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Analysis On Figurative Language In Taylor Swift Selected Songs In "Midnight "Album

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis dan makna bahasa kiasan yang terdapat dalam album *Midnights* karya Taylor Swift. Dengan menggunakan teori bahasa kiasan Abrams (1999), penelitian ini menerapkan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa lirik lagu pilihan, yaitu *Midnight Rain*, *Snow on the Beach*, *Anti-Hero*, *You're on Your Own Kid*, *Bigger than the Whole Sky*, dan *High Infidelity*. Data dianalisis melalui proses pengkodean, klasifikasi, dan interpretasi, serta divalidasi dengan teknik triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat lima jenis bahasa kiasan, yaitu metafora (42%), hiperbola (28%), simile (12%), personifikasi (9%), dan ironi (9%). Dari temuan tersebut, metafora menjadi jenis yang paling dominan, yang menggambarkan kecenderungan Swift menggunakan perbandingan tidak langsung untuk menyampaikan emosi seperti kesepian, kehilangan, kerinduan, kecemasan, dan cinta. Analisis ini membuktikan bahwa bahasa kiasan tidak hanya memperindah estetika lirik, tetapi juga memperdalam ekspresi perasaan sehingga pesan lagu lebih mudah dipahami dan dirasakan oleh pendengar. Hasil penelitian ini menegaskan peran penting bahasa kiasan dalam lirik lagu sebagai perangkat sastra yang mampu menyampaikan makna kompleks secara artistik dan imajinatif, serta memberikan kontribusi bagi kajian sastra Inggris maupun pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata kunci: *Bahasa Kiasan, Metafora, Lirik Lagu, Taylor Swift, Midnights*

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the types and meanings of figurative language found in Taylor Swift's *Midnight* album. Using Abrams' (1999) theory of figurative language, the study employed a descriptive qualitative method, with data sources taken from selected songs: *Midnight Rain*, *Snow on the Beach*, *Anti-Hero*, *You're on Your Own Kid*, *Bigger than the Whole Sky*, and *High Infidelity*. The data were analyzed through coding, classification, and interpretation supported by triangulation to ensure validity. The findings revealed five types of figurative language: metaphor (42%), hyperbole (28%), simile (12%), personification (9%), and irony (9%). Among these, metaphor emerged as the most dominant, illustrating Swift's tendency to use indirect comparisons to convey emotions such as loneliness, grief, longing, anxiety, and love. The analysis shows that figurative language not only enriches the lyrical aesthetics but also deepens the expression of feelings, making the messages more relatable and emotionally impactful for listeners. These results highlight the significant role of figurative language in song lyrics as a literary device that conveys complex meanings in an artistic and imaginative way, while also offering valuable insights for English literature studies and language learning.

Keywords: *Figurative Language, Metaphor, Song Lyrics, Taylor Swift, Midnight*

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to analyze the types of figurative language and the meaning of figurative language found in the song lyrics of Taylor Swift's album "Midnight". The result of this study is expected to give contribution to theories relating to figurative language. This research shows the types of figurative language used as a reference or knowledge for readers and English literature researchers who are interested in figurative language.

According to Goldberg (2021), "Language is a system of symbols that enables humans to understand and produce complex information, including abstract concepts such as thoughts, feelings, and beliefs." Algeo (2005) stated, "A language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate." This definition has several important terms, each of which is examined in some detail... Those terms are system, signs, vocal, conventional, human, communicate.

Keraf in Smarapradhipa (2005): provides two definitions of language. The first definition states that language is a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by the human vocal tract. Second, language is a communication system that uses arbitrary vocal symbols (speech sounds).

Language is a human tool for communicating with other people and language is also an important part of human life. Language can be spoken or written. Written language can be found in many kinds of literary works such as novels, newspapers, poems, and

magazines. Spoken language can be found in the song, speech, and conversation. As human, we cannot escape from the involvement of the social environment, therefore language plays a big role in our daily lives.

People often use lyrics to express their feelings and ideas because lyrics contain very strong emotions from someone's soul. Based on the problem that I want to solve the meaning that the lyrics of the song communicate to the listener is in accordance with the point of view and experience of the songwriter who is a listener who experiences the same thing as the writer and singer. They can feel the feeling that makes them like listening to the lyrics of the song and that is one of the communications through the meaning conveyed.

