

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of relevant theories and previous studies that establish the conceptual foundation of this research. It elaborates on several interconnected concepts essential to the study: the nature of songs and song lyrics, the concept and types of figurative language, the framework of literary analysis in song lyrics, the notion of spiritual meaning, an overview of Maher Zain's musical and thematic contributions, and previous empirical findings related to the topic. This theoretical background aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how figurative language contributes to constructing spiritual meanings in 3 Maher Zain's song *"The Chosen One, Peace Be Upon You, Assalamu Alayka."*

A. The Nature of Songs and Song Lyrics

Songs are a unique form of literary and artistic expression that combines language, rhythm, and melody to convey meanings and emotion. Song lyrics serve as "poetry in performance", where meaning is not only embedded in words but is also shaped by voice, tone, and delivery (Frith, 1996). Unlike ordinary speech or prose, song lyrics often rely on thick forms of expression such as imagery, repetition, and symbolism to achieve emotional resonance.

In literary studies, song lyrics can be analyzed as texts that convey aesthetic and communicative goals (Klarer, 1999). They are not just entertainment but serve as cultural products that reflect individual social values, religious beliefs, and emotions. Religious songs in particular serve as a bridge between art and spirituality, carrying messages of faith and devotion through

poetic language. In this sense, Maher Zain's works can be seen not only as musical compositions but also as literary texts that use figurative language to communicate spiritual truths.

Furthermore, songs, especially those with religious or moral themes, serve as bridges between art and spirituality. They communicate messages of faith, devotion, and transcendence through poetic and symbolic language. The emotional power of music strengthens the lyrical message, enabling songs to inspire reflection and spiritual connection (Frith, 1996). Religious songs thus function as a form of aesthetic worship, in which rhythm and language are harmonized to elevate spiritual experience.

In this context, Maher Zain's works exemplify the fusion of artistic creativity and religious devotion. His songs are not only musical compositions but also literary texts rich in figurative language that communicate spiritual truths. Through metaphors, imagery, and symbolism, his lyrics convey concepts such as divine love, guidance, and moral struggle in a way that resonates emotionally with the listener. Artistic language in such texts bridges the gap between emotion and intellect, allowing the audience to access both aesthetic beauty and moral insight simultaneously. (Klarer, 1999).

Therefore, understanding songs from a literary perspective enables this research to approach 3 Maher Zain's songs such as "*The Chosen One, Peace Be Upon You, Assalamu Alayka (English Version)*" as a textual and symbolic representation of spirituality. By treating the song lyrics as a form of poetic discourse, this study positions them within the broader tradition of literary

analysis, where artistic language serves as a means to construct and communicate spiritual meaning.

B. The Concept and Types of Figurative Language

Figurative language is a key element of literary and linguistic expression that allows speakers or writers to convey meanings beyond the literal level. It functions not only as ornamentation but also as a conceptual mechanism through which human beings understand abstract ideas via familiar experiences. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003) in *Metaphors We Live By*, figurative language, particularly metaphor, is not merely a poetic device but a fundamental part of human cognition. They argue that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." This means that figurative expressions reflect how people perceive the world, organize experience, and construct meaning. In songs, figurative language allows the listener to access emotional, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions that literal language cannot capture.

In literary works, especially in song lyrics, figurative language provides semantic richness and emotional resonance. It transforms abstract concepts such as love, faith, or divine presence into tangible and aesthetic expressions. As Keraf (2009, p. 113) explains, figurative language or *majas* is "a way of expressing thought through language that shows the writer's or speaker's soul and personality". Classifies figurative language into several types that serve various communicative and rhetorical purposes. Each type of figurative language adds nuance and depth to a text by shaping tone, attitude, and meaning. In the context of 3 Maher Zain's songs "The Chosen One, Peace Be Upon You,

Assalamu Alayka (English Version)", figurative language is used not merely for artistic embellishment but as a means of expressing spiritual experience through symbolic and affective expression.

The classification of figurative language varies among scholars, as each expert offers a different perspective in categorizing its types. According to Perrine, for instance, he identifies thirteen types of figurative language, including metaphor, simile, metonymy, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, irony, paradox, symbol, allegory, apostrophe, imagery, and understatement. On the other hand, Knickerbocker and Reninger propose ten types, namely simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, dead metaphor, allusion, and paradox. Meanwhile, Leech presents a more concise classification consisting of seven types: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, irony, and litotes.

