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The Use of *Ateji* as Figurative Speech in Japanese Song Lyrics

Faustina Ardisa, Utari Novella
Faculty of Humanities
Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia
ardisafaustina@yahoo.com, utari.novella@binus.edu

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the types of *ateji* used in Japanese song lyrics, and to analyze *ateji* as a form of figurative speech by the semantic-semiotic connection between the words used in *ateji*'s writing and reading. Analysis is done qualitatively based on Shirose's theory of *ateji* classification and Japan's *hiyu hyougen* (figurative speech) theory. This research resulted in the finding of 4 *ateji* types in Japanese song lyrics, which are *ateji* for foreign words pronunciation, *ateji* for pronouns, *ateji* for replacing words, and *ateji* for words used in specific titles/works. The use of metaphor (*in'yu*), metonymy (*kan'yu*), and synecdoche (*teiyu*) are also found between the uses of *ateji*, based on the relation of the words in said *ateji*. The words can be linked through contextual relation, conceptual relation, or semantical relation. The connection of the words can also result in similar uses as other figurative speeches not included in Japanese's *hiyu hyougen*, which indicated that *ateji* can be handled and understood as a general form of figurative speech in written Japanese language.

K E Y W O R D S

Ateji; Figurative Speech; Semantics; Semiotics; Song Lyrics

INTRODUCTION

Japanese songs are getting more reputation through the internet. The uses of OSTs (original soundtracks) in Japanese *anime*, games, or dramas also provides more exposure on the spread of the songs. As Japanese cultures gain more recognition internationally, more people also gain interests in learning the language itself. Some Japanese language learning videos are even created on platforms such as YouTube using Japanese songs as its media of learning. The use of songs for learning can be seen as practical, as the song lyrics does not need to be dubbed when it plays outside of Japan, as opposed to other Japanese pop

cultures that need to be translated before it can be sold to foreigners (e.g., comic/*manga*, movies, etc.). But the learning of Japanese is not easy. To understand the text, one would have to learn to read at least three types of characters, which are Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. To add it up, some *kanji* are not always read as how the reading rules (known as *on'yomi* and *kun'yomi*) stated. These combination of irregular kanji readings are known as *ateji*.

Ateji is a form of written expression, usually containing *kanji* with an irregular way of reading written as *furigana*, which is a small font on top of the Kanji (Lewis, 2010). *Ateji* can also be written with numbers or alphabets as long as it has an

irregular way of reading, sometimes even read as a whole different word with different meaning from the characters (Shirose, 2012). *Ateji* are mostly found on written documents, such as magazines, novels, or comic books, but this written expression is also used on song lyrics despite the nature of songs that are mostly heard but not seen.

Shirose (2012) classified *ateji* into 7 different types, which are *ateji* of mouth speak, *ateji* of foreign language, *ateji* of foreign abbreviation, *ateji* of sport terms, *ateji* of pronouns, *ateji* of word substitution, and *ateji* of specific works. For example, *ateji* of pronouns are written like 喫煙所 (あそこ) with the *kanji* of '*kitsuensho*' (smoking area) pronounced as '*asoko*' (there). In that example, the *furigana* '*asoko*' indicates the speaker way of talking, while the *kanji* showing explicitly what place the speaker was pointing at.

The practice of using different words to tell different meanings not only happened in *ateji* but is also shown in many other languages, universally known as figure of speech. In Indonesian, figure of speech is known as '*majas*', while in Japanese it is called as '*shuujihou*' or '*hiyu hyougen*'. In essence, *majas* and *shuujihou* are both technique of wording things, to get one's point understood by audiences and having a certain effect on them (Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Prihantini, 2015; Yuasa, Itoku, Iwai, Oketani, Nagamatsu, Minami, & Yamami, 2011). Japanese *hiyu hyougen* is a type of *shuujihou* that specializes in seeing things as another thing and comparing them (Nakazawa, 2020). Included in *hiyu hyougen* are similes, metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and personification (Moriyama (2010) and Moriyama & Fukasa (2003) in Lee, 2020; Nakazawa, 2020).

