

## **Figuring the Figures of Speech in Acehese Traditional Song Lyrics**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Not much research has been conducted on the literature of the Acehese traditional song lyrics. These songs are well known for their role in the society as lullabies, expressing aesthetic values, teaching morals, spreading wisdom, disseminating religious knowledge, encouraging soldiers in battles, and uplifting spirits to work, among others. The lyrics also reflect the contexts of culture, belief, and life of the Acehese. Accordingly, to fill in this gap, this research aims at investigating the use of figures of speech in the Acehese traditional song lyrics. A number of eight songs were analyzed based on the 11 figures of speech proposed by Kennedy. The results showed that only six figures of speech were found in the lyrics of the songs; they are: metonymy, ellipsis, repetition, personification, synecdoche, and litotes. Meanwhile, the most dominant used are metonymy and ellipsis. Nevertheless, in the culture of writing the Acehese traditional songs, the writers preferred to use more of similar associations to the things that they are writing about, giving human characteristics to things being inferred to in the songs, and being humble in their expressions. These traits are intended to make their connotation more alive so that the messages or information that they are trying to convey to the listeners can spark emotions and be grasped within their empathy. These ways and means are important because these lyrics are the reflections of the images and values of the society. Finally, it is expected that future studies also focus on undocumented Acehese traditional songs that are still sung by the society today to further develop the conclusions drawn from this present study.

*Keywords:* Figures of speech, Acehese, traditional songs, lyrics, values

## INTRODUCTION

Acehnese literary work is developing in Indonesia although still limping along. Acehnese literature develops from various types of literature, which are “*hikayat*, *panton*, *hiem*, and some others” (Abdullah 23). However since the fourteenth century, the people have started the process of documenting all literary works. In *Kesusastraan Aceh* (Acehnese Literature) by Mutia, some classic literatures of the Acehnese include *narit maja* or *hadih maja* (proverb), *neurajah* (mantra), *hiem* (riddles), *panton* (traditional oral form of expression), *haba jameun* (folklore) and *ca’e* (lyrical prose).

In the Acehnese tradition, *hadih maja* functions as a medium to control social institutions (social control) and as a means of delivering a moral message. Ali and Muhdlor (13) identified that “*hadih maja* is advice of the ancestors containing moral values, religious education (i.e., Islamic education) and philosophy, thus, unsure which is used as notice, admonition, classification, or insinuation as guidance in experiencing life.” Nowadays, the Acehnese youth is seen to have lessened their recognition and comprehension of these proverbs. It is caused by the lack of vernacular usage and entry of external Acehnese culture (Gusti and Ginting). Then there is *neurajah*, or spells, typically used by animal guardians to tame tigers, elephants, wasps, and other wild animals.

Moreover, the people of Aceh in daily life often gathered with their families and relatives for *hiem* moments. The Acehnese society does not only see riddles as a medium for entertainment, but it is also an art of brain teaser, because they also comprise elements of education. Another Acehnese classic literature is *pantôn*, where the arrangement of words contains meaning of advices and rhythmic musicality. Then there is *haba jameun*, which is folklore that is passed orally from one generation to another. Today, many of the Acehnese folklores are documented, such as *Raja Burung Parkit* (The King of Parakeet Birds), *Tujuh Anak Lelaki* (Seven Sons), and *Aman Ane* (Ane’s Uncle), in the works of Rosa and Ara.

*Ca’e* is a kind of lyrical prose and *lagu* (songs) is a part of it. Songs are also a part of the Acehnese lives; they are poetry with music or instrument (Tuczyńska 3). Songs are created based on life experiences, tells about someone, the environment, problems, and many other occurrences in life. Acehnese traditional songs particularly tell the stories of heroism, history, religion, daily lives of the people, and nature. These songs contain lyrics that can affect the feelings of those who listen. Potter signified that these lyrics as the peculiar genius of music to capture and evoke patterns of universal feelings such as expectation desire, joyful, sadness, and even

madness. To achieve so, the writers of songs typically use figures of speech, or also known as figurative language, to stir the emotional atmosphere of every listener.

Accordingly, this study is known to be the first study on the Acehese traditional song lyrics that examines the figures of speech found in the lyrics. Kartomi has done numerous works on the Acehese traditional dances and instruments, thus, they do not specifically address on the figures of speech of the lyrics. Her work largely focus on the ethno-musicological research on the Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, and Filipino traditional music, dances, and theatre performances in their social context. Therefore, our research intends to fill in the research gap by answering the following research questions: What figures of speech are used in the Acehese traditional song lyrics?

It is expected that by studying the figures of speech in the Acehese traditional song lyrics, we can further understand the values and characteristics of the people that are presented through these songs. Traditional songs are typically built and developed in a particular area and era, and inherited from one generation to the next. They consist of language, style, and tradition exclusive to the people who created them. The result of this research is expected to add insights about the traditions of the Acehese people in the lyrics and the meaning that listeners can collect from the words through the figures of speech that enfold in their traditional song lyrics. It can further be documentation to the existing literature on the lives of Acehese.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Kennedy writes that figures of speech “occur whenever a speaker or writer, for the sake of freshness or emphasis, departs from the usual denotations of words” (584). This is done to endorse the authors with ways of transmitting or constructing ideas and images by employing descriptive and symbolic words to the readers or listeners. Starkey further illustrates figures of speech as a “departure from the ordinary form of expression, or the ordinary course of ideas, in order to produce a greater effect” (62). Based on Kennedy, these figures are typically known as metonymy, repetition, personification, synecdoche, litotes, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, ellipsis, and allusion.