Although these classifications differ in terms of the number and types of figurative language identified by Perrine with thirteen types, Knickerbocker and Reninger with ten types, and Leech with seven types, they essentially share similar underlying concepts. The variation may be influenced by the period in which each classification was developed. Leech's classification, for example, was introduced in the early 1980s with a more limited scope. Over time, later scholars expanded these categories, resulting in a broader range of figurative language types. Among these various classifications, this study adopts Leech's framework as the primary basis for analysis.

This study is classified because it provides a clear and systematic taxonomy of the most commonly used figures of speech in Indonesian and

English literary contexts. From his sixteen identified types, six are selected for analysis in *The Chosen One*, *Peace Be Upon You*, *Assalamu 'Alayka* due to their frequent appearance in religious and lyrical texts: metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony, and symbolism. Each type contributes differently to the construction of meaning, emotion, and spirituality in the song (Keraf, 2009).

1. Metaphor

Metaphor is a comparison between two unrelated things without using comparative words such as "like" or "as." The definition of metaphor as a figure of speech that expresses a direct analogy between two concepts, transferring meaning from one domain to another (Keraf, 2009). Metaphor as a conceptual mapping where one idea is understood in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). For example, in the lyric "To make your smile each time I'm around you," the word "around" does not only indicate physical presence, but also symbolizes emotional support, affection, and comfort. The speaker's presence is metaphorically associated with happiness and warmth, showing how emotional closeness can bring joy to another person (Kakang, 2022).

2. Personification

Personification attributes human characteristics to non-human objects or abstract ideas. Personification as a figure of speech that describes non-living or abstract entities as capable of acting like humans (Keraf, 2009). Through personification, abstract spiritual concepts such as faith, mercy, or light are made alive and dynamic. For example, in the lyric "Haunt

your mind and your heart is full of shame,” the words “mind” and “heart” are described as if they can experience human emotions such as shame. This lyric illustrates a person who feels deep regret and embarrassment. Therefore, the lyric is classified as personification because it gives human feelings and emotional capacity to abstract parts of human consciousness (Purba et al., 2021)

3. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is intentional exaggeration for emphasis or emotional intensity. It is a figure of speech that contains an overstatement Keraf (2009), while Lakoff and Johnson (2003) view hyperbolic language as part of human conceptual exaggeration to express intensity of experience. For example, in the lyric “Haunt your mind and your heart is full of shame,” the expression emphasizes intense emotional suffering and guilt experienced by a person. The phrase exaggerates how shame completely controls the mind and heart, creating a strong emotional effect on the listener. The lyric reflects overwhelming regret and sadness, making the emotional condition appear deeper and more dramatic (Syahputra, 2022). Therefore, the lyric can be interpreted as hyperbole because it uses exaggerated language to strengthen the emotional intensity of the experience.

4. Imagery

Imagery is a literary element that uses words related to the senses to give readers a clear and vivid picture of a scene, object, person, or idea. It appeals to the senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell to make the description feel real and engaging. Through the use of descriptive language

and figurative expressions such as metaphors, imagery helps build a particular mood or emotional tone in a literary work. It allows readers to imagine and experience the events or emotions in the text more vividly and deeply. According to Matvejeva (2024), imagery uses descriptive language that appeals to the five senses sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell to help readers create mental pictures of what they read. For example, *visual imagery* describes what can be seen, *auditory imagery* relates to sounds, *tactile imagery* describes how something feels, *gustatory imagery* refers to taste, and *olfactory imagery* refers to smell. In addition, there are two other types: *organic imagery*, which describes inner sensations such as hunger, fear, or tiredness, and *kinesthetic imagery*, which shows movement or physical action. Through the use of imagery, writers allow readers to connect emotionally to the text, experience the scene more vividly, and better understand the message or atmosphere of the story.

For example, in the lyric “Glitter in the sky, glitter in our eyes,” the songwriter uses visual imagery to help listeners create a clear mental picture of sparkling stars in the sky and the shining eyes of two people who admire each other. The expression allows the audience to visualize a beautiful and emotional atmosphere filled with affection and wonder (Putri et al., 2022). Through this imagery, the listener can feel the romantic mood and imagine the scene more vividly.

5. Symbolism

Symbolism is a literary device where an object, action, or event stands for a broader idea, concept, or emotion beyond its basic meaning.