Even in the Japanese language itself, figurative speech is already used on a daily basis. For example, Ana and Divna (2012) stated the *kanji* for "hand" (手) is used to create compound words in Japanese and Chinese dictionaries, with the *kanji* used metonymically to symbolize a person who is skilled with their hands/techniques. The metonymic use of "hand" *kanji* resulted in professional words such as "singer" to be written as 歌手 (*kashu*) using the *kanji* for "song" and "hand". Other than metonymic uses, Lee (2020) also found how a word in Japanese language can have many functions – reaching up to 11 uses – from the perspective of metaphor, synecdoche,

and metonymy. Yet, none of the research connected figurative speech with *ateji*.

With the amount of figurative speech used in Japanese language, it is deemed possible to for *ateji* to be used as another way of showing figure of speech in literatures. After all, *ateji* and figure of speech have the same characteristics, as both are utilizing different words for showing different meanings. For example, there is one *ateji* used in a song titled "More Than You, Less Than Me" (キミ以上、ボク未満。) where the songwriter uses the *kanji* '*shinchuu*' (heart/mind) to write what is sung as '*sekai*' (world). The more detailed explanation of the lyric can be seen below.

世界は君以上で溢れかえってる (Deco*27, 2009)
Sekai/ wa/ kimi/ ijou/ de/ afurekaetteru
World/ particle/ you/ more/ particle/ overflowing
The world is overflowing with people better than you

でも僕の心中(せかい)には君しかいないから
Demo/ boku/ no/ shinchuu/ ni wa/ kimi/ shika/ inai/ kara
But/ I/ particle/ heart/ particle/ you/ except/ no one/ because
But there is no one except you in my world

The words in the corresponding *ateji* are not related semantically, whereas one means the heart/mind of the singer, while the other one means the world. Yet, those words are connected through the content of the song – a love song sung for one's lover. The *ateji* used in the song above is comparing the singer's heart with the world, and replacing the way of reading the *kanji* likewise. This *ateji* use shares similar concept with metaphor, where two different things can be seen as the same, and the missing words of comparison (e.g., as brave as a lion, crazy like a fox, etc.) between utilized words. This *ateji* shows the difference between the word '*sekai*' (world) stated at the first line of the lyric and at the second line of the lyric, and it shows that *ateji* is indeed a form of figure of speech just like other *majas* or *shuujihou*.

The result of this research is expected to prove to use of *ateji* found in Japanese song lyrics as figure of speech whether in Japanese sense or other languages. To make the classification easier, the figure of speech found in *ateji* will be correlated with Shirose's theory of *ateji* types. With the understanding of *ateji* as a figure of speech, Japanese learners will be able to

understand the use of *ateji* in a more relatable way, as figure of speech are used more internationally compared to the Japan-exclusive *ateji*.

METHODS

This research used qualitative-descriptive approach, in which the researcher will be the key instrument to analyse the collected data (Sugiyono, 2013). This approach is chosen as the data used in this research is formatted as words and not numbers, unless there are numbers that are directly related to the analysed phenomenon.

The data are in the form of *ateji*s found in Japanese songs, collected with literature study method. The *ateji*s are known by looking through song lyrics of various sources, including official lyric videos or music videos, lyrics citing sites, or the songwriters' personal blogs. Songs that do not have *ateji* in them are not listed as data. In result, there are 50 sets of *ateji* collected from 30 Japanese songs, with all of them released on year 2009-2020 period.

To understand different words used in one *ateji*, the data will be written as lines from the song lyrics. The gloss is written in the order of 1) Original Japanese lyrics, 2) Romanized reading based on the *kanji* or the way the lyrics is written as, 3) Meanings of each Romanized words, 4) Translation of the full line including the meaning of how the *ateji* is read as. The *ateji* used for data analysis will be underlined.

