

## **Figurative Language in The Selected Songs from The Tortured Poets Department Album**

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### **Abstract**

*This research is aimed to analyses kind of figurative language, the meaning each figurative language, and the function of figurative language consists in Taylor Swift song lyric based on findings using the theory of Arp and Johnson. Using qualitative descriptive method through the analysis is focused in answering the statement of problem, applied the theories that related through the findings of figurative language. From the result of research, the writer concluded the types of figurative language found in the selected song is simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, irony and metonymy. The function of figurative language that the writer found is to provide imaginative pleasure, to talk a lot in a short compass, and to add emotional intensity. Metaphor is the most frequently appears from the 23 data, and based on the meaning analyses to provide imaginative pleasure is the most common function used in the selected song. The use of figurative language is to deepens the emotional resonance of the song and to describe the complexity and the intensity of the author emotional experience to making it relatable and impactful for the reader's imagination.*

*Keywords: Figurative Language, Figurative Language Analyses, Song Analyses.*

### **1. Introduction**

Language is an instrument of human language using verbal or non-verbal to convey the meaning means that language can be spoken or written. Additionally, language plays a crucial role in shaping identity, culture, and cognition, considered as a tool through social interaction. In the globalized world, being fluent in another language can significantly improve communication in diverse settings. Furthermore, mastering a foreign language can lead to personal growth by adapting and broadening a worldview. One way to learn the English language is through studying literary works.

Literary works offers a core of knowledge and understanding, providing deep insights and a nuanced comprehension reflections on the various phenomena of human life, deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and historical contexts that surround the author. Mostly the author using language skills to convey the idea through their work that shaped their own characteristic. This suggests that literary works are expressions of language. One of literary work that the writer known with the beautiful language is a poetry. Poetry and song lyrics have an interconnected element, where the lyric is crafted from various ideas from the auth, to create the song lyrics, the songwriter needs their imagination and their authentic style. Vania et al, 2020 states in lyric's writing the songwriter or composer usually uses a figurative language to make their song more beautiful and fuller meaning. Figurative language employs words or expressions that is far from their literal meaning accordance with Wibowo et al (2017) states figurative language is a language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation.

One of the best songwriters nowadays is Taylor Swift. The lyric that she made is so well-attached and related to kind of story that happened in our life, she usually uses a phrase with a poetic language that sometimes needs a time to interpreted the meaning. The writer decided to make entitle this study *Figurative Language in The Tortured Poets Department Album by Taylor Swift*, this album have thirty-one songs, the writer decided to use two selected songs as an object data. The writer will focus in the use of figurative language contained in the song lyrics album and what the function of figurative language in the song lyrics, so that researcher and reader can find out more about the meaning of the song lyric.

### **Research Question**

To support the research study the writer proposed with three statements of problem, there are:



1. What are the kinds of figurative language contained in the selected songs from The Tortured Poet Department album by Taylor Swift?
2. What are the meanings of figurative language in the selected songs from The Tortured Poet Department album by Taylor Swift?
3. What is the function of figurative language towards the selected songs from The Tortured Poet Department album by Taylor Swift?

### ***Theoretical Review***

#### ***Figurative Language***

When expressing or describing something, an author has a unique way of conveying the intention of the idea. Through language, authors convey feelings and thoughts in diverse ways, resulting in a variety of expressions. These variations in language use, including word choice and phrasing, are referred to as figurative language. Dancygier and Sweetser (2014:1) state that "Figurative language was thought of as being one aspect of what gives a text-in-particular, a poetic text-special aesthetic value". The statement above implies that figurative language is employed in texts, particularly in literary work to convey an idea indirectly. It is frequently utilized in literature to showcase the author's creativity and the beauty of language.

Purba et al., (2021) Stated Figurative language is used in many forms of communication, such as in daily conversation, poems, novels, short stories, articles in newspapers, advertisements, song lyrics, and more. It has been observed that figurative language is employed across a wide range of literary works to convey a big essence in style and beauty of language.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that figurative language is a style of language that uses words or expressions in ways that convey meanings different from their literal interpretations. This type of language enhances communication by adding depth and creativity, allowing for more vivid and imaginative descriptions. Figurative language enriches both written and spoken communication, making it more engaging and impactful.