The symbol may be a concrete item like a rose or an abstract notion such as freedom and it carries deeper significance than the literal form suggests. Writers use symbols to create multiple layers of meaning and to subtly communicate themes or messages to readers. According to the source, through symbolism, authors can enhance emotional impact and engage readers on a more profound level, making the reading experience more immersive and memorable (Literary-Devices, 2023). In the lyric “A great big bang and dinosaurs,” the phrase functions as symbolism because it carries meaning beyond its literal sense. The “big bang” refers to the scientific theory of the universe’s creation, while “dinosaurs” refer to ancient creatures that are now extinct. However, in the context of the lyric, both expressions are used to represent deeper emotional meanings. The “big bang” symbolizes the beginning of intense feelings, such as the sudden start of falling in love, while “dinosaurs” symbolize sadness, loss, or the ending of a relationship (Syahputra, 2022). Therefore, the lyric is classified as symbolism because it uses concrete concepts to represent abstract emotional experiences.

In summary, figurative language viewed through the theories of Keraf (2009); Lakoff and Johnson (2003) serves both a conceptual and aesthetic function. It enables abstract spiritual meanings to be communicated through tangible linguistic forms. In 3 of Maher Zain's songs, these figures of speech do not merely beautify the lyrics but function as a spiritual semiotic system that expresses meaning that transforms emotion into faith and language into worship. Figurative expressions thus

bridge human experience and divine reality, making song lyrics a powerful medium for expressing devotion and spirituality.

C. Literary Analysis of Song Lyrics

Song lyrics can be analyzed as literary works because they use language, structure, and artistic meaning that function similarly to poetry. Literary analysis of song lyrics aims to reveal how linguistic elements such as diction, imagery, and figurative language convey emotional, aesthetic, and cultural values. Therefore, studying Maher Zain's selected songs, namely "The Chosen One," "Peace Be Upon You," and "Assalamu Alayka" (English Version), requires a literary approach that focuses on the relationship between language and meaning to uncover their spiritual dimensions. Literary analysis is a method for interpreting how form, language, and meaning interact within a text. This perspective emphasizes that language in literary works carries symbolic and emotional meaning, rather than simply functioning as a neutral medium of communication. Every word choice, expression, and poetic structure used in song lyrics contributes to the creation of a particular mood, feeling, and meaning. Through literary analysis, it is possible to understand how Maher Zain uses linguistic strategies to express admiration, respect, and devotion to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to communicate spiritual values through his song lyrics.

Song lyrics, especially in poetry and music, function not only as artistic expressions but also as a medium to convey emotional and spiritual messages. They often use elements such as rhythm, repetition, and figurative language, like metaphor and symbolism, to strengthen the listener's emotional

engagement. Through these elements, abstract ideas such as peace, love, and spirituality can be expressed in a more vivid and meaningful way.

In this context, the use of figurative language in Maher Zain's songs plays an important role in conveying messages of faith and devotion. Metaphorical and symbolic expressions allow the lyrics to represent deeper meanings beyond their literal sense, making the spiritual messages more relatable and impactful for listeners.

Therefore, analyzing figurative language helps to understand how song lyrics communicate Islamic spiritual values. It shows that figurative expressions are not only decorative, but also serve as an effective tool to express religious messages and strengthen emotional connections between the message and the audience.

Moreover, Klarer, (1999) extends this discussion by viewing songs as "poetic discourse embedded in musical performance." This definition implies that song lyrics function as *multimodal texts* combinations of language, sound, and rhythm that communicate meaning not only through words but also through tone and melody. As a result, the audience perceives both the verbal message and the emotional resonance that accompanies it. In those Maher Zain's songs, the combination of soothing melody and poetic language strengthens the listener's sense of spiritual intimacy and admiration, turning the song into both an aesthetic and spiritual experience.

This study applies a text-oriented approach, combining insights from New Criticism and stylistics. According to New Criticism, a literary text should be analyzed as an autonomous entity, where meaning is derived from the text

itself rather than the author's intention or audience response. This approach focuses on internal coherence: how diction, figurative language, and imagery create unity of meaning. Therefore, Maher Zain's lyrics can be seen as an integrated structure in which every figurative expression contributes to the construction of emotional depth and spiritual meaning.

Literary analysis of song lyrics reveals that language in musical compositions carries deeper emotional and moral messages beyond entertainment. Through the combination of poetic diction, imagery, and figurative language, Maher Zain's *The Chosen One*, *Peace Be Upon You*, *Assalamu 'Alaika* illustrate how artistic expression becomes a medium for spiritual reflection. The study of its language structure helps uncover the hidden layers of meaning that connect aesthetic beauty with religious devotion.