According to Moylan (2021) cited in (Sihotang et al, 2024), a song is music that contains elements of text or lyrics in it. The lyrics of a song in which the form of writing or words to convey a message in building an atmosphere and a picture of a particular imagination, can be interpreted differently by each listener of the song. Song lyrics are one of the works of art that forms like poetry and is written. Song lyrics are one of the works of art that forms like poetry and is written.

According to Hornby, as cited in Lubis (2019:3), lyrics express a person's personal feelings and thoughts; they are associated with singing and are written as the words of a lyric poem. Siallagan (2017) state that lyrics can complement and enhance songs, thereby increasing the listener's interest in music. Rahim and Maryadi (2019) state that the meaning of lyrics consists of words, phrases, or lines that refer to or represent something and can be interpreted through other words.

According to Daemono, as cited in Sari (2016:36), song lyrics are expressions of a person's thoughts about something they have seen, heard, or experienced. Songs use words and language to create attraction and to highlight the uniqueness of lyrics or poetry. Firdaus (2013) states that "lyrics are a form of communication between the author and his readers." Typically, lyrics contain a message—regardless of its nature—that can stimulate the listener's thoughts or emotions.

Lyrical language is a language that is condensed, translated, and has meaning which is then wrapped in musical rhythm and the use of imaginative lyrical words. This is one way we know the meaning in a song is by every lyric they write in it there is a message they want to convey to everyone who listens. One example is the song by Taylor Swift entitled LOVE STORY

The lyrics of the song Love Story use elements of the story of Romeo and Juliet to build a love story full of obstacles, but with a happy ending. This shows how lyrical language can condense, translate, and change the meaning of a classic story into something more modern

and relatable. Music is also a literary work where there are songs with lyrics that contain deeper meanings and are felt based on what is being felt and there are also moral values, written in beautiful forms and easy-to-remember language.

In a song's lyrics, the meaning can be realized in a unique way for each singer, for example Swift, every song that she has full of emotional wordplay when we know what is conveyed in the song. The example: "You're on Your Own, Kid" The song conveys the journey to adulthood and the loneliness that sometimes must be accepted in life. Lyrics such as "I gave my blood, sweat, and tears for this" show the struggle in pursuing dreams.

According to Kramer (2016), music is a human action that involves the arrangement and organization of sounds and voices to create experiences that affect feelings, thoughts, and bodies.

According to Kreidler (2002) cited in (Erlinda, 2019), semantics is the study of meaning based on the conditions required for a sentence to be true, and how sentence truth relates to the truth or falsity of others. Meaning studies about ideas and concepts that can be conveyed from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them, as it were, in the form of one language or another, according to what has long been the most widely recognized view of semantics. There are various elements to semantics, one of which is figurative language.

A figurative language is a style of language that uses figurative words to convey a message imaginatively or in other words, fantasy. In Indonesian, this term is known as figure of speech. Abrams (1999:96) cited in (Syahfitri & Marlinton, 2018), defined figurative language as "a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect.". According to Maros (2018) cited in (Wibisono & Widodo, 2019), "figurative language is another style to say something other than the common way to make speech more beautiful." Picken (2017), as cited in Hutauruk (2019:130) stated that "figurative language is noticed and frequently interpreted in considerable detail, and evaluation takes place." Ratna (2017) stated that figurative language in English lyrics can have a strong emotional impact on the listener. According to Lazar, as cited in Hutauruk (2017:41) "figurative language can provide a useful springboard for integrated skills work and to stimulate reading, speaking, and writing skills." It tells, figurative language is very useful for improving skills like reading, speaking, writing because it can increase the knowledge, insight, and anything related to the context of language variants.

As we know, figurative language gives an interesting way to deliver the message rather than direct statement. Usually, figurative language can be found in novels, poetry, and

movies. Besides that it turns out the use of figurative language is also found in many songs to understand deeply the message represented by the use of figurative language interpretation is needed. Many people listen to music if they are bored, emotional, or unhappy in this day and time because listening to music makes listeners feel good, relaxed, and happy if they listen to music or sing a song based on their mood.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to analyze figurative language in song because every song has a deep meaning that the singer convey to the listener. The researcher is interested to conduct this research because in general adult listeners including researcher sometimes found some difficulties in understanding the meaning from the song lyrics.

