

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim in this chapter is to examine definition of figurative language, kinds of figurative language, song and lyrics, and literature review.

A. Definition of Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to the use of words or phrases whose meaning exceeds their literal meaning. Rather than being an uncommon or difficult to understand style of speech, research shows that figurative language is a natural and widespread part of everyday communication. It does not only appear in poetry or literature, but is also frequently used in ordinary conversation and can be easily understood when given the right context (Fussell and Moss, 1992).

One of the main functions of figurative language is to convey emotions. Emotions themselves are complex and involve aspects such as feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and behavior. Through figurative expressions, one can express feelings that are difficult to express directly. For example, phrases such as “empty inside” or “ready to explode” can effectively describe feelings of sadness or anger (Fussell and Moss, 1992).

Research also reveals that figurative language is more commonly used when describing strong emotions compared to milder emotions. Many of these expressions are also conventional and recognized by many speakers. In interpersonal interactions such as therapy, figurative language can help create

shared understanding and deepen emotional understanding between the speaking and listening parties. Figurative language therefore plays an important role in expressing and communicating emotional experiences (Fussell and Moss, 1992).

B. Types of Figurative Language

Figurative language plays a crucial role in literature, adding depth to both meaning and emotional impact. As outlined by Arp and Johnson in Perrine's *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* (2018), there are thirteen key types of figurative language frequently used in both poetry and prose. These include devices like similes, metaphors, personification, and irony each contributing to the way readers interpret and emotionally connect with a text. By exploring these figures of speech, readers can uncover deeper, symbolic meanings and experience a richer emotional resonance, moving beyond the surface level understanding of the words.

1. Simile

Simile is a language style that uses a direct comparison between two different things by using connective words such as "like", "as", or "like". The main purpose of similes is to help readers understand abstract concepts by relating them to more familiar concrete images. This style of language is often used in literature to create strong visual imagery in the reader's mind. Similes not only enrich descriptions but also add an emotional dimension to the writing. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki's song lyric:

As far as the indica goes

The researcher define phrase “as far as indica is concerned” conveys the idea that the shared pleasure and enjoyment felt by both individuals lasts as long as possible. Metaphorically, this phrase emphasizes the duration and scope of their shared experience, implying continued closeness and long lastness emotional bond.

2. Metaphor

Metaphor is a language style that equates two different things directly without using a conjunction. Unlike similes that use a word of comparison, metaphors create a direct identification between two different things. This style of language is often used to convey complex ideas in a simple and powerful way. Metaphors are effective for creating deep and lasting mental images in the reader's memory. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki’s song lyric:

I don't need to take your heart You keep yours, I'll keep mine

The researcher defined that lyrics as a “Taking your heart” doesn’t mean an actual heart, but someone’s emotions. Niki realizes they probably shouldn’t have been together from the start. She doesn’t want to hurt him, so she feels it’s better if they don’t continue the relationship and keep their feelings to themselves.

3. Personification

Personification is a language style that assigns human traits to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract concepts. This technique allows the reader to emotionally relate to a subject that normally lacks human characteristics. In literature, personification is often used to make descriptions more vivid and interesting. This style is particularly effective in poetry and prose to create an emotional closeness between the reader and the text. The example, from Teja et al (2022) reseach, researcher analyze Alec Benjamin's song lyric:

Got two windows and those windows, well, I call them my eyes

The lyrics convey a connotative meaning, as their interpretation goes beyond their literal meaning. Since windows are not eyes and do not function as eyes, the statement should not be interpreted literally. Instead, it implies that the songwriter is experiencing psychological distress related to being in a mental institution, and the image is used metaphorically to express that condition.

4. Apostrophe

Apostrophe is a style of language where the writer or speaker speaks directly to something that is absent, deceased, or inanimate as if it could respond. This technique is often found in poetry and speech to express strong emotions. Apostrophes allow writers to communicate with abstract concepts or physical objects as if they were conscious entities. This style of language is especially useful for conveying intense feelings such as longing, anger, or admiration. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki's song lyric:

*Does the trick for all of the things left unsaid. I'm Missin' our drunken 2
a.m. strolls in k-town*

These lines show that Niki is reminiscing about her past experiences and appears to be talking to her former partner. Although she has moved on with her life, the lyrics reflect a retrospective engagement with the memories and emotions associated with that relationship.

5. Metonymy

Metonymy is a style of language that uses the name of a thing to refer to another thing that is closely related to it. Unlike metaphors that make comparisons, metonymy creates an associative relationship between two things. This style of language is often used to convey complex ideas briefly and effectively. For example, using “palace” to refer to the government or “crown” to refer to the monarchy. Metonymy works by utilizing the reader's general knowledge of the relationship between the objects. The example, from Milana and Ardi (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Saif Adam song lyric:

If I can write the roads Would you let me a hands I will make a difference

The lyrics are an example of metonymy. The phrase “Would you lend me a hand” is not meant to literally ask for a hand. Instead, it refers to something closely related to a hand namely, assistance. In this context, the phrase signifies an offer of help or support, demonstrating how a related part or concept is used to represent a broader meaning.

6. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a specialized form of metonymy where a part of something is used to represent the whole, or vice versa. This style of language creates focus on a particular aspect of an object or concept. For example, using “hand” to refer to a worker or “screen” to refer to a movie. Synecdoche is often used in colloquial language and literature to create certain rhetorical effects. This style of language is effective for highlighting a particular aspect of a concept that the writer wants to emphasize. The example, from Teja et al (2022) research, researcher analyze Alec Benjamin’s song lyric:

*Well, it all began in the back of her car
I was just 16, but I fell so hard
Well, the years went by, and she held my heart
But her love ran dry, and we
fell apart*

The lyrics use connotative meaning, because their interpretation goes beyond their literal meaning. The expression does not indicate that the partner physically holds the songwriter's heart; rather, it signifies that the partner has control over the songwriter's emotions. Consequently, the hidden meaning is that the songwriter fears the pain or emotional hurt that the partner might cause.

