

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the research discusses background of the study, research question, object of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and also the definition of the of the key term.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not merely a tool for communication rather, it constitutes a complex, dynamic, and socially embedded system that reflects cognitive processes, cultural values, and human interaction. Contemporary linguistic perspectives emphasize that language should be understood as an evolving system shaped by social practices and contextual use, rather than as a static and autonomous structure (Larsen Freeman, 2022; Ellis, 2023). In this sense, language functions not only to transmit information but also to construct meaning, express identity, and convey emotional and imaginative experiences. As argued by Gee (2021), language plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals interpret reality and participate in social life, thereby positioning language as a fundamental medium of both communication and expression.

Within the domain of artistic expression, songs represent a significant manifestation of language use in a creative and aesthetic form. A song can be defined as an integration of linguistic and musical elements that work together to communicate meanings, emotions, and narratives to the audience. The lyrical component of a song, in particular, functions similarly to literary discourse, as it employs stylistic and semantic features (stylistic features refer to the use of language style such as figurative expressions, imagery, and rhetorical devices, while semantic features relate to the meanings conveyed, including both literal and non literal meanings) to articulate ideas and experiences in a condensed yet highly expressive manner. As noted by Murphey (2021) and Simpson (2022), song lyrics utilize language not only at the

literal level but also at deeper interpretative levels, allowing listeners to engage with symbolic, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of meaning. Therefore, songs can be regarded as a rich source for linguistic analysis, especially in examining how language operates beyond its denotative function and extends into figurative and artistic expression.

Building on the understanding of songs as a form of artistic language, it is important to recognize that song lyrics frequently employ figurative language to convey meanings that extend beyond literal interpretation. Figurative language allows songwriters to express complex emotions, abstract ideas, and personal experiences in a more vivid and imaginative way. Rather than stating meanings directly, figurative expressions invite listeners to interpret and emotionally engage with the message conveyed. Gibbs (2021) and Simpson (2022) argue that figurative language plays a crucial role in enhancing the aesthetic quality of texts and deepening emotional resonance, particularly in creative works such as songs. Therefore, analyzing figurative language in song lyrics provides a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in artistic discourse.

One example of contemporary music that demonstrates the extensive use of figurative language is the album *sour* by Olivia Rodrigo. The album achieved significant commercial success and critical recognition, as reflected in its performance on international music charts, including reaching the number one position on the Billboard 200, as well as receiving major industry awards such as the Grammy Awards in 2022. In addition to its commercial achievements, the album has been widely discussed in music criticism for its emotional intensity and its exploration of relatable themes, including love, heartbreak, jealousy, and self identity.

The lyrics in this album are characterized by expressive and imaginative language, frequently employing various figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, hyperboles, and

other figurative devices to depict emotional experiences in a nuanced manner. These characteristics make the album a relevant and rich subject for analysis, particularly in examining how figurative language functions in constructing meaning and conveying emotional depth within modern song lyrics.

These characteristics make the album a relevant and rich subject for analysis, particularly in examining how figurative language functions in conveying meaning and emotional depth within modern song lyrics. However, a considerable body of previous research on figurative language in song lyrics appears to have predominantly concentrated on the identification and classification of figurative expressions, often without sufficiently addressing how these expressions contribute to meaning making and emotional resonance (Abrams & Harpham, 2015; Simpson, 2022). While such studies provide a useful foundation for recognizing the presence and variety of figurative devices, they tend to remain largely descriptive in nature, with limited attention given to interpretative and functional dimensions.

This tendency reflects a notable limitation in the existing literature, particularly within the context of contemporary popular music, where the intricate relationship between linguistic form, emotional expression, and aesthetic meaning has not been fully examined (Gibbs, 2021). Furthermore, the absence of a systematic semantic perspective in many prior studies restricts the depth of analysis, as it overlooks the ways in which figurative language constructs layered meanings and evokes affective responses beyond its literal interpretation. Consequently, analyses that rely solely on classification risk oversimplifying the complexity of figurative language in artistic texts.

In light of these limitations, there is a need for a more comprehensive analytical framework that integrates both the classification of figurative language and its semantic interpretation. Such an approach enables a more nuanced and systematic understanding of how

figurative expressions function not only as stylistic features but also as essential mechanisms for meaning construction and emotional articulation in song lyrics.

However, although numerous studies have analyzed figurative language in song lyrics using Perrine's theory, most of them focus primarily on identifying and classifying the types of figurative expressions in different artists' works, such as Folklore, Thank U, Next, 21, and Happier Than Ever (Rizky, 2021; Rahmawati, 2020; Wahyuni, 2019; Nuraini, 2022). These studies tend to emphasize structural classification rather than providing deeper semantic interpretation. Recent studies also investigated figurative language in modern popular songs and albums, including analyses of *Midnights*, *SOUR*, and *Emails I Can't Send*, focusing on the dominance of metaphor, hyperbole, and personification in expressing emotional experiences and youth identity (Putri & Sari, 2023; Lestari, 2024; Febriani & Utami, 2025). Nevertheless, most of these studies still concentrate on categorizing figurative language without examining the semantic meanings conveyed in the lyrics in greater depth. In addition, research that specifically examines *SOUR* using Perrine's framework remains limited. Moreover, only a few studies integrate Perrine's theory with Geoffrey Leech's semantic approach to explore both the types and the underlying meanings of figurative language comprehensively (Agustina & Mustikawati, 2024). Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by analyzing both the types of figurative language based on Perrine's theory and the meanings based on Leech's semantic theory in Olivia Rodrigo's *sour* album.