The analysis for will be done semantically and semiotically to determine on how do the words within the *ateji* data are connected with each other, and what do they represent regarding the context of the song. The context will be seen from the full song lyrics and the plot of its respective official music video. The uses of *ateji* in Japanese song lyrics will be compared to previously mentioned Shirose's theory of *ateji* classification and theory of figurative speech from various sources. Results of *ateji* types and figurative uses found in Japanese song lyrics will also be compared to see better correlation of the *ateji* uses. The result of the analysis will be presented in sentences and tables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Since *ateji* are mostly used in written works such as novels and magazines, most *ateji* research are done with Japanese *manga* or comic books as its resources. Nevertheless, the uses of *ateji* are not limited to written works but are also represented in songs, though it is rarely recognized. Not only that, the use of *ateji* have never been recognized as figurative speech. As so, it is necessary for *ateji* found in song lyrics to be analysed on the *ateji* types found in it and figurative speech found within the *ateji*. Analysis of stated topics are written below.

Ateji Types Found in Japanese Song Lyrics

Depending on its functions, *ateji* can be classified into *ateji* of mouth speak, *ateji* of foreign language, *ateji* of foreign abbreviation, *ateji* of sport terms, *ateji* of pronouns, *ateji* of word substitution, and *ateji* of specific works (Shirose, 2012). The *ateji* types found in the data and its frequencies are summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1: Analysis Result of *Ateji* Types.

Ateji Type	Frequency	%
Ateji of foreign language	6	12
Ateji of pronouns	3	6
Ateji of word substitution	38	76
Ateji of specific works	3	6

As seen from Table 1, the highest frequency of *ateji* found from the data was '*ateji* of word substitution' (38 times), followed by '*ateji* of foreign language' (6 times), while '*ateji* of pronouns' and '*ateji* of specific works' used with the lowest frequencies (3 times). The analysis of each *ateji* based on their type is presented below.

Data 1:
まるで　御伽噺 （フェアリィテイル）　(orange, 2018)
Marude/ otogibanashi
Just like/ fairy-tale
Just like a fairy-tale

The Data 1 above uses two different languages on its *ateji*. The *kanji* is usually read as "*otogibanashi*", but in this case, it is read as "fairytale". In Japanese dictionary and English

dictionary, both words used in the sentence have the same meaning, whereas both are stating a fantastical story meant for kids. Thus, it can be concluded that Data 1 is translating the words from Japanese *kanji* to English words acting as its *furigana,* or the other way around. This translating function is the characteristics of *ateji* of foreign language, as stated by Shirose (2012).

Data 2:
祈っても王子様はまだ来ない (Noboru, 2010)
Inottemo/ oujisama/ wa/ mada/ konai
Even praying/ prince/ particle/ not yet/ come
Even though (I) pray, you haven't come yet

In Data 2, the *ateji* is read as "*kimi*", despite the *kanji* sound "*oujisama*". In Japanese, "*oujisama*" is a way of calling a prince, meanwhile "*kimi*" is a pronoun, literally translated as "you". In this *ateji,* the *kanji* in the lyrics are stating who does the lyric meant when it sang the pronoun "you". The use of pronoun paired with the subject of it stated in the *kanji* means that this *ateji* is classified as *ateji* of pronouns.

Data 3:
この小さな劇場から出らんない (Eve, 2017)
Kono/ chiisana/ gekijou/ kara/ derannai
This/ small/ theater/ from/ can't go out
Can't go out from this small theater box

In Data 3, two completely different words are used in the *ateji*'s written text and pronunciation. The *kanji,* read as "*gekijou*" means "theater", while the *furigana* is read as "*hako*" or "box". The Japanese dictionary stated that *gekijou* is defined as "a building used to show stage play, movies, shows, etc., to audiences". Meanwhile, *hako* is "a case made of wood etc., usually shaped in cubes, as a container for things".