The listeners who love the song can be involved within the message of the story that happened in the song. The listeners love songs because they can pick the message of the song lyric and figurative language meaning deeply. in this study, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title of figurative language analysis in Taylor Swift's selected songs on the album "Midnight".

The researcher uses Abrams' (1999) theory of figurative language because it supports the problem discussed in this study. Abrams (1999:96) defined figurative language as "a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect" cited in (Herlina & Agitha, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used qualitative research methods and focused on the process and results of the study. According to Moleong (2017), "descriptive qualitative research is research in the form of words or descriptions as the final output, conducted to understand phenomena that occur within the research subjects." Creswell (2018) stated that "qualitative methods rely on textual and visual data, involve in-depth analysis, and employ various research designs." The purpose of this descriptive study is to make a description, characteristics and the relationship between phenomena investigated.

Descriptive qualitative data was required to described and analyzed the data being investigated. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the qualitative research theory by Creswell (2018), which involves several steps: first, organizing and preparing the data. Second, read or looked at all data. Then, started coding all of the data. this research displayed the description about the content of this research and it did not calculate the data of this research. The data source in this research were sentences, clauses, phrases, and even

words that contained song lyric of Taylor Swift songs entitled; Midnight, "Snow on the Beach", Anti Hero", "You're on Your own Kid", "Bigger than the Whole Sky", "High Infidelity".

In this study, the researcher used data triangulation to increase validity. This approach which is widely used to guarantee data accuracy, uses outside sources as comparison or verification tools. Research triangulation, as defined by Miles & Huberman (1994), is the process of studying a phenomenon using several approaches, data sources, or viewpoints. By cross-checking data and offering a more thorough grasp of the topic under study, this method contributes to the validity and credibility of the research findings. To examine and validate the study's findings, the researcher employed the data triangulation technique, sometimes referred to as source triangulation. This approach encourages researchers to gather information from various libraries to aid in the analysis of sentence patterns in Sasha Sloan's album "Only Child." Miles & Huberman (1994) say that analyzing qualitative data involves three main steps: reducing the data, displaying the data, and drawing conclusions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The researcher presented the analysis of figurative language in Taylor Swift songs which has been mentioned in the scope of the problem in chapter one. The researcher classified the figurative language contained in Taylor Swift album. All song lyrics were analyzed and classified based on the theory of Abram's Theory (1999).

1. Findings for Research Problem No. 1: Types of Figurative Language Used in Taylor Swift's "Midnights" Album

Based on the detailed analysis of each lyric line presented in the previous section, the researcher summarizes the findings regarding the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's "Midnights" album. The analysis identified five types of figurative language: Personification, Metaphor, Simile, Irony, and Hyperbole, with Metaphor being the most frequently used type throughout the album.

The frequency and percentage of each type are presented in the table below:

Figurative Language	Frequency	Percentage
Metaphor	18	42%
Hyperbole	12	28%
Simile	5	12%
Personification	4	9%
Irony	4	9%
Total	43	100%

This table shows that Metaphor dominates the figurative language used in the “Midnights” album, followed by Hyperbole, Simile, Personification, and Irony. This finding answers the first research problem regarding the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s “Midnights” album and aligns with Abrams’ (1999) theory, which states that figurative language involves the intentional use of words deviating from their standard meaning to achieve a special meaning or effect, as reflected in the identified figurative language in the lyrics.

2. Findings for Research Problem No. 2: How Figurative Language Conveys Deep Meaning in Taylor Swift’s “Midnights” Album

After identifying the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s “Midnights” album, the researcher analyzed how each type of figurative language conveys deep meanings and feelings through the lyrics. The analysis shows that figurative language in the album conveys feelings such as loneliness, grief, longing, anxiety, and love through metaphorical expressions, exaggeration, comparison, personification, and irony, aligning with Abrams’ (1999) theory.

1. Metaphor

Metaphor is used to convey feelings of loneliness, grief, longing, and regret implicitly, allowing listeners to interpret the deep emotional struggles of the songwriter.

For example,

In *“You were bigger than the whole sky,”* (Line 6, Bigger Than the Whole Sky) The metaphor expresses the vastness of loss without stating it directly, creating an emotional connection with the audience.

In *“Midnights become my afternoons,”* (Line 12, Anti-Hero)

the metaphor conveys depression affecting daily life indirectly, allowing listeners to sense the heaviness without explicit wording.

2. Hyperbole

Hyperbole emphasizes strong emotions by presenting them in an exaggerated manner, making feelings more vivid to the listeners.