#### ***Kinds of Figurative Language***

This research study using (Arp and Johnson, 2017) from the book *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound & Sense* this theory classifies Figurative language into categories, there are figurative language by comparison (metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe), figurative language by association (metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allegory), and figurative language by contrast (paradox, irony, hyperbole, litotes). Support by (Wiehardt, 2017:1) as cited in (Yastanti et al., 2018) there are six main types of figurative language for different purpose, and understanding their strength helps people to give the best effect in writing, there are; Simile, Metaphor, Synecdoche, Hyperbole, Personification, and Puns. Different with Wiehardt Kennedy & Gioia, (2005:817) stated figurative language divided into several types, there are; metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, metonymy and paradox

As for purposes, Arp and Johnson identify the functions of figurative language into four classifications, namely to provide imaginative pleasure, to carry additional images, to add emotional intensity, and to say a lot in a brief compass (Arp and Johnson, 67).

#### ***Song lyric***

Song lyrics known as a form of expression and a medium for conveying messages and opinions to society. As one of the fundamental elements in a song or music, lyric can be classified as poetry in literary works. In composing songs, a poet or a songwriter must be good in linguistic, arrange the choice of word, and combining it to evokes the emotion from the listener (Djohan, 2016).

Based on (Taufik & Cahyati, 2022) Lyrics contain the expression of the emotions that we experience, creating the meaningful sentences when the songwriter arrangement word. Furthermore, Sylado (Hadi, 2020) explains that lyrics in songs express the creator's feelings and thoughts, reinforcing the connection between songs, lyrics, and literature.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The writer chooses qualitative approach in this research in aimed to analyses the song lyrics. There are several functions of qualitative research methods for what are used in research, one of them is qualitative descriptive function, where this qualitative description is applied by narrating the object under study (Sugiyono, 2017). This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method in order collected the data from the text and lyrics of the selected song by Taylor Swift from her new album, make the analysis based on the data finding dan give the explanation and the interpretation the lyric with the semantic approach.

**3. Results and Discussion**

**3.1. Types of Figurative Language**

Based on the analysis, the writer found out for Figurative language by Comparison, there are only 3 types; simile, metaphor, and personification, for Figurative language by Assosiation, there is only 1 type which is metonymy, and last for Figurative language by Contrast there are 2 types Hyperbole and irony. The writer classified the data findings into categories and put the data in tables. Below here is the types of Figurative language that include in the song lyrics with the percentage.

Table data finding of types of Figurative Language

No	Figurative Language	Total findings	Percentage
1.	Simile	1	3.13%
2.	Metaphor	23	71.88%
3.	Personification	2	6.25%
4.	Metonymy	1	3.13%
5.	Hyperbole	3	9.38%
6.	Irony	2	6.25%

After the writer categories it into tables, here are the further explanation about the data that includes in the song lyrics. It would be followed with the explanation and interpretation about the lyric using the theories by Arp and Johnson.

**3.2. The Meaning of Figurative Language towards lyrics**

*Figurative language by Comparison*

**1. Simile**

Simile is a figurative language that was utilized to compare things that were different. The comparison is using an expression. It compares two different things to highlight a shared characteristic using the words “like,” “as,” or “than”. through analysis the data based on the table, it found that there is one simile found in the song *but daddy, I love him*. Here is the lyric that can classifies as simile through the lyric.

“*Bedroom eyes like a remedy*”

4<sup>th</sup> Stanza, 5<sup>th</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

This song is about the anger Swift felt about her controversial relationship that did not get good responses from her fans. The phrase above is one example of simile form through the lyric, using *like* to indicate the comparison between the *Bedroom eyes* described as a particular look from someone. The term *bedroom eyes* typically refer to seductive or alluring eyes, meanwhile, *remedy* means healing or having beneficial effects. Based on the semantic approach, it suggests that the thing is providing relief, comfort, or an escape from the problem.

Through analyses the data, the writer concludes this phrase as simile by highlight the theory (Arp and Johnson, 774) the comparison using the expression word ‘like’ that is meaningful to compare things to indicate directly the phrase as a simile.

**2. Metaphor**

Metaphor is figurative language categorized to compare two things but it does not use an expression like a simile. In a metaphor, an implied comparison means using a literal sense or in implicit sense. Based on the data from the table, there are found many forms of metaphor that implied through the song lyrics.

Below here the lyrics that classify as a metaphor includes in the song entitled *But daddy, I Love him*:

“*Raise you to cage you*”

1<sup>st</sup> Stanza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

The data above is one form example of metaphor towards the lyric, this phrase is metaphorically described as someone raising an individual with the intention to restricting their freedom and controlling them, it carries a negative connotation about the relationships, parenting, or societal relations.

Through this song, as described in the previous part, the phrase is a comment about the fans that forced Swift to end her relationship. By semantic approach, it can be interpreted the songwriter wants to highlight the comparison between the fans who support her career who raised her name in the industry but somehow become confining about her life.