Ateji that uses completely different meanings in the *kanji* and *furigana* such as seen in Data 3 is categorized as *ateji* of word substitution. This type of *ateji* does not only substitute words that has completely different meanings, but also conclude *ateji* that uses words that has similar meaning yet completely different pronunciation as its *furigana.* The example of such case can be seen in Data 4.

Data 4:
互いを裁き合う宿命だから (40meterP, 2013)
Tagai/ wo/ sabakiau/ shukumei/ dakara

Each other/ particle/ to judge each other/ fate/ because
Because we are fated to judge each other

Data 4 uses "*shukumei*" as its *kanji* while it is pronounced as "*sadame*". Even so, both words can be translated as "fate" or "destiny" and is synonymous. The difference between *sadame* and *shukumei* is, *sadame* can also be translated as "decision" or "agreement". Though it uses similar word meanings in it, this *ateji* still counts as *ateji* of word substitution. Due to the different pronunciation of the *kanji* and *furigana.* The main function of this *ateji* type is bestowing a different layer of meaning to each term used inside the *ateji* by using slightly or completely different words as its *kanji* and *furigana*.

Data 5:
深水に腫魔る恋模様   (Deco*27, 2019)
Fukami/ ni/ shu/ maru/ koimoyou
Deep waters/ particle/ tumor/ demon/ relationship
Our relationship is plunging into deep water

Ateji used in Data 5 above is unique, as it uses non-existent words as its *kanji*. Though the *furigana* "*hamaru*" can be understood as "falling" or "sinking", the *kanji* compound word "*shumaru*" cannot be found in the Japanese dictionary. It can be concluded that in this *ateji,* the songwriter created a word to fit the context of the song. A word created by one person or group that is not widely used cannot be defined semantically as it does not officially exist. This results a creation of *ateji* words that can be used exclusively by one author or in a single title of works. And thus, this type of *ateji* is called *ateji* of specific works by Shirose (2012).

Ateji as Figurative Speech

Ateji as figurative speech analysis will be centered on categories found in Japanese *hiyu hyougen*. *Hiyu hyougen* consists of *chokuyu*/simile, *in'yu*/metaphor, *kan'yu*/metonymy, *teiyu*/synecdoche, and *gijinka*/personification (Nakazawa, 2020).

Frequencies of each *hiyu hyougen* and figurative speech found in the usage of *ateji* are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Figurative Speeches Found in Usage of *Ateji*.

Ateji Type	Meta-phor	Meto-nymy	Synec-doche	Others	None
Ateji of foreign language	-	-	-	-	6
Ateji of pronouns	-	-	-	1	2
Ateji of word substitution	6	7	12	13	-
Ateji of specific works	1	1	-	1	-
Total Frequency (%)	**14%**	**16%**	**24%**	**30%**	**16%**

As seen from Table 2, the highest frequency of figurative speech found in the use of *ateji* was synecdoche (24%), followed by metonymy (16%), and Metaphor (14%). However, there is 30% of *ateji* that are not included in *hiyuu hyougen* which classified into 'Other', while there is also 16% of *ateji* that do not function as figurative speech and classified into 'None'.

The use of each *ateji* based on their type of figurative speech is presented further in sub-sections below.

Ateji as Metaphor

In metaphor, an object is described by using a completely different object, without the use of comparative words (Nakazawa, 2020; Yuasa et al, 2011). Metaphors are based similarities found between the compared objects (Lee, 2020).

Data 6:
こたえ
決して離さない想いは届いた　(CHiCO with HoneyWorks, 2015)
Kesshite/ hanasanai/ omoi/ wa/ todoita
Ever/ to not let go/ feelings/ particle/ reached
(My) never-changing answer has reached (you)

Data 6 is taken from a song titled アイのシナリオ/Love Scenario. The song centered around "repeating fate" as its narrative, in which three characters keeps repeating same situations even after their rebirth. In the plot of the story, a male character keeps protecting a female character from the villain, and even though he was aware of the repeating plotline, his actions will never change; he will protect the female character.