D. Islamic Spiritual Meaning

The concept of spiritual meaning has become a significant subject in contemporary Islamic research, particularly in the study of how language, symbolism, and artistic expression communicate transcendent, devotional, ethical, and emotional dimensions of faith. In Islamic intellectual tradition, spiritual meaning (*al-ma'nā al-rūḥī*) is inseparable from the **Tawḥīdic worldview**, which interprets all existence as a unified system filled with divine signs (*āyāt*). According to Nuryanti and Hakim (2020), the Islamic worldview (*ru'yat al-Islām li al-wujūd*) is grounded in the unity of being and meaning, where every symbol ultimately directs human consciousness toward God. Dong and Duan (2020) emphasize that spiritual meaning emerges when the intellect (*'aql*) and the heart (*qalb*) are harmonized, enabling deeper metaphysical

interpretation beyond literal comprehension. Meanwhile, Komalasari et al. (2024) explain that figurative language within Islamic discourse functions as a linguistic *āyāt*, guiding the believer toward remembrance, reflection, and awareness of divine presence. These studies collectively affirm that figurative language is inherently capable of carrying spiritual significance, serving as a symbolic bridge between the material world and transcendent reality.

Recent scholarly work further refines the understanding of spiritual meaning through interdisciplinary perspectives such as cognitive linguistics, phenomenology, religious aesthetics, and Islamic arts. Oyarzo Alvarado (2023) argues that spiritual metaphors operate through embodied cognition, meaning that metaphors, such as light, elevation, heart, and journey, resonate spiritually because they reflect universal human experiences. According to Thomas (2022), through the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory, demonstrates that metaphors of transcendence (e.g., *light*, *height*, *journey*) consistently evoke spiritual associations across cultures. Additionally, the importance of inner awareness, explaining that spiritual meaning arises when symbolic language activates deep existential reflection and emotional consciousness. Within Islamic arts, particularly nasheed, Rahman et al. (2024) reveal that symbolic imagery, metaphorical praise, and melodic harmony create "spiritual sweetness," a heightened emotional-spiritual state that deepens the listener's connection to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. Collectively, these findings show that spiritual meaning emerges through a synergy of linguistic symbolism, emotional embodiment, and contemplative awareness, making figurative language a powerful medium for spiritual interpretation.

Building on contemporary Islamic studies, cognitive linguistics, and religious aesthetics, this research synthesizes several theories to classify six types of spiritual meanings found in figurative language expressions in the selected lyrics.

1. **Transcendental Meaning**

Transcendental meaning refers to figurative expressions that orient the believer toward the presence, majesty, and guidance of Allah. Metaphors involving *light*, *dawn*, *purity*, *height*, or *guiding star* elevate human experience toward the divine realm. In this type, figurative language acts as a medium of *hidayah* (divine guidance), representing God as the ultimate source of clarity, protection, and truth. This category illustrates the vertical relationship between human and divine reality, showing how symbolic language becomes a channel for experiencing transcendence (Al-Attas, 1993).

2. **Prophetic–Devotional Meaning**

Prophetic–devotional meaning encompasses figurative expressions that convey love, reverence, admiration, and emotional intimacy toward Prophet Muhammad. Symbols such as *the shining moon*, *the fragrance of mercy*, and *the light of Madinah* reflect deep spiritual devotion (*mahabbah*). These metaphors not only praise the Prophet aesthetically but also elevate emotional connection, making devotional expressions part of spiritual experience. Through this type, figurative language reinforces the believer's attachment to the Prophet as a model of ethical and spiritual excellence (Al-Ashhar, 2023).

3. Ethical–Moral Meaning

Ethical, moral meaning arises from metaphors that express Islamic virtues such as patience, gratitude, sincerity, humility, and perseverance. Imagery of *journeys, gardens, storms, fire, or refining flames* symbolizes the moral processes required for spiritual growth. These figurative expressions illustrate that moral transformation is not merely behavioral but deeply spiritual, forming essential pathways toward achieving *ihsan*. Thus, ethical-moral meaning demonstrates how metaphor communicates moral instruction and depicts the believer's struggle for ethical refinement (Chaer et al., 2025).