Metonymy is the name of thing that is substituted for that of another that is closely associated with it (Kennedy 595). It is the use of something closely related for the thing that is actually meant. According to Potter, it is the use of an attribute in place

of a whole and uses character or name of things that is related to the name of person, something as pronoun, or uses words to describe another thing closely associated with it (142). For example, “The students in our school like to read Bobo.” “Bobo” in the sentence refers to the name of the magazine that they read. Afterward, repetition is repetition of sound, syllable, word, or sentence to emphasize the meaning (Keraf 127). It is the duplication, either exact or approximate of any element of language, such as a sound, word, phrase, clause, sentence, or grammatical pattern to create effects (Sharndama and Suleiman 172). Singers use repetition to gather momentum in order to bring a brighter idea in the next stanza, to emphasize a point or to authenticate a claim. This is such as seen in this example, “Good bye my friends, good bye my family, good bye my love.”

Next is personification, a figure of speech in an imagination of something, in which inanimate things in this world are guessed as animate by giving some attributes in inanimate things (Potter 54). Crystal further sees it as a type of metaphor in which an object or idea is represented in human terms. Hence, it is the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects (Kennedy 487). For example, “The alarm clock wakes me up every morning.” An alarm clock is inanimate thing; meanwhile it is given attribute like an activity that is done by an animate (i.e., “wakes me up”).

Then there is synecdoche, which Kennedy, Potter, and Chapman explain as the use of a part of a thing to stand for the whole of it or vice versa (688). For example, “I haven’t seen his nose the whole day today.” “His nose” here means that whole of the body consists of head, neck, stomach, hands, feet, etc., and represents a person as a whole.

Litotes is figurative language that contains statement which is made smaller from the original (Potter 135). It means that people usually use it to make it simple. They are not arrogant because they guess something valueless although it is valuable. For example, “I hope that she can accept my invaluable present.” “Invaluable present” is in fact valuable, but the writer lessens the value by using the litotes “invaluable” to make himself more humble.

Metaphor is describing something by using an analogy with something quite different (King 216). It means that there are similar attributes between two unlike notions, and the writer uses it to compare it to another. The analogy is closely related to other rhetorical figures of speech that achieve their effects via association, comparison, or resemblance including allegory, hyperbole, and simile (David 165). It takes a word from its original context, and uses it in another. For example, “I am

feeling blue.” In reality, the color blue is not a feeling, however, as a metaphor, “feeling blue” means “feeling sad.”

Kennedy defines simile as a comparison of two things indicated by some connective words such as “like” or “as.” Meanwhile, Klarer states that simile is rhetorical figure which “compares” two different things by connecting them with “like,” “than,” “as,” “or,” or “compare” (152). Lonada and Martin further explains that in simile, the comparison is seen evidently, whilst metaphor compares things implicitly (16). They go on by saying that if the concept of a metaphor is *A is B*, then the concept of simile is *A is like B* (Lonada and Martin 16). For example, “She is like a flower.” The writer compares “a girl” and “flower” because both of them have similar attributes, such as sweet scented, beautiful, and attractive.

Hyperbole or overstatement is a figure of speech that contains exaggeration element about something (Potter 135). It means that something is made greater than the fact and can even be beyond human logic. For example, “I died when I heard the news.” The writer explains that the news surprised him so much that he felt that he died. Meanwhile, the fact is the contrast in which he is still alive and is not dead. Barnwell proposes that “a hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration, used for emphasis and dramatic effect.” This statement is supported by Murfin and Ray who say “a figure of speech that uses deliberate exaggeration to achieve an effect, whether serious, comic, or ironic.” Thus, readers should be sensitive to hyperbole because it may contain excessive statement and it brings untrue meaning. Potter alerts readers to be careful in determining the expression of hyperbole by saying “if the reader (listener) is not carried away by the emotion of the writer (speaker), hyperbole becomes mere lie.” He gives the example, “He was so tall that I was not sure he had a face.” The meaning of this hyperbole expression is that he is indeed so tall that the speaker cannot see his face.

Paradox occurs in a statement that at the first strikes us as self-contradictory but that on reflection makes some sense (Kennedy 101). Meanwhile, Perrine says that “paradox is an apparent contradiction that is nevertheless somehow true” (101). According to Rozakis, “paradox is a set of statement whose surface, obvious meaning seems to be illogical, even absurd, but which makes good sense upon closer examination” (112). Paradox is a variety of figure of speech which is contrasted with a fact. It means that all things that is interesting because of their truth (Potter 101). For example, “I feel sad in the middle of a happy wedding party.” The writer contrasts the words “sad” and “happy” in the sentence to explain that despite being in a happy situation, he is still unhappy.

Next, ellipsis is figurative language that eliminates a word or part of a sentence (Potter 146). According to Henderson, ellipsis is the deliberate omission of a word or words that are readily implied by the context and must be supplied by the reader or listener (ix). It refers to constructions in which words are left out of a sentence but the sentence can still be understood. It helps someone to avoid a lot of redundancy. For example, "I asked for a car, and he (asked for) a motorbike." The sentence has eliminated the unnecessary word or information of "asked for" in the next phrase of the sentence.