In the *ateji*, the lyrics read as *kotae*/answer, while the *kanji* "*omoi*" means feeling/thoughts. In other words, the lyrics in Data 6 is comparing the

character's feeling/resolution as an answer. This metaphorical use of the word "answer" to symbolize the character's feeling happened due to the context of the song, whereas the male lead is answering his destiny with his strong feelings of wanting to protect the female lead. To top it off, this comparison does not happen explicitly, just like how metaphors are used.

Data 7:
ホンネ　　　　ウソ
欲 を隠して愛をつくんだ (Deco*27, 2019)
Yoku/ wo/ kakushite/ ai/ wo/ tsukunda
Desire/ particle/ to hide/ love/ particle/ to say
(I) will hide my desire and speak lies

The song, titled as スクランブル交際/Relationship Scramble, tells the story of a guy who lost his lover and is trying to find new relationships as a form of denying his own pain. The song lyrics stated that the lead character is seeking "instant love" and in the video, it is shown that he has relationship many girls at one time, though none of them seemed to last.

The line in Data 7 comes in as the character is saying "then, I will hide my wishes and lie for someone's sake." Though the lyrics are sung as "lie" the *kanji* is written as "love". The word "love" and "lie" in this song is related by its theme of shallow relationship, in which the character is saying out lies as a form of love for his partners, cherishing them in a twisted way. Thus, in this song, the word *uso*/lie is metaphorically taken as *ai*/love, as what is written on the lyrics.

Data 8:
こたえ
真実はいらない　偽りでいいの (40meterP, 2010)
Shinjitsu/ wa/ iranai/ itsuwari/ de/ ii no
Truth/ particle/ to not need/ fake/ particle/ good
(I) don't need answers, lies are fine

In a song titled トリノコシティ/Torinoko City, the singer is narrated as someone cold, as she keeps pushing people away from herself. In the lyrics the singer asked weird questions to others as an attempt to do so. The quirkiness of the character is shown by asking someone to answer her question within designated word counts. Even though the first part of the song clarified that she is fine with being alone, in the latter part, it is stated that she can't stand being alone, and wanted somebody to stay by her side.

The lyrics quoted in Data 8 exists in the second half of the song. After throwing out weird questions to other people, in the end, the lyrics said that she "doesn't need answers" and is okay with being lied to. In the line, the word "*kotae*" or "answer" is written with the *kanji* "*shinjitsu*" or truth. In that sense, it can be understood that the word "answer" is used to symbolize the meaning "truth", which is why the lyrics can be followed with "lies are okay".

Ateji as Metonymy

Metonymy is a way to replace words used in sentences with other words that are tightly related with each other (Nakazawa, 2020; Lee, 2020). For example, Beethoven is highly related with music, and the name can be used as metonymy in the sentence: I'm playing Beethoven. In other words, metonymy uses words that are tightly related to each other, and the correlation are widely known by people, like trademarks (Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Prihantini, 2015).

> Data 9:
> こども
> 生徒 扱 いはもうしないよと約束して
> (Kanon69, 2017)
> *Seito/ atsukai/ wa/ mou/ shinaideyo/ to/ yakusoku/ shite*
> Student/ treatment/ particle/ again/ please don't/ particle/ promise/ please
> Please promise to not treat me like a child anymore

The word *seito*/student in this data is read as *kodomo*/child. Semantically, *kodomo* means a person who is yet of age, meanwhile *seito* means students in primary and secondary school or elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. From that semantic aspect, it can be known that *seito* and *kodomo* are both speaking about somebody who is not an adult. With that concept in mind, the *ateji* in Data 9 works as a metonymy, especially when the song's theme is revealed as a song about forbidden relationship between a high school student with her teacher.