For example,

“I gave my blood, sweat, and tears for this” (Line 34, You’re on Your Own Kid).

Highlights the extreme effort and sacrifice in pursuing dreams, while

“Bigger than the whole sky” (Line 6, Bigger Than the Whole Sky)

Intensifies the sense of loss.

3. Simile

Simile clarifies feelings by making explicit comparisons using 'like' or 'as.'

For instance,

"My smile is like I won a contest" (Line 15, Anti-Hero).

Shows overwhelming happiness in a relatable way, helping listeners understand the emotional state described in the lyrics clearly.

4. Personification

Personification gives human characteristics to abstract ideas or objects, making emotions more vivid.

For example,

"Summer went away, still the yearning stays" (Line 2, You're on Your Own Kid).

Presents yearning as something that remains even as seasons change, illustrating persistent longing and emotional attachment.

5. Irony

Irony expresses hidden disappointment or emotional conflict subtly.

For example,

"Storm coming, good husband, bad omen" (Line 20, High Infidelity).

Illustrates the fear and uncertainty of a seemingly good marriage, reflecting internal conflict and anxiety.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that Taylor Swift's *Midnights* album contains five types of figurative language: metaphor, hyperbole, simile, personification, and irony, with metaphor being the most frequently used type, followed by hyperbole, simile, personification, and irony. This is consistent with previous studies showing that songwriters often use figurative language to convey messages artistically and indirectly.

According to M.H. Abrams (1999), figurative language enriches the meaning and aesthetic value of literary works, allowing abstract concepts to be understood more vividly. In this study, Taylor Swift uses figurative language to express complex feelings such as longing, regret, love, and sadness in a relatable and artistic manner.

For example:

Metaphor in "You were bigger than the whole sky" (*Bigger Than the Whole Sky*, Line 6) conveys the significance and depth of loss.

Hyperbole in "I gave my blood, sweat, and tears for this" (*You're on Your Own Kid*, Line 34) emphasizes struggle and sacrifice.

Simile in "Your picket fence is sharp as knives" (High Infidelity, Line 16) helps listeners visualize hidden dangers within ideal situations.

Personification in "Summer went away, still the yearning stays" (You're on Your Own Kid, Line 2) gives human attributes to seasons, illustrating persistent longing.

Irony in "Storm coming, good husband, bad omen" (High Infidelity, Line 20) reflects the complexities of relationships, showing that what seems good may still bring challenges. These examples illustrate how figurative language in the *Midnights* album effectively conveys emotions, making the lyrics expressive, poetic, and relatable to listeners.

The results align with the previous study by Dodi Widia Nanda (2023), which found that Taylor Swift frequently uses figurative language to express feelings indirectly, although in that study, hyperbole was found to be the most dominant type. In contrast, this study found metaphor to be the most frequently used type in the *Midnights* album, reflecting Taylor Swift's creative use of metaphors to express complex emotions.

Overall, the use of figurative language in Taylor Swift's *Midnights* album is not only a stylistic choice but also an effective strategy for conveying feelings and stories, enhancing the artistic quality and emotional depth of the lyrics. This supports Abrams' (1999) theory that figurative language plays a significant role in literary works, including song lyrics, by delivering complex messages in a relatable and aesthetic manner.

Additionally, the analysis of figurative language in song lyrics can serve as a valuable resource in English language learning, helping students understand the creative use of language and develop their interpretative skills when engaging with literary texts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of figurative language in selected songs from Taylor Swift's *Midnights* album, it can be concluded that various types of figurative language are used to convey deeper meanings and emotions within the lyrics. A total of 43 data of figurative language were found, consisting of 9% personification, 42% metaphor, 12% simile, 28% hyperbole, and 9% irony. The most dominant type found in the lyrics is metaphor, indicating that Taylor Swift often uses indirect comparisons to illustrate feelings, situations, and experiences in her songs, allowing listeners to interpret the messages creatively. Hyperbole is also frequently used to emphasize emotions and situations in an exaggerated manner, making the lyrics more expressive. Personification, simile, and irony also contribute to enriching the imagery within the lyrics. Overall, the use of figurative language in Taylor Swift's *Midnights* album not only adds aesthetic value to the lyrics but also plays a significant role in conveying complex feelings and stories in a relatable and artistic way for the listeners.

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