Through the data analyses, the writer concludes this phrase as a metaphor based on the theory by (Arp and Johnson, 774). This phrase implied a comparison and classified it as a second form of metaphor where the literal term is explicit while the figurative sense is implicit.

Another lyric data from the song entitled *So Long, London* that the writer classifies as a metaphor.

*"I kept calm and carried the weight of the rift"*

1<sup>st</sup> Stanza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

The data above contains a metaphor, comparing the emotional burden of a *rift* to physical weight, suggesting how resilience in dealing with conflict. The rift here refers to a serious disagreement, conflict, or division between people, such as in a relationship, friendship, family, or group. This line suggests a situation where someone maintained their composure and managed to handle the burden or stress of a significant conflict.

Based on the semantic approach this line is interpreted as the situation where Swift's resilience in her faded relationship with her then-boyfriend Joe Alwyn. She pictures the last stages of her relationship, illustrating a scene where her partner is slowly pulling away while Swift makes a desperate effort to maintain their relationship. She vividly describes her state of affairs as "carrying the rift," emphasizing the emotional burden of trying to hold on as the relationship is fading. Through analyses of the data, the writer summarize this phrase as a metaphor based on theory (Arp and Johnson, 774).

**3. Personification**

Personification is figurative language that attributes human characteristics to objects, animals, and plants, creating parables. This kind of figurative language gave the impression that inanimate objects were acting as if they were alive. Through analyses of the lyric, based on the data in the table there are found two data that classify as personification in the *so long, London* song lyric. Here is the data explanation:

*"so long, London"*

4<sup>th</sup> Stanza, 1<sup>st</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

The data above contains a personification language based on the theory. The word "London" is treated as if it were a person to give a salutation, in a way can say goodbye. By addressing the city directly and expressing a farewell, the speaker imbues London with a sense of presence and personality, as if the city itself could acknowledge or respond to the farewell. This phrase suggests that it has a presence or significance that lasts over time. It implies a long-standing relationship or situation involving London. Through this line, Swift wants to say farewell to her relationship personifies the city of London. Signify a memorable period that happened in London, so she wants to begin a new chapter in her life.

Through analyses of the data, the writer concludes this phrase as personification. This phrase implicitly visualizing the city as if gives a salutation like a human characteristic as described in (Arp and Johnson, 776).

**Figurative language by Association****1. Metonymy**

Metonymy is defined by Arp and Johns on as a figurative language whose use is to express something by using other related words. Through analyses the lyric, there are one form of metonymy found in But Daddy, I Love him song lyrics.

*"Of my heart when he touches me"*

7<sup>th</sup> Stanza, 5<sup>th</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

The data above classifies as metonymy. The use of word *heart* here is implied to emotions, feelings, or deep affection. In literature, the use of word heart is represented by emotions or feelings and is often associated with love. This phrase suggests a deep emotional response to physical touch, using "heart" as a for the speaker's inner emotional world.

Through analyses of the data, the writer concludes this phrase as metonymy as follow the theory from (Arp and Johnson, 774). This phrase here represents a reaction with the speaker's feeling.

**Figurative language by Contrast****1. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is a figurative language that that exaggerates the actual details, often to create a humorous, imaginative, exaggerated, persuasive, or unconvincing atmosphere. Through analyses the song lyric, the writer found the data that classified as a hyperbole. Here are the data:

*"I'm just mad as hell cause I loved this place"*

6<sup>th</sup> Stanza, 5<sup>th</sup> Line

**Explanation:**

The data above is taken from So long, London song lyric. This phrase describes a wave of extreme anger, frustration, or outrage. It conveys a sense of intense emotional agitation or irritation. the phrase is often used to emphasize the intensity of someone's emotions in a situation. It can be used to express frustration with a particular person, event, or circumstance, and it suggests that the person experiencing the emotion has reached the peak point.

Based on the semantic approach through the song, Swift wants to express the frustration she felt about the ending of their relationship because she loved the place leading to London.

**2. Irony**

Irony has a meaning that goes beyond its mere figurative use. is often likened to innuendo, as it involves saying something with a purpose and a hidden meaning within. Verbal irony specifically involves saying the opposite of what is meant. On the other hand, sarcasm is a form of verbal irony used to express words that are intended to hurt the listener or reader emotionally. Another type of irony is dramatic irony, which occurs when there is a contrast between what a character says or understands in a story and what the audience knows to be true, the last types of irony is irony of situation, when the real situation occurred with circumstances that are expected to conflict. After analyses the song lyric, the writer found there are two data that classifies as irony in the two selected song lyrics in this album. Here are the data:

*"Growing up precocious sometimes means not growing up at all"*

4<sup>th</sup> Stanza, 3<sup>rd</sup> line

**Explanation:**

The data above shows a classification of irony. The term *growing up precocious* refers to a child who shows early development or maturity, especially in intellectual abilities. While ***not growing up at all*** suggests that despite being intellectually advanced, some precocious individuals may struggle to mature emotionally in society.