7. Symbol

A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something beyond its literal meaning. Unlike metaphors that make direct comparisons, symbols create additional layers of meaning in the text. In literature, symbols are often used to convey a larger theme or idea. For example, a bird in flight can symbolize freedom, or spring can symbolize rebirth. Effective use of heraldry can add depth

and complexity to a literary work. The example, from Sandy et al (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Hardy's Poem

"My husband clasps another bridge"

"Clasps another bridge" symbolizes that he has chosen a path other than the marriage he is currently in. The word "clasps" emphasizes a conscious and active action, as if he is firmly grasping this new opportunity or relationship.

8. Allegory

Allegories are long narratives where characters, events, and settings represent abstract ideas or concepts. Unlike stand alone symbols, allegories create a system of symbols that are intertwined throughout the story. This literary form is often used to convey moral lessons or social commentary indirectly. Famous examples of allegory include George Orwell's "Animal Farm" which represents the Russian Revolution. Allegories allow authors to explore complex ideas through stories that appear simple on the surface. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki's song lyric:

I know We know better, so We'd both better go

The lines of lyrics serve as an allegory, briefly describing the narrative of the relationship. After realizing the challenges she faced with her partner, Niki realized that breaking up was the most sensible decision. The lyrics convey a shared understanding that separation is ultimately the best for both parties.

9. Paradox

A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory or absurd, but actually contains truth. This style of language is used to challenge conventional thinking and encourage readers to see things from a new perspective. For example, the statements “less is more” or “true freedom comes from discipline”. Paradoxes are often found in philosophy, literature, and even in everyday life. Their effective use can reveal deep insights into the complex nature of life. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki’s song lyric:

Silverlake, Hollywood, pretty little white lies got me good Thought this was love, I was misunderstood, mm

The lyrics of this song use paradox, revealing that what Niki initially considered to be true happiness and satisfaction ultimately did not meet her expectations. Although she expected positive and satisfying results, reality did not match those expectations, causing disappointment and emotional contradictions.

10. Hyperbole (Exaggeration)

Hyperbole is a language style that uses exaggeration to emphasize a point or create a dramatic effect. This technique is not meant to be taken literally, but to convey the intensity of emotion or importance of a situation. The example, from Alfiyani (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Niki’s song lyric:

'Cause I ain't tryna be the one been through this a thousand times

The researcher defined the lyrics as “a thousand times,” which was not meant literally but was hyperbole to express his frustration. He felt as if he was the only one who was really trying to maintain the relationship, and the use of extreme words reflected how overwhelmed and alone he felt in his efforts.

11. Litotes (understatement)

Litotes is a language style that uses understatement or double negation to emphasize a point. Unlike hyperbole, which exaggerates, litotes undermines to create an equally strong effect. For example, saying “my grades weren't bad” when they were actually very good, or “he wasn't a bad looking guy”. Litotes are often used to show politeness, subtle irony, or to let the reader infer the true meaning. This style of language is very common in English and other languages. The example, from Milana and Ardi (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Saif Adam song lyric:

Looking for a happy ever after when we are gone

These lyrics illustrate the use of litotes, which functions as a deliberate statement to tone down the meaning in order to convey the opposite or a stronger idea. Instead of directly stating “dead” or “has died,” the author uses the phrase “we have gone,” which softens the expression while still implying the same result. This demonstrates the use of litotes as figurative language to indirectly express a serious condition through gentler words.

12. Irony

Irony is a style of language that exploits the difference between expectation and reality, or between literal meaning and intended meaning. There are three main types of irony: verbal (saying the opposite of what is meant), situational (an outcome contrary to expectation), and dramatic (the audience knows something the character doesn't). An example of situational irony is a fireman whose house is on fire. Irony is used in literature to create humor, social criticism, or to highlight contrasts in human life. Its effective use can reveal deep truths about the human condition. The example, from Milana and Ardi (2021) reseach, researcher analyze Saif Adam song lyric:

And when you're feeling down You know the way to go

The lyrics describe an individual who is facing personal difficulties and feels confused about where to seek help, even though he knows the right steps to take. This situation reflects the contrast between hope and reality, describing a situation that develops contrary to what the person expects.

13. Allusion

Allusion is a form of figurative language that refers indirectly to a public figure, event, place, myth, or literary work that is widely known. The reference is not explicitly explained in the text, as the writer relies on the knowledge and experience of the reader or listener to understand the intended meaning. Therefore, understanding allusion is highly dependent on the cultural background and literacy of the reader. The example, from Arifah (2016) reseach, researcher analyze John Legend song lyrics:

“Don’t be lazy, or lost time is never found!”

This sentence using popular expression from Peter. It means everyone who doesn’t have chasing everything and just being lazy will lose all his or her chance and time.

C. Meaning of Figurative Language

Keraf (2010) define that figurative language is a hidden expression in writing that has a meaning that is not conveyed directly. Figurative language is formed based on comparisons and similarities, so its meaning cannot be understood literally and requires further interpretation to reveal its true meaning.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in their influential work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), argue that figurative language, especially metaphors, is not merely a stylistic choice, but a fundamental element of human thought. They propose that metaphors shape our understanding of abstract concepts