

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study and the definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Language plays an important role in literary expression because it enables writers and musicians to communicate emotions, ideas, and experiences creatively. One of the stylistic features frequently used in literary works is figurative language. Figurative language allows writers to convey meaning indirectly through devices such as metaphor, irony, paradox, and symbolism. In song lyrics, figurative language enriches meaning and invites listeners to interpret deeper emotional messages (Kennedy & Gioia, 2007). In song lyrics, figurative language enriches meaning and enables listeners to interpret deeper emotional messages. This is in line with Goldstein (2008) who defines language as a means of communication that enables us to express our feeling, thoughts, ideas and experiences by using sounds or symbols. This means that language is a tool for human to deliver their message from one to another. In addition, when language is transformed into a piece of artwork, it can be utilized as a medium for the artist to communicate with the audiences. Language can transform our everyday utterance into something very meaningful by becoming an artwork (Firdausyi, 2024). As an artwork, language is used sometimes differently from everyday use. It is typically labelled as figurative language.

Figurative language means that words, sentences, or utterances have meanings that are different from their actual meanings. Figurative language has a significant impact on people's beliefs and worldviews, and it influences language that is expected to be followed or conventional (Amalia et al., 2021). According to McKenzie (2016), figurative language refers to language that conveys ideas beyond the literal definitions of words, phrases, or sentences. Figurative language emphasizes the significance of the message while evoking a sense of beauty. Figurative language can refer to a variety of words or phrases that have a concealed meaning. Out-of-context words are used to create figurative language.

When a researcher uses literal language, they are communicating the facts exactly as they are. In comparison, figurative language uses overstatements or word replacements to communicate a particular linguistic meaning. Based on Kennedy and Gioia (2007), figurative language includes metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, litotes, paradox, and irony. Figurative Language is a term that refers to language that conveys concepts beyond the literal sense of the words. (Arp & Johnson, 2005). The figurative language will make the language has its meaning because it can not define the word literally.

Although several previous studies have examined figurative language in song lyrics, most of them focused only on identifying figurative expressions without providing deeper interpretation of their contextual meanings. In addition, limited studies specifically analyze Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album using Kennedy and Gioia's theory. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by identifying the types of figurative language and interpreting their meanings within the emotional

and narrative context of the album. For example, Fitria (2018) examined the lyrics from One Direction's album "Up All Night" and found six types of figurative language, including repetition, parallelism, personification, metaphor, simile, and hyperbole, with repetition being the most frequently used form. Similarly, Pratiwi (2018) analyzed the lyrics of songs by Naif and Payung Teduh, identifying personification, simile, metaphor, and irony as the main figurative styles, and discussed their functions in conveying meaning. Both studies utilized a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the identification and explanation of figurative elements to enhance understanding of the song lyrics. Several previous studies have analyzed figurative language in song lyrics. For instance, Amalia et al. (2021) examined figurative language in contemporary pop songs and found that metaphors and symbolism were dominant stylistic devices. Similarly, Firdausyi (2024) investigated figurative expressions in modern music and highlighted how figurative language contributes to emotional storytelling.

However, limited studies have specifically examined the use of figurative language in the *Folklore* album, particularly using Kennedy's theoretical framework. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by analyzing the types and meanings of figurative language found in the album. This unique context allows for the exploration of how the circumstances of the album's creation may influence the use and meaning of figurative language in the lyrics. Additionally, the current research may offer a more nuanced analysis by considering the sociocultural or emotional context of the songs, rather than solely focusing on categorization. This approach provides new insights into how figurative language reflects the artist's

creative response to extraordinary circumstances, setting it apart from previous studies that primarily aimed to list and explain types of figurative language in song lyrics.

Thompson (2020) highlights the acknowledging the universe of stories and characters Swift built. With Swift passing down the stories of characters she created in her mind, and thus sharing them with the world, it allows the stories and characters to become ‘folklore’ themselves, with academics, fans and music critics all theorising upon the meaning and sharing their musings with the world. According to Abrams in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* seventh edition (1999:121) imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature. Based on the reasons above, it is important to analyze the used of figurative language and imagery in song lyrics.

B. Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, there are some research questions for this research.

1. What types of figurative language are found in Taylor Swift’s *Folklore* album?
2. What meanings are conveyed through the figurative language found in Taylor Swift’s *Folklore* album?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, these are the objectives of the study.

1. To identify the types of figurative language present in Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album.
2. To analyze the meanings of figurative language found in Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album.

D. Significances of the Study

This study holds significance for several reasons:

1. This study contributes to the field of literary and linguistic studies, particularly in the analysis of figurative language in song lyrics. By applying Kennedy and Gioia's (2007) theory to Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album.
2. For students and readers, this study can help improve their understanding of figurative language and encourage deeper interpretation of literary works, especially song lyrics.
3. This study may serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in analyzing figurative language, song lyrics, or contemporary literary works.

E. Definition of the Key Terms

Based on the study, here are the definitions of key terms:

1. **Figurative Language:** An aberration of what is known as literal language that enhances songs and makes them more interesting.
2. **Song Lyrics:** The written words or text of a song, often expressing emotions, stories, or messages through poetic and figurative language.

3. Folklore (Album): Taylor Swift's eighth studio album, released in 2020, known for its introspective storytelling, rich figurative language, and creation of interconnected narratives and characters.