> Data 10:
> 望んだ過去から続く (Ito, 2016)
> *Nozonda/ kako/ kara/ tsuduku*
> Wished/ past/ from/ to be continued
> Continuing from my desired past

じぶん
現在になれるように　変えればいい
Genzai/ ni/ nareru/ youni/ kaereba/ ii
Present time/ particle/ can be/ so that/ if changed/ good
It would be good if it changed, so I can be myself

Ateji in Data 10 came from a song titled as *Time Traveler*, a song about the invention of time machine. In the lyrics mentioned above, the singer is thinking about going back to the past. The *ateji* then appears with *genzai*/present as its *kanji* and *jibun*/oneself as its *furigana*.

Though it is not completely connected by the context of the song, the words in this *ateji* shares the same concept of "existing in front of one's eye". The singer is thinking of going to the past to change it, yet he hopes for the present to not change. It can be concluded that the words *genzai* and *jibun* are metonymic because in the lyric line, the *ateji* shows how the singer values his present self, and the *kanji* works to highlight his statement.

> Data 11:
> ほ　し
> キミが居るこの地球を　忘れたくはないんだよ (Natsushiro, 2017)
> *Kimi/ ga/ iru/ kono/ chikyuuu/ wo/ wasure/ taku/ wa/ naindayo*
> You/ particle/ to exist/ this/ Earth/ particle/ to forget/ to want/ particle/ not
> I don't want to forget this star where you exist

The use of *hoshi*/star and *chikyuu*/Earth as a set of *ateji* can be found in many songs. One of them exists in the song above, titled ニア (Near). Semantically, the words in *ateji* above are related to each other, as both star and Earth are astronomical objects. But stars are twinkling, burning celestial bodies, meanwhile Earth is a planet filled with water where life forms exist. With that difference, the *ateji* as used in Data 11 works as metonymy, since the only common point between stars and Earth – the concept of them as astronomical objects – works to show a place that is neither a star or Earth, as it is shown in *Near* music video that the story of the song happened in a foreign, unknown planet.

Ateji as Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech where one part of a thing is used to refer to the whole thing, or the reverse, stating an object to point out one specific part of it (Lee, 2020; Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Prihantini, 2015; Waridah, 2014). The use of a general word to refer to a more specific terms of the word also counts as synecdoche (Nakazawa, 2020).

Data 12:

あの女と結婚ばれる前に (Kanon69, 2017)
Ano/ onna/ to/ kekkon/ bareru/ mae/ ni
That/ woman/ with/ marriage/ suffix/ before/ Particle
Before you are tied to that person

In Data 12, the word "*kekkon*" or marriage are read as "*musubareru*" or "to be tied to something". In this context, "ties" means relationship. Even though *musubareru* doesn't essentially means marriage, the *kanji* in the lyrics clarified what the singer meant. Since "relationship" is a more general word compared to "marriage", this use of *ateji* can be concluded as synecdoche.

Data 13:

彼は今最期の瞬間 (BuzzG, 2010)
Kare/ wa/ ima/ saigo/ no/ shunkan
He/ Particle/ now/ last/ Particle/ second
He is now in his last moment

The Data 13 above wrote the *kanji* "*shunkan*" to be read as "*toki*". In Japanese, *toki* is a general word for time. It can be translated as moment/occasion/season depending on the sentence. Meanwhile, *shunkan* means time in a shorter sense, like a blink of an eye or an instant moment. Thus, it can be concluded that the *ateji* in Data 13 are used similarly like Data 12, in which a word with broader meaning is used as the sound while it is written with a word with more specific meaning.

Data 14:

悔しいけどあなたの瞳には映らなくて (Nagaya, 2018)
Kuyashii/ kedo/ anata/ no/ hitomi/ ni wa/ utsuranakute
Frustrating/ but/ you/ Particle/ pupil/ Particle/ not reflected
It is frustrating, but (I am) not reflected in your eyes

Data 14 used the word "*hitomi*" to be sounded as "*me*". Each word respectively means pupil of an eye and the organ, eye. Thus, it can be understood that *hitomi* is a small part of *me*. By using the bigger term of word (eye/*me*), the lyrics is saying a small part of the eye. And thus, this *ateji* is used similarly like how synecdoche is used.