4. Inner–Existential Meaning

Inner–existential meaning focuses on the emotional and psychological dimensions of spiritual life, including inner peace, self-reflection, healing, and the search for meaning. Metaphors such as *the storm within, the quiet room of the heart, and the journey inward* portray deep internal processes. In Islamic spirituality, this corresponds to *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the purification of the soul through introspection and emotional awareness. Figurative expressions of this type highlight the intimate nature of spiritual experience, showing how inner struggles and emotional clarity contribute to spiritual development (Thomas, 2022).

5. Aesthetic–Emotional Meaning

Aesthetic–emotional meaning focuses on the spiritual impact of beauty. This includes metaphors relating to *melody, color, harmony, and flow*. In Islamic aesthetics, beauty (*jamāl*) is considered a manifestation of divine attributes. Thus, metaphors that evoke emotional resonance through

beauty illustrate how sensory experience leads to spiritual elevation. This category recognizes the role of artistic expression, particularly music and poetic imagery, in creating emotional states that guide the believer toward spiritual awareness (Rahman et al., 2024).

6. Transformative Meaning

Transformative meaning encompasses figurative expressions that symbolize spiritual awakening, repentance, rebirth, or movement from darkness to light. Common metaphors include *rebirth*, *open doors*, *ascending the path*, and *light after darkness*. These symbols represent personal transformation through divine guidance and spiritual realization. In this sense, figurative language becomes a narrative of change, capturing the believer's journey from confusion to clarity, from weakness to strength, and from distance to nearness with God (Sulaiman, 2021).

By combining the Tawhīdic worldview, contemporary spiritual meaning theory, the seven-type classification, and Islamic values, this study establishes a comprehensive conceptual framework for analyzing figurative language in Islamic songs. Figurative expressions are treated not merely as stylistic elements but as symbolic signs capable of generating transcendental, devotional, ethical, existential, mystical, aesthetic, and transformative meanings. Through this integration, the framework offers a spiritually grounded and analytically rigorous method for interpreting figurative language in 3 of Maher Zain's songs, demonstrating how symbolic expressions communicate Islamic values and foster deeper spiritual awareness.

Recent scholarship over the past five years demonstrates a growing interest in understanding how spiritual meaning is constructed through language, symbolism, and artistic expression within Islamic contexts. One of the most relevant contributions is the study by Pohan et al. (2025) which proposes a model of spiritual meaning identification and classification grounded in gratitude transformation among university freshmen. The authors emphasize that spiritual meaning emerges through a dynamic interaction between cognition, emotional awareness, and proactive spiritual practice. Although their study does not focus on music, its theoretical insight, that spiritual meaning is shaped through interpretive processes influenced by culture, emotion, and religious consciousness, provides a methodological foundation that can be adapted to the analysis of figurative language in Islamic songs.

A supplementary perspective is provided by Al-Asyhar (2023), who explores the evolution of Indonesian Islamic musical art from nasyid to gambus. His work emphasizes how contemporary Islamic music incorporates layered spiritual symbolism, merging devotional messages with local cultural aesthetics. Al-Asyhar maintains that figurative language, such as metaphors of longing, remembrance, and divine love, serves as a key medium for conveying spiritual experiences through music. This study supports the notion that Islamic songs function not just as entertainment but as tools of spiritual education embedded within cultural expression.

Further depth is provided by research on the musician Setiawan Djody, whose artistic work reflects a synthesis of Sufi spirituality and

Indonesian cultural motifs. Thahir (2025) shows that Djody's lyrics consistently employ metaphors of divine love, inner purification, and existential longing, thereby inviting listeners into a reflective and transformative spiritual journey. The study clarifies how Islamic music can convey spiritual meaning by merging symbolic imagery with emotional resonance. This aligns with broader Islamic aesthetics emphasizing the role of beauty (*jamāl*) in drawing the soul toward the Divine. Another article from the same issue of Thahir (2025) reinforces these findings, identifying Djody's musical expression as a form of spiritual communication shaped by symbolism, poetic language, and Sufi-inspired metaphors. Together, these two studies substantiate the claim that Islamic musical art is a significant locus of spiritual meaning-making in modern Indonesian society.

In a broader interreligious and theological context, Ria Novianti et al. (2023) examine Pietro Rossano's contributions to Christian–Muslim dialogue, focusing especially on the mystical and contemplative dimensions of interfaith encounter. Although not directly related to Islamic music, The analysis offers crucial theoretical implications: spiritual meaning, he argues, is often generated through shared symbolism, inner experience, and the language of the heart. These insights enrich the conceptual understanding of spiritual meaning by emphasizing the role of interiority, symbolic communication, and metaphysical orientation, principles that are also central to figurative language in Islamic songs.