Finally, allusion is a figure of speech that shows indirectly a person or event that people have known together (Potter 145). It is a direct or indirect reference to something which is presumably commonly known, such as an event, book, myth, place, or work of art. Allusion can be historical, literary, religious, topical, or mythical. For example, "This place is like Heaven." In the sentence, "Heaven" is the paradise God made for human who do good deeds during their life on Earth.

A number of studies in analyzing figures of speech in traditional songs have been conducted. These studies investigated how figures of speech are used to transfer messages to the listeners, and the values that are put forward by the authors for the listeners to grasp. To start with, Sharndama and Suleiman have analyzed the figures of speech in two funeral songs of the Kilba people of Adamawa State of Nigeria. The two texts were subjected to analysis using the descriptive and discursive approaches. The outcome of the analysis revealed that performing artists among the Kilba people use a lot of rhetorical devices to address various messages in the songs. Metaphors, similes, rhetorical questions, imagery, symbolism, and repetitions among others were found to be the common figures of speech used by the performing artists when composing the funeral songs. These figurative expressions were used in order to create sad feelings and to let the people recall the positive qualities and achievements of the deceased.

Another research study by Mutia tried to find out the kind of figures of speech in *hikayat* Aceh. *Hikayat* is saga; in Acehese culture, it is one of the forms of literary prose that contain stories about the greatness and heroism of someone. There were three *hikayat* analyzed in her research; they were *Hikayat Prang Aceh* (Acehnese War) written by Mular MS, *Hikayat Indra Nur Alam* written by Tgk. Abd. Gani Ali, and *Hikayat Hasan Husen* written by Medya Hus. The study was conducted by using the textual approach to analyze the verses of those *hikayat*. The results showed that *Hikayat Prang Aceh* revealed several kinds of figurative language, namely hyperbole, apostrophe (the rhetorical device of breaking off in the middle of speech from addressing one party and instead addresses a third party), personification, simile,

and onomatopoeia (a word that phonetically imitates or resembles the sound of the thing it refers to). *Hikayat Indra Nur Alam* also exposed several kinds of figurative language, namely hyperbole, onomatopoeia, and personification. The last *Hikayat Hasan Husen* uncovered hyperbole, personification, simile, and onomatopoeia in the verses. These findings showed that the Acehese literature uses a lot of figurative language in their works. In all three works, hyperbole is used in all of them; this implies that Acehese tend to exaggerate for emphasis and dramatic effect in their piece of art oeuvre.

Based on the previous studies, we can conclude that figures of speech allow writers to add colors and variety to their writing that can be both entertaining and educating to readers. Aristotle even reasoned that these figures mirror the way humans actually process information. In the classic or traditional work of previous writers, the messages in their work can be revealed through descriptive and symbolic words used to create their images, ideas, or points of view, and disclose the life of their people.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative design (Creswell) and the data were taken from the *Ensiklopedi Musik dan Tari Daerah Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh* (Burhan et al.). This book collects and documents the regional Acehese culture. It also provides information about the strength of culture that has its own meaning in the diversity of the Indonesian national culture. The editors are Burhan et al., and the book is published by Pusat Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya (Historical and Cultural Research Center), Jakarta, in 1986. Among the famous Acehese songs documented in this book are *Bungong Keumang*, *Bungong Seulanga*, *Jak Kutimang*, *Mars Iskandar Muda*, *Cut Nyak Dien*, *Ranub Lampuan*, *Bungong Jeumpa*, and *Dibabah Pintô* songs. The Acehese orthography presented in this paper, however, follows the latest version as proposed by Pillai and Yusuf. Our study focused on these song lyrics to analyze for their figures of speech and the meanings behind them. Due to the limited time of our research, we did not seek these songs further out in practice.

The lyrics in the song are studied and categorized into the figures of speech proposed by Kennedy, which are metonymy, repetition, personification, synecdoche, litotes, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, ellipsis, and allusion. The results are described and discussed. A simple percentage formula by Creswell was also used to find out the most to the least used of figures of speech in these song lyrics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results, it was found that metonymy and ellipsis were the most used figures of speech in the Acehese song lyrics. It was followed by repetition, personification, synecdoche, and finally litotes. Table 1 shows the figures of speech used most to the least in the lyrics.

**Table 1. Figures of Speech in the Acehese Traditional Song Lyrics**

No.	Figures of Speech	Occurrences	Percentage
1	Metonymy	8	26.67
2	Ellipsis	8	26.67
3	Repetition	7	23.33
4	Personification	3	13.33
5	Synecdoche	2	6.67
6	Litotes	1	3.33

It is evidenced in Table 1 that the Acehese songs employ metonymy most in their lyrics, followed by ellipsis, repetition, personification, synecdoche, and litotes as the least used. Each of these figures of speech in the Acehese song lyrics are discussed in the next sections. On the other hand, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, and allusion were not found in data.