Ateji as Other Figure of Speech

Though this research is centered on Japanese *hiyu hyougen*, there are still other *ateji* uses that are not included in the category. As such, this paper will also elaborate lightly on other figurative speech found in *ateji* usage.

Data 15:

抱き合って理解った痛みから (Deco*27, 2020)
Dakiatte/ rikai/ tta/ itami/ kara
Hugging each other/ understand/ suffix/ pain/ because
Because I understand the pain of hugging each other

Data 15 utilizes the word *wakaru/wakatta* written as the *kanji* "*rikai*". These words are synonymous to each other as both means "to understand". The use of synonymous words in one sentence is usually seen as a mistake but it can also be seen as a style of speech known as tautology. In tautology, synonymous words are written in one sentence as a repetition to emphasize a statement (Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Waridah, 2014). In Japanese, this usage is commonly known as *kasanekotoba* or *juugen*, a writing style that repeats words with similar meaning in one sentence to add more information or to give emphasize on the related words (Yu, 2009).

Data 16:

抱えきれないほどの現実を (40meterP, 2013)
Kakae/ kirenai/ hodo/ no/ genjitsu/ wo
Hold/ cannot completely/ Particle/ Particle/ reality/ Particle
The fantastical reality that cannot be grasped completely

The *ateji* in Data 16 is opposite of the previous data, as it uses antonymous words in *ateji*. The data above reads as *gensou*/fantasy, but is written as *genjitsu*/reality. *Gensou* semantically means "things that are not real", meanwhile *genjitsu* means "real things that can be seen in front of

one's eyes". In this case, the meanings inside the *ateji* are paradoxical. Paradox, or *gyakusetsu*, is a figure of speech where one uses contradictory words to emphasize a point (Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Prihantini, 2015; Waridah, 2014; Yuasa et al., 2011). By combining *gensou* and *genjitsu* as a singular word, the contradiction developed an emphasis inside the song, showing the singer's confusion and denial of the world that is happening around them.

Data 17:
あ の 人
母さんは? (Honeyworks, 2020)
Kaasan/ *wa*
Mother/ Particle
What about Mom?

Ateji can be used to clarify subjects of a sentence. In Data 17, the *furigana ano hito*/that person is clarified by *kanji* of *kaasan*/Mom. Semantically, *ano hito* is a third-person pronoun used to talk about someone that is not closely related to the speaker, like an acquaintance or a stranger. Yet, in this lyric line, the singer is talking about his own family, which is his mother.

In Data 17, *ateji* is used like litotes or *kanjo-hou*, which is an understatement of things to express something greater than what is mentioned (Nillas & Nufus, 2014; Prihantini, 2015; Waridah, 2014; Yuasa, et al., 2011). By expressing the singer's mother as someone who is not close to him, listeners are able to know the relationship between the mother and the son.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis done in this research, it is known that there are four types of *ateji* found in Japanese song lyrics. The *ateji* types found based on the data analysis are *ateji* of foreign language, *ateji* of pronouns, *ateji* of word substitution, and *ateji* of specific works. Within those four types, *ateji* of word substitution has the most frequencies. It is also known that all *ateji* of word substitution and *ateji* of specific works are used as figurative speech, either as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, or other figurative speech. Since more than half of the data is categorized as *ateji* of word substitution, more than half of the *ateji* is also proven to be able to be understood as figurative speech.

The analysis also concluded that there are certain patterns on the selection of words used in *ateji*. The words can be correlated by similarities or shared value based on the context of a story, resulting a metaphorical effect on the *ateji*. They can also be tightly related through concepts, similar to metonymy. Words in *ateji* can also connected as general meaning and specified meaning, as found in synecdoche. Lastly, they can also have semantical relation like synonyms and antonyms, resulting in similar patterns found in other figurative speeches such as tautology and paradox.

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