Taken together, these five studies illuminate how spiritual meaning can be approached from psychological, cultural, aesthetic, and theological

perspectives. They collectively demonstrate that spiritual meaning is not a fixed entity but a layered construct shaped by symbolism, emotional experience, cultural context, and interpretive engagement. While none of these studies specifically examines the figurative language of Maher Zain's "The Chosen One," they provide a strong conceptual and methodological foundation. Their insights affirm that Islamic songs communicate spirituality through symbolic expression, metaphorical imagery, and aesthetic resonance, precisely the elements this research investigates.

E. An Overview of Maher Zain's Works

Maher Zain is an internationally acclaimed Islamic singer-songwriter whose work blends contemporary musical styles with spiritual and religious themes. Born in Tripoli, Lebanon, and raised in Sweden from the age of eight, he initially pursued a career in the Western music industry before shifting his focus to Islamic-themed music in 2009 with the release of his debut album *Thank You Allah Maher Zain* (2009). The album was a huge international success, reaching Muslim audiences around the world and being translated into multiple languages. His musical background blending Western pop, R&B, and Middle Eastern influences allows him to present Islamic values in a modern and accessible artistic form.

Maher Zain is one of the most influential contemporary Islamic singers whose works combine popular music with religious messages. His songs are widely accepted among Muslim youth because they not only serve as entertainment but also function as a medium of da'wah. A study by Fairuz (2021) discusses Maher Zain's role in operating da'wah activism through pop

culture, showing how his music functions as a cultural product that bridges modern entertainment with Islamic moral values. From a linguistic perspective, Maher Zain's lyrics are also rich in figurative language, which contributes to the emotional and spiritual resonance of his songs. A study by Pasaribu (2021) highlights how the use of metaphors, personification, and symbolism creates deeper meanings and strengthens listeners' spiritual reflection. In addition, research by Prawiro (2019) underscores that Maher Zain's works can be categorized as Islamic literary texts because of their poetic structure and symbolic expressions. The study on figurative language in Maher Zain's song lyrics emphasizes that his music instills faith-based awareness while also offering aesthetic pleasure, making his songs valuable objects for both rhetorical and literary analysis. Therefore, Maher Zain's works represent not only popular Islamic songs but also meaningful texts that integrate entertainment, da'wah, and literary value, reflecting the balance between modernity and spirituality in contemporary Muslim societies.

F. Previous Studies Related to the Topic

Several studies have explored figurative language in song lyrics; these studies have some differences from the research to be carried out.

The first previous study, researched by Pasaribu (2021), in her thesis, *The Analysis of Figurative Language in Maher Zain Selected Song Lyrics*, conducted a descriptive study that focused on identifying the types of figurative language used in several of Maher Zain's songs. Using Keraf's theory of language style as the analytical framework, she examined figurative devices such as metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Her findings reveal that

metaphor and personification are the most dominant features in the selected lyrics, serving mainly to enhance the aesthetic quality and emotional effect of the songs. However, Pasaribu's study remains limited to classification and does not interpret how these figurative expressions contribute to Islamic spiritual meaning or how they convey deeper religious messages embedded in the lyrics.

The second previous study was conducted by Prawiro (2019), entitled *Figurative Language in Selected Songs Lyrics of Maher Zain*. Using stylistic and semantic approaches based on theories from Perrine and Leech, he identified several forms of figurative language, including metaphor, hyperbole, symbol, and imagery. His findings indicate that figurative expressions enrich the emotional nuance and enhance the poetic style of Maher Zain's lyrics. Nevertheless, Prawiro's research is also descriptive and does not go beyond identifying linguistic forms. He does not examine how figurative language constructs religious devotion, reflects Islamic teachings, or expresses spiritual emotions, which leaves an analytical gap in understanding the spiritual dimension of the songs.

Yuliawati and Hasan (2013) conducted the third previous study, titled *An Analysis of Figurative Language in Maher Zain's 2013 Album*, which provides a broader examination of figurative language throughout the entire album. Employing a qualitative descriptive method based on stylistic theory, they found that figurative elements such as symbolism, metaphor, and hyperbole play a significant role in enhancing lyrical beauty and emotional resonance. Although this study offers a more comprehensive overview, it still focuses on identifying stylistic forms and does not analyze how these figurative

devices shape Islamic spiritual meanings, prophetic values, or moral messages within the songs. As a result, the interpretive dimension, particularly the construction of spiritual meaning, remains unaddressed.

The fourth previous study conducted by Riftasandha et al., (2025) studied the song *Palestine Will Be Free* by Maher Zain and found that figurative language, such as metaphor, and symbolism, not only enriches the aesthetic value of lyrics but is also effective in conveying morality & social awareness. Their findings suggest that metaphors such as "your soul will always be free" show the unyielding spirit of the Palestinian people, while the repetitive symbolism enhances a sense of empathy and solidarity.

The fifth previous study was conducted by Anggraini (2019), entitled "An Analysis on Figurative Language in Maher Zain's Song Lyrics". The writer analyzed the figurative language in some of Maher Zain's songs from the Album Thank You Allah. This research focuses on identifying the types of figurative language that have deep meaning and moral messages for the audience. They don't like to listen to music, but they also know the meaning of the song. This research aims to find out the figurative language used in the lyrics of Maher Zain's song and to find out the moral message in the lyrics of Maher Zain's song. The methodology used in this research is qualitative descriptive. The instrument of this research is the lyrics of the song by Maher Zain and the researcher himself. Figurative language is a word or phrase that deviates from literal language, which is very difficult for people, even students, to understand, because it has a difference in its context and reality in meaning, to know that figurative language is formed on the basis of comparison and similarity. There

are a few songs lyrics of Maher Zain's songs on the album "Thank You Allah" that the researcher used, that is, "Hold My Hand", "Insha Allah", "Palestine Tomorrow Is Free", "Thank Allah", and "For the Rest of My Life". To collect data, the researcher selected some of the song's lyrics. After that, the researcher cited the data based on their classification. This research data is analyzed by using Groys Keraf's theory. The results of this research showed that the researcher found figurative language in the lyrics of the song of Maher Zain, that is, Personification, Metaphor, Analogy, Paradox, Synecdoche, and Hyperbole. The most dominant figurative language used in some songs is Hyperbole. There are also some moral messages in each song's lyrics, which are: Optimistic about the good, grateful, do not give up, and caring.

This research is important because it shows how religious songs can be a medium of da'wah and moral awareness at the same time. However, the analysis is still limited to a single song and has not been thorough on the rhetorical approach of the text. Therefore, this study takes this gap by focusing on the song *The Chosen One* as a case study to show how figurative language functions as a rhetorical and spiritual medium in Islamic music."

G. Theoretical Framework

1. The role of theory in data analysis

This study is based on the principle that theory serves as a guide for analyzing and explaining meaning in a systematic way. In this research, the data consist of song lyrics by Maher Zain, while the theory is used as a tool to support the analysis of figurative language and its meaning.

The use of theory helps the researcher to organize the analysis, avoid subjective judgment, and provide clear categories for identifying Islamic

figurative language and spiritual meanings. Thus, the theory of this study supports the process of describing how meaning is expressed in words.

2. Operational Use of Theory in Meaning Analysis

To ensure a clear and systematic analysis, this study applies several steps as follows:

a. Identifying the figurative language

The first step is to identify the figurative language in the lyrics of the songs. This process is based on the classification of figurative language such as metaphor, comparison, personification, hyperbole, imagery, and symbolism. The purpose of this step is to recognize how language is used creatively in lyrics.

b. Classification of figurative language

After identifying expressions, the data is classified into types of figurative language. This step helps organize the data and structure the analysis.

c. Context-based explanation of meaning

At this stage, each figurative expression is explained according to the context of the lyrics. The researcher focuses on the meaning of the expression in the song without using complex theoretical interpretations.

d. Relationship with Islamic spiritual values

The meanings are then related to Islamic spiritual values, such as faith, devotion, love of the Prophet, moral behavior and guidance. This step explains how the lyrics reflect Islamic teachings and values.

e. Categorization of spiritual meanings

Finally, meanings are grouped into categories such as prophetic-devotional meaning, transcendent meaning, ethical-moral sense, and interior-existential meaning. This helps to present the results in a clear and systematic way.

3. Conceptual relationship of the framework

The framework of this study can be summarized as follows:

Figurative language → identification → classification →
explanation based on context → relationship to Islamic values →
categorization of meaning

This framework shows that the analysis focuses on describing how figurative language expresses meaning in words and how it reflects Islamic spiritual values systematically and understandably.