### Metonymy

Metonymy is used most with 26.67 percent in the song lyrics. An example can be found in the song *Bungong Keumang* (L refers to Lyrics from the data, and thus L1 is Lyric one and so forth):

(L1) *Bungong dum keumang peu meugah bangsa* (A lot of flowers blossom to glorify the nation)

This figure of speech substitutes the name of an attribute for the thing that is meant. It uses one word or phrase substituted for another which is closely associated to it. And so, in the lyric of *bungong dum keumang* "A lot of flowers," it refers to the Acehese adolescents. It informs us that the adolescents mature and marry to increase the Acehese nation. The Acehese expects people to be good men and

heroes for their nation. To them, this denotes to the time when a person die and it is expected by his family, friends, and acquaintances that he is endlessly remembered for his good deeds by others (Fara). And thus, in the lyrics, these people are referred as *bungong* (flowers).

In *Bungong Seulanga* song, the metonymy also occurs in the following lyric:

(L2) *Beujeut geu-tanyoe seulanga ta meuduek dua* (let us be ylang-ylang so that we can sit together)

*Bungong Seulanga* is a well-recognized song by the Acehese society and is also taught in every school in the province. It tells about the *bungong seulanga* (or ylang-ylang flower) which has a nice fragrance during the day and night. If this flower is treated, cared for, and watered on a regular basis, then it will keep blooming flowers all year around. But once it is neglected and not maintained, then the flower will wither and die. Some Acehese even refer the flower of this song to Aceh. They say Aceh is like the flower, that it should be managed properly so the people can live in prosperity. If not, then destruction will follow the province. Furthermore, *bungong seulanga* (ylang-ylang flower) is known to be adaptive toward other plant species that grows around them. L2 above explains that the Acehese should also have this trait, where they can adapt and live among people who are different than them in peace.



Figure 1. The Seulanga flower (source: Lia Novita Sari).

Metonymy is also found in the lyrics of *Jak Kutimang*:

(L3) *Jak kutimang bungong meulu* (let me carry you, jasmine)

(L4) *Jak kutimang bungong padée* (let me carry you, rice flower)

*Jak Kutimang* is a song that is typically sang as a lullaby to children. It tells about a mother who educates her children so they can be good people in the future. She hopes her children can reward her efforts someday when they are successful. This notion is supported by other lyrics in the song that refer “flowers” to children, such as in “*gantoe abu rayeuk gata, ta-jak meugoe ta-jak meu’ue, mangat na bu ta-bri keu ma*” (You will replace your father once you are grown, we will do business and we will be farmers, so there will be food to be given to your mother). This is followed by the next lyrics in the next stanza “*beu-jroh peu rayeuk gata, beu Tuhan bri le hareukat, ta-peusapat puwoe keu ma*” (may all good deeds are given while raising you, may God give you much dignity, all are presented to your mother) and “*beu jroh peurayeuk gata, tutô beujroh bek rôh singkée, bandum sarée jireueh gata*” (may all good deeds are given while raising you, speak kindly and don’t be cruel, be a man of just).

This song is also a part of the traditional dance, Tari Pho, or Pho Dance, which consists of seven parts in its performance; one of the traditional dances and songs performed by women (Idris and Zainuddin). In the past, this dance was commonly performed in the ceremony of the death of great people and kings. It is a mourning dance to express grief during unhappy situations. Over time, Tari Pho has been altered and is not performed only in mourning ceremonies anymore, but also during merry times such as weddings, *akikah* (naming of a baby ceremony), and others (Idris and Zainuddin). The verses actually refer to a mother who educates her children to be successful people. The Acehnese expects that children should always reward their mothers once they have grown up to become adults. In the lyric *jak kutimang bungong meulu, bungong meulu* (jasmine flower) refers to her children; she associates her children with the jasmine flowers. Likewise, in *jak kutimang bungong padée, bungong padée* (rice flower, this is the flower that grows before they become rice), also refers to her children.

Furthermore, in *Mars Iskandar Muda*, metonymy occurs in this lyric:

(L5) *Seuramoe Mekkah neu-mat neuraca* (Serambi Makkah takes hold a pair of scales)

*Mars Iskandar Muda* is a song that strikes a chord on the golden time of the Acehnese kingdom under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Muda (born in 1593 and died in 1636). He ruled the biggest, glorious, and strongest sultanate in Aceh from 1607 to 1636. Abdullah informs us that he expanded the Acehnese sultanate by conquering the kingdoms of Deli and Aru in Sumatra Island, and even all the way to the Straits of Melaka, which were the kingdoms of Johor, Pahang, and Kedah. His fleet also managed to draw back the Portuguese who were attacking those kingdoms at the time. The

Sultan also increased the trade in pepper and became the center of this trading in Sumatera. He further cooperated with the Indian nation, British Empire, and the Kingdom of France (Abdullah). Until today, this song is also taught in the schools to students in Banda Aceh. They often sing this song to celebrate *Hari Pendidikan* or The National Education Day.



Figure 2. Sultan Iskandar Muda (source: <http://aceh.kotamini.com/tag/sejarah/>).

In L5, the lyric demonstrates the glory of the sultan, Iskandar Muda, during his ruling. *Serambi* (porch) *Mekkah* (Islam's holiest city in Saudi Arabia) is one of the toponyms of Aceh Province. There are different stories that are told about the name *Serambi Mekkah* that is given to Aceh. Based on Yunita, Amsia, and Syaiful, they argued that Aceh is called *Serambi Mekkah* because it was the area to primarily have its people to convert to Islam in the archipelago. Likewise, this toponym generally refers to Aceh's prominent history in the coming of Islam to the archipelago and historical importance as a site of Islamic scholarship and study (Birchok).

