provide readers with information about country music. This study also aimed to give significant ideas or contributions to the readers

in understanding the impact, the types of figurative language, and the hidden meaning that were contained in a song, especially in Alan Jackson's songs. Moreover, the researcher hoped this study could be a reference for other researchers when conducting further studies, especially those that relate to figurative language, so it could be easier to analyze their study.

1.5. Limitation of the study

One of the greatest albums by Alan Jackson is "34 Number Ones," which contained 37 songs. Based on the title, the researcher limited this study by choosing selected love songs that contain figurative language in the album. In addition, there were 18 songs in the album "34 Number Ones" that were chosen by the researcher as limitations since the theme of these songs was love. The songs were: *Tall, tall trees*, *Livin' on love*, *Dallas*, *Here in the real world*, *Remember when*, *Who's cheatin' who*, *It must be love*, *(Who says) you can't have it all*, *She's got the rhythm*, *Tonight I climbed the wall*, *Ring of fire*, *As She's Walking Away*, *Love's got a hold on you*, *Someday*, *Look at me*, *I'll try*, *Between the Devil and Me*, and *There Goes*.