To address this gap, this study analyzes the figurative language found in Olivia Rodrigo's *sour* album by applying the theoretical frameworks of Perrine (2021) and Leech (2021). Perrine's theory is used to classify the types of figurative language, while Leech's semantic approach is employed to interpret the deeper meanings and emotional implications conveyed through these expressions. By combining these two perspectives, this study aims not

only to identify the forms of figurative language but also to examine their contribution to the overall meaning in greater depth.

Furthermore, this study offers significant pedagogical contributions to the field of English language education. The analysis of figurative language in song lyrics can serve as an enjoyable instructional resource that supports both reading completion and learning completion. By using songs as authentic materials, students are expected to better understand non literal meanings, improve their interpretative reading skills, and develop their vocabulary in a more engaging way. Songs provide meaningful linguistic input that can increase students' motivation and foster deeper emotional engagement in the learning process (Murphey, 2021). Hopefully, through exposure to figurative language in song lyrics, students will become more sensitive to implied meanings, which is an essential component of communicative competence in a foreign language (Richards, 2022).

The selection of the album *Sour* by Olivia Rodrigo is not arbitrary but grounded in its relevance to adolescent psychology. The themes presented in the album such as love, heartbreak, jealousy, and identity formation closely reflect the emotional experiences commonly encountered during adolescence. According to developmental psychology, adolescence is characterized by heightened emotional sensitivity and the ongoing construction of personal identity (Steinberg, 2022). Therefore, the emotionally expressive and relatable nature of the song lyrics makes them particularly suitable as learning materials for students at the secondary school level, as they can foster both cognitive and emotional engagement in the learning process.

Therefore, this study is expected to provide practical insights for English teachers in integrating song lyrics into classroom instruction. By incorporating authentic texts that resonate with students' psychological and emotional development, teachers can design more

contextualized and student centered learning activities that foster students' critical thinking and interpretative abilities. Such an approach aligns with contemporary educational practices that emphasize meaningful learning and the development of higher order thinking skills (Widodo, 2021). Consequently, this research contributes not only to the theoretical understanding of figurative language but also to the improvement of pedagogical practices in English language teaching.

1.2 Research Question

1. What types of figurative language are used in sour album Olivia Rodrigo's?
2. What are conveyed meaning by the figurative language used in the song lyrics of the album sour by Olivia Rodrigo?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of figurative language used in Olivia Rodrigo's sour album.
2. To identify the conveyed meaning by the figurative language used in the song lyrics of the album sour by Olivia Rodrigo

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This research goal was to identify the figurative language used in the song. This research is predicted to bring both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of education, as follows:

1. For the students.

This study's results can be used to evaluate students' ability to use figurative language types, allowing them to improve their analytical abilities by practicing more closely examining the figurative language in each song.

2. For the teacher

This study provides teachers with the knowledge and can assist in implementing students' ability to analyze songs, especially figurative language. They can guide and encourage students into more music analysis as a form of evaluation.

3. For the researcher

This study aims to contribute and be useful for students in English language education. Besides, this study hopes students understand the kinds and meanings of figurative language. This research expects to be used by students as a reference in research related to this topic.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on the analysis of figurative language used in the lyrics of songs on Olivia Rodrigo's album *sour*, released in 2021. This study examines both the types of figurative language and their meanings as reflected in the song lyrics. The analysis was conducted using Perrine's (2021) theory to classify the types of figurative language and Leech's (2021) theory to interpret their meanings. Thus, this study focuses on identifying figurative expressions and analyzing how these expressions contribute to the meaning in the song lyrics.

This study is limited to the analysis of figurative language found in 11 selected songs from the sour album, namely Drivers License, Déjà vu, Good 4 u, Brutal, Jealousy Jealousy, Traitor, Favorite Crime, Happier, 1 step forward 3 steps, Enough for you, and Hope Ur OK. The analysis is restricted to the lyrical content only and does not include musical elements, visual aspects, or audience interpretation. In addition, this study only focuses on figurative language based on Perrine's classification and Leech's semantic meanings, without exploring other linguistic theories or broader discourse analysis.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Album Sour

Album Sour refers to the music album released in 2021 by Olivia Rodrigo, an American singer songwriter known for her emotionally expressive and personal lyrics that explore themes such as love, heartbreak, and identity, which serves as the primary data source in this study.

2. Figurative Language

Figurative language in this study refers to non literal expressions used in song lyrics to convey meaning in a more imaginative and expressive way, based on Perrine's classification.

3. Leech's Semantic Theory

Leech's Semantic Theory refers to the approach used in this study to interpret the meanings of figurative expressions beyond their literal sense.

4. Olivia Rodrigo

Olivia Rodrigo refers to an American singer songwriter whose works are characterized by emotionally expressive and relatable lyrics, making her songs relevant for analyzing figurative language in the context of contemporary music and adolescent experiences.

5. Perrine's Theory

Perrine's theory refers to the classification of figurative language used in this study to identify types such as metaphor, simile, and hyperbole.

6. Song Lyrics

Song lyrics refer to the written words of songs in the album *sour* that are analyzed as the main data of this study.