Metonymy also occurs in the lyrics in *Cut Nyak Dien*, such as:

(L6) *Hana neu-gundah, keu darah ilée* (do not worry of the flowing blood)

The lyric tells us that *Cut Nyak Dien* was a brave person. She was never afraid of anything, including in death (Ibrahim). "The flowing blood" in the lyric refers to death. *Cut Nyak Dien* was one of the toughest Acehese warriors from West Aceh of

the same name (born in 1850 and died in 1908) in the period of 1873 until 1905 (Ibrahim). She is also acknowledged by Indonesia as one of the national heroes prior to the country's independence from Dutch colonization. She came from a noble family in Aceh and fought side by side with her first husband, Teuku Ibrahim Lamnga, until he was killed by the Dutch in 1878. She continued her struggle with her second husband, Teuku Umar, until he was also killed by the Dutch in 1899. Cut Nyak Dien was detained by the Dutch in 1905 and isolated to Sumedang (in Java Island) in 1906. She was then already blind, although this did not stop her from giving lessons to the women in the area on Islam and reciting the Al-Quran. This made her well-known as the Ibu Perbu or Ibu Suci, which means the Holy Mother, by those people there. In 1908, she died due to her age and health condition.



Figure 3. Cut Nyak Dhien (source: <http://aceh.kotamini.com/tag/sejarah/>).

It is determined that metonymy occurs in five songs out of the eight songs being studied. Carter explains that this figure of speech is often confused with synecdoche. They do resemble each other, but they are not the same. Synecdoche refers to a thing by the name of one of its parts. In metonymy, on the other hand, Darlong said that the word we use to describe another thing is closely linked to that particular thing, but is not a part of it.

From the results on metonymy, it is realized that the Acehnese commonly associate children or their next generation to flowers that are well known in their culture, ylang-ylang, jasmine, and rice flowers. These associations can be found in the songs of *Bungong Keumang*, *Bungong Seulanga* dan *Jak Kutimang*. These flowers also

have great symbolic importance in the Acehese culture (Hermaliza). For example, these flowers are commonly used in the ceremony of *peusijuek*. This well-practiced ceremony by the Acehese society is performed by sprinkling water on the object believed to be “hot” by the Acehese (Yusuf and Yusuf). Examples are when trying to make peace between two disputing people, to bless wedded couples so that they will avoid anger and quarrels in their marriage, to bless a baby so they will be spared from the devils’ mischief, to bless a new home, and many others. These leaves combined with water are typically used in the process and sprinkled on the person/people or objects.

Acehnese are also known to be fighters and survivors in any life situations that they are in. The society further expects them to be good people so that they will be known by their society even though they are no longer alive (Fara). These associations can be found in the songs of *Mars Iskandar Muda* and *Cut Nyak Dien*.

### Ellipsis

In the Acehese traditional song lyrics, a lot of ellipses are also found. It occurs at the same rate as metonymy at 26.67 percent. Some examples can be found in the lyrics of *Bungong Jeumpa*.

- (L7) *Putéh kunèng meujampu mirah* (white and yellow mixed with red color)
- (L8) *Lurôh meususôn, meususôn yang mala mala* (they wither and fall)
- (L9) *Keubit that harôm meunyo ta-tém côm* (it is so sweet-smelling if we want to smell them)

The lyrics inform us about the beauty of *jeumpa* (magnolia champaca flower) in Aceh. The lyrics above all refer to this flower despite no subject are mentioned at the beginning of the lyrics. *Bungong Jeumpa* tells about the beauty of *bungong jeumpa* (or magnolia champaca flower) in Aceh. This flower is famous in the province and has always been planted in the gardens of the Acehese houses. The colors of the flower are white, yellow, and red.

Some historians also associate the song to the Jeumpa Kingdom, which existed in Aceh in the seventh century. This is based on the impression of the Jeumpa King at the time in a book written by Ibrahim Abduh (Abdullah). This kingdom was located in the hilly areas, starting from the west of Peudada riverside till the east of Pante Krueng Peusangan. The King’s palace was located in the village of Blang Seupeueng;

today this village is called Cot Cibrek Pintoe Ubeuet in the Bireun district. Hermaliza further explains that the jeumpa flower is more than just a beautiful flower because its presence has influenced much of the Aceh culture, ranging from traditional ceremonies until carvings on buildings. As a consequence, this flower contributes to the aesthetic values of the Acehnese. Nevertheless, this song also escorts the Acehnese traditional dance of the same name, *Bungong Jeumpa*. This is among the art in Aceh where a song and ritual dance music coexist (Kartomi), a common performance also found in other cultures around the world, including the Philippines (Buenconsejo 140).

Similar omissions of subjects that clarify the construction of their being are also found in the *Bungong Keumang* lyrics.

(L10) *Sambong turônnan peu keumang bangsa* (they continue to develop the nation)



Figure 4. The white and yellow *Jeumpa* flowers (source: Lia Novita Sari)

The subject of the lyric above is the Acehese people. They are expected to be active in having children to develop their nation. Similar ellipsis are also found in the lyrics of *Bungong seulanga, keumang cot uroe* ([the flower that] blossom in the afternoon), *Bungong jeumpa, lam sinar buleun angèn peuyôn* (under the moonlight, the wind sways [the flowers]), and *Cut Nyak Dien, hana neu-gundah, keu darah ilée* ([she] does not worry of her death), in which the omitted subjects refer to what and whom the songs are about.

In *Ranub Lampuan*, however, the ellipsis is the guests since this song is about the custom of welcoming guests into the house by Acehese people.

(L11) *Tamong neu-piyôh neu-duek bak tika* (please enter and take a seat on the mat)  
(L12) *Geunanto bungkôh bohru peut punca* (replacing the pack of four metal crafts)

*Bohru* is a metal craft placed on the hanging bonded fabric on the shoulders of the king or warriors in the kingdom. These accessories characterize the greatness of the leaders of the region at that time. L11 and L12 portray the courtesy of host. Traditionally, Acehese welcome their guests with a greeting and the guests would sit on the mat since traditional Acehese houses do not have chairs but typical straw mats for sitting. Offering and eating betel together is the polite way of welcoming and conversing with guests.

*Ranub Lampuan* also accompanies the dance of the same name, *Ranub Lampuan*. *Ranub* (betel) *lampuan* (metal container) means betel in a metal container. It tells about respecting guests at all times since it has been the custom of the earlier Acehese during the sultanates to serve betel to guests, especially to noble or respected ones. It is still seen to be done by the people of Aceh until today. The offer of betel is a tradition that honors the guests since the early times in the Acehese history. In a documented report, when Sir James Lancaster represented the English King, James I, to Aceh in the time of Sultan Alauddin Riayatsyah Saidil Mukammal (1602 AD), where the Acehese had already welcomed their supreme guests with a treat of betel offerings.

In Aceh, a treat of *ranub* consists of a slice of areca nut, white lime paste and *gambir* (dried sap derived from extracts of the leaves and twigs of *Uncaria gambir Roxb* plants). These contents are wrapped in a betel leave. The areca nut and gambir symbolizes health because the function of the nut is to increase stamina and a sense of well-being, meanwhile gambir is a source of antioxidant and helps relieve mouth and stomach ulcers. The betel leaf contains antiseptic and is clinically useful

for various health problems, therefore it symbolizes youth and longevity. The function of the white lime paste in a treat of ranub is to add crispiness and lightness to its sweet, spicy and sour taste. So when dancers of Ranub Lampuan hand the ranub treats to the guests, it implies that the dancers pray for the guests' long life, health, and prosperity.

### Repetition

Repetition occurs 23.33 percent in the Acehnese song lyrics under study. In *Bungong Jeumpa*, for example, repetitions of words are done to the first or second word that appears in each verse of the song. In the verse *bungong jeumpa, bungong jeumpa meugah di Acèh* (magnolia champaca flower is famous in Aceh), the words *bungong jeumpa* (first words) are repeated twice thus the words *meugah di Acèh* are added at the end to emphasize its status to the Acehnese. It is followed by *bungong teuleubèh, teuleubèh, indah lagöina* (an extraordinary flower, extraordinary, is very beautiful). In this verse, the second word *teuleubèh* (extraordinary) is repeated. And a similar pattern is found the next third and fourth following verses of the song. In *Bungong Seulanga*, common repetition occurs toward the name of the flower throughout the song because the song is literally about this flower.

(L13) *Bungong seulanga, seulanga* (ylang-ylang flower, ylang-ylang)

(L14) *Ya ... seulanga, bungong seulanga* (yes ... ylang-ylang, ylang-ylang flower)

Yet, in *Dibabah Pintô*, the phrase *udép dua, udép dua* (living together, living together) is repeated in the chorus of the song since its concentration is on the relationship between a husband and wife and how sad is the wife that her husband leaves her without any news.

(L15) *Udép dua, udép dua* (living together, living together)

*Dibabah Pintô* tells about a sad woman waiting for her husband's return. He left the home without telling her. *Dibabah Pintô* in English itself means "at the front door." Nevertheless, it is a common practice in the Acehnese culture that husbands leave their village for a long period of time to seek for sustenance for the future and well-being of his family. In Acehnese society, when this is done, the wives' and children's care are given to their parents or closest relatives while the husbands are away. Today, *Dibabah Pintô* has become more famous after it was sung by a well-known Acehnese singer, Liza Aulia.

### Personification

Personification occurs at 13.33 percent in the Acehese song lyrics. In *Bungong Keumang*, the author of the song gave human characteristic to these flowers; they are referred to the Acehese youth as revealed at the last lyric of the song: *Meugah turônan Iskandar Muda* (the great generation of Sultan Iskandar Muda). The flowers were given the human characteristics of power, knowledge, moral, spirit and resources to build their nation, such as in L16:

(L16) *Bungong dum keumang peu meugah bangsa* [many blooming flowers (i.e., *bungong keumang*) develop the nation]

Moreover, in *Bungong Keumang*, personification occurs toward the water in the river which was given human character by describing it as having a mouth to recite poetry with an emotional feeling like human being:

(L17) *le alue ilée meusya'e seunang* (the flowing water in the river recites poetry happily)

Additionally, Mars Iskandar Muda also contains personification such as in the following verse:

(L18) *Seuramoe Mekkah neu-mat neuraca* (Serambi Makkah holds a pair of scales)

As mentioned earlier, *Serambi Mekkah* is a title given to Aceh due to the people's devotion to Islam. In the song, this title was given the human character of having hands to hold the scales. The scales here refer to justice that the people expect from their leaders.

### Synecdoche

Not much of synecdoche is found in the data; it was only about 6.67 percent or only two occurrences. The first one is in *Bungong Keumang*, synecdoche can be found in:

(L19) *Bah tan lée badan, jasa geu-puja* (even though his body is no more, his merit is remembered)

The verse informs us that Sultan Iskandar Muda is still remembered in the heart of his people, although he had passed away. *Badan* (body) in the verse represents the Sultan as whole. Another example of synecdoche is found in *Ranub Lampuan* in the following verse:

(L20) *Jaroe lôn siplôh ateuh jeumala* (the ten of my fingers are on the top of my head)

In the verse, the ten fingers represents the human being as a whole, in which he is wholly sincere in welcoming the guests to his home as what the song is about.

### Litotes

Litotes was found the least in the data, with only a 3.33 percent frequency, or only one occurrence. The example is in *Ranub Lampuan*:

(L21) *Nyang na mudahan, teungku neu-pajôh* (please eat to whatever is available [in our home])

To host guest to their fullest in the Acehnese home is cultural priority in the Acehnese society. To only offer betel as a sign of cultural welcoming to the home is at most times not enough. When guests happen to arrive during meal time, it is a must to prepare food to them. In the verse, the writer tries to be humble by welcoming the guests to eat the food that he or she has prepared for them, even though the food, according to the writer, is not much for the guest. Thus in fact, servings of food to guests by the Acehnese are always more than enough. In this society, hospitality to guest is a must to avoid shame in the society.

### CONCLUSION

From the 11 figures of speech proposed by Kennedy, only six are found in the Acehnese traditional song lyrics in this study, namely metonymy, ellipsis, repetition, personification, synecdoche, and litotes. These lyrics are dominated by metonymy and ellipsis, with synecdoche and litotes as the least employed. Contrariwise, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, and allusion were not found in the data. It can be concluded that the culture of writing the Acehnese traditional songs, the writers preferred to use more of similar associations to the things that they are writing about, giving human characteristics to things being inferred to in the songs, and

being humble in their expressions. These traits are also reflections of the Acehese characters; they are how the Acehese interpret their feelings, surroundings, and other human beings.

In view of this, there are a number of Acehese traditional songs that specifically express about the beauty of flowers that are found in Aceh. These flowers are used in ceremonies (such as weddings and celebrations), embroidery on women's hair and escorts to traditional dances. In the encyclopedia, among the seven Acehese traditional songs documented, three voices about the special flowers in Aceh. The first one is a song that refers to blooming flowers, or else known as *bungong keumang* in Acehese. This is also the name of the song; it carries a typical melody and tone of the Acehese music. Hence, it can be said that the meaning of these songs reflect their identity. The words signify their social and religious beliefs that are put into words to build senses (Ningsih and Fata). They were created from the Acehese experiences and intend to carry one their values to the listeners.

The most used figures, metonymy and ellipsis, are intended to make their connotation more alive so that the messages or information that they are trying to convey to the listeners can spark emotions and be grasped within their empathy. Culturally, the Acehese use mostly metonymy in their song lyrics because this interprets one of the people's characters that they do not speak in detail. They are likely to mention something in general. For example, in explaining the attributed of times, phrases such as "please come over to my house after sundown" or "we will leave at dawn" is more commonly used compared to "please come over to my house at 7.30 p.m." or "we will leave at 6 a.m." This is because the Acehese, who are Muslims, prays five times a day as obliged by their religion, Islam. Therefore, their dimension of time is based on these times for prayers, which are early morning or dawn (*Subuh* prayer), noon (*Dzuhur* prayer), afternoon, (*Ashar* prayer), evening (*Maghrib* prayer), and night (*Insya* prayer). As in metonymy, Acehese then used these prayer times to substitute a way of marking time because culturally, prayer times are associated with the time division in a day (i.e., dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night).

Furthermore, as Acehese commonly do not speak in detail in conversations; this implicitly inclines them to use ellipsis to shorten their talk and simplify utterances. Unlike English, syntactical subject omission in Acehese sentences is obligatory after the subject is first introduced, once or sometimes twice in the earlier sentences (Yusuf). Yusuf further elaborates that it is likely for Acehese sentences to exist without subjects because proclitics and enclitics on the predicate in this language are pronominal prefixes and suffixes which cross-refer as subjects or agents (379).

For example, “*Abua Ali ka geu-teubiet rumoh-geuh. Geu-jak u blang* (Uncle Ali has left the house. Went to the paddy field).” Grammatically, the pronoun “he” for “Uncle Ali” is found in the form of proclitic “*geu-*” marking the subject. This grammar rule in Acehnese is assumed to further facilitate their use of ellipsis in their literary work.

We do acknowledge that this research has limitations, among them is the limited data since we only focused on a few number of Acehnese traditional songs that are documented by publication. Looking at the current situation, where much of the Acehnese literary works are still not documented properly, it is hoped that future research can further take into consideration of other undocumented Acehnese traditional songs that are still sung by the society today. Furthermore, the lyrics are only analyzed from the literary point of view (figurative language) in this paper, and even though we have incorporated some notes on the Acehnese history and culture from the meanings behind these lyrics, we have not further investigated them deeply from the historical or anthropological point of views. Therefore, this can be prospects for future research on these Acehnese traditional song lyrics. We believe that more findings can be acquired from a larger quantity of data and from analyses based on different approaches or perspectives to further develop the conclusions that have been drawn from this present study.

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### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **Bungong Keumang**

Buleun ngon uroe bumoe ji-peutrang  
Dilangèt bintang meusimpreuk cahaya  
Rama lam donya dara ngon agam  
Sambông turônan peu keumang bangsa  
    le alue ilée meusya'è seunang  
    Bungong dum keumang peu meugah bangsa  
    Didalam ulah meugah disinan  
    Wareuna jih pahlawan bangsa  
Bak gaki bukét jirat meurentang  
Bah tan lée badan jasa geu-puja  
Dalam sjarah geu-keubah sinan  
Meugah turônan Iskandar Muda

### **APPENDIX 2**

#### **Bungong Seulanga**

Bungong seulanga, seulanga  
Keumang cot uroe  
Harôm bée bungong, oh adoe that mesra  
Didalam cita seulanga malam ngon uroe seulanga  
Beujeut geu-tanyoe seulanga ta-meuduek dua (2x)  
Ya seulanga, bungong seulanga (2x)

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **Jak Kutimang**

Jak kutimang bungong meulu  
Gantoe abu rayeuk gata  
Ta-jak meugoe ta-jak me'ue  
Mangat na bu ta-bri keu ma  
    Jak kutimang bungong padée  
    Beu-jroh peu rayeuk gata  
    Beu Tuhan bri le hareukat  
Ta-peusapat puwoe keu ma  
Jak kutimang bungong padée  
Beu jroh peu rayeuk gata  
Tutô beujroh bek rôh singkèe  
Bandum sarée jireueh gata

#### **APPENDIX 4**

##### **Mars Iskandar Muda**

Aceh meusyeyuhu makmu ngon meugah  
Masa peurintah Iskandar Muda  
Raja nyang adée hatée neu-murah  
Karonya Allah neu-bri bahgia  
    Iskandar Muda Raja that tuah  
    Seuramoe Makkah neu-mat neuraca  
    Iskandar Muda, keurajeuen luah  
    Raja nyang meugah meusyeyuhu nama  
Lasyeuka neu-le ngon guda gajah  
Panglima ceudah gagah perkasa  
Ho neu-maju prang reujang that keumah  
Keurajeuen luah troh u Meulaka  
    Iskandar Muda, Raja that tuah  
    Seuramoe Makkah, neu-mat neuraca  
    Iskandar Muda, keurajeuen luah  
    Raja nyang meugah meusyeyuhu nama

#### **APPENDIX 5**

##### **Cut Nyak Dien**

Masa prang Acèh, meugah Cut Nyak Dien  
Teubiet u mideuen, neu-prang Beulanda  
Sunggôh that putroe, nanggroe neu-peu theuen  
Bek ji-keurajeuen, uléh Beulanda  
    Di Acèh meugah putroe pahlawan  
    Masa neu-meuprang dengon Beulanda  
    Putroe jroh peu hatée neu-peutrang  
    Putroe nyang sayang nanggroe ngon bangsa  
Ilana neu-gundah, keu darah ilée  
Putroe neu-matée bak bila bangsa  
Beu that bak musuh tangkôh buknlée  
Putroe lam hatée teumakôt hana  
    Di Acèh meugah putroe pahlawan  
    Masa neu-meuprang dengon Beulanda  
    Putroe jroh peuhatee neu-peutrang  
    Putroe nyang sayang nanggroe ngon bangsa

## APPENDIX 6

### Ranub Lampuan

Saleum'alaikom teungku barô trôh  
Tamong neu-piyôh neu-duek bak tika  
Ranub lampuan sinan ulôn bôh  
Geu-nanto bungkôh bohru peut punca  
    Ranub lam uteuen, pineung nyang luri  
    Lawang jih lôn bôh meuada kala  
    Nyang na mudahan, teungku neu-pajôh  
    Jaroe lôn siplôh ateuh jeumala

## APPENDIX 7

### Bungong Jeumpa

Bungong jeumpa bungong jeumpa meugah di Acèh  
Bungong teuleubèh teuleubèh indah lagöina (2x)  
Putéh kuneng meujampu mirah  
Bungong si ulah indah lagöina (2x)  
    Lam sinar buleun, lam sinar buleun angen peuyôn  
    Lurôh meususôn, meususôn yang mala mala (2x)  
    Keubit that harôm meunyoe ta-tém côm  
    Leupah that harôm si bungong jeumpa (2x)

## APPENDIX 8

### Dibabah Pintô

Dibabah pintô su meualôn  
Dara meupantôn  
Ngon hatée duka  
    Wahai cut abang pakon tinggai lôn  
    Peu jak ka neu-trôn  
    Ulôn han neu-ba  
Udép dua, udép dua  
Bahagia tanyoe  
Dalam sijahtra (2x)  
    Hatée lôn seudéh sakét didalam  
    Bak ulôn tuan han neu-bri haba  
    Bah cit meunan do'a lôn lakèe  
    Cut abang neu-bri dalam sijahtra  
Udép dua, udép dua  
Bahagia tanyoe  
Dalam sijahtra (2x)

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