The phrase above is ironic because it suggests that being precocious, can prevent true emotional or psychological growth in any other areas of life. It is interpreted that Swift highlights a contrast between the maturity early and the natural maturity. Based on the explanation, the writer concludes this phrase as irony of situation.

**Function of Figurative Language**

After found out the types of figurative language and analyses the meaning of figurative language consist the song lyrics, the writer will analysis how the function of figurative language contained in the selected song on *The Tortured Poets Department* album. After analyses, the writer found 14 data of figurative language with the function to provide imaginative pleasure, 12 data of figurative language with the function to add emotional intensity, and the last there are 6 data of figurative language with the function to talk a lot in a short compass.

**1. To provide imagination pleasure**

In literary works, authors and poets usually enrich their writing by using the style of language, one of them is figurative language. This technique gives the imaginative pleasure for readers to stimulate their creativity, encouraging them to expand and develop their imaginative capabilities

*"A moment of warm sun"*

**Explanation:**

This data is taken from the song entitled *So Long, London*. Through analyses of the data, this phrase is related to the function of figurative language to provide imaginative pleasure. This phrase provides sensory imagery that evokes the physical sensation of warmth from the sun. By combining the explanation before, *a moment of warm sun* provides imaginative pleasure through its rich sensory and emotional connotations, creating a vivid and universally appealing image that readers can easily immerse themselves in through the lyric.

**2. To add emotional intensity**

Figurative language has the power to evoke strong emotional responses. These expressive techniques help convey complex feelings and moods, allowing readers to experience and understand the emotional nuances more vividly. Based on the data finding, 12 data that classified as the function of figurative language to add emotional intensity.

*"I'm just mad as hell cause I loved this place"*

**Explanation:**

The first data above is taken from the song lyrics entitled *so long, London*. Through analyses of the data, the phrase *mad as hell* related to the function of figurative language that adds emotional intensity. The phrase conveys powerful emotions such as anger and love. The intensity of the feelings creates a dramatic contrast that engages the reader's imagination the phrase effectively conveys a powerful and intense emotional state, making the reader feel the full impact of the speaker's conflicting emotions.

**3. To talk a lot in the short compass**

Talking a lot in a short compass means that the author or poet does not need to provide detailed explanations in conveying ideas. Based on the data there are 6 data, the writer would choose and explain two selected data to analyses the function of figurative language to bring up additional images.

*"Two graves, one gun"*

**Explanation:**

The second data classifies as the function of figurative language to talk a lot in a short compass through analyses of the song lyric. Different from the first data, the data above is taken from the song lyric entitled *So Long, London*. The words *graves* and *gun* consist of imagery and symbolism.

Based on the explanation above the writer concludes the phrase as an example form of figurative language functions to talk a lot in a short compass. The phrase is extremely brief, using only four words to express a profound concept. It makes a powerful and memorable narrative or moral lesson in just a few

**4. Conclusion**

Based on the data findings in the selected song lyric in *The Tortured Poets Department* album, the writer found there are 32 data of figurative language contained in the song lyric. These data consist of 23 data of metaphor, 3 data of hyperbole, 2 data in personification, 2 data in irony, 1 data in simile and 1 data of metonymy, within had their meaning.

The use of figurative language to deepen the emotional resonance of the song. The most common figurative language in the selected song lyric by Taylor Swift is metaphor. The use of metaphor to describe the complexity and intensity of the author's emotional experience in an implicit way makes it relatable and impactful for the audience.

Associated with the function of figurative language, from the 4 functions of figurative language, 3 functions are found through the song lyrics from the album. Based on the analyses, 14 data that classified as the function of figurative language to provide imaginative pleasure, 12 data functions to add emotional intensity, and 6 data functions to talk a lot in a short compass.

Based on the analysis and conclusions have been organized carefully, the writer suggested for future research, it is recommended to expand the analysis by investigating more songs by Taylor Swift or other artists, comparing different genres to see how figurative language usage varies, and studying audience reactions through surveys or interviews to understand their interpretations and emotional responses. By considering these suggestions, future research can build on the findings of this study and continue to expand our understanding of the role and significance of figurative language in song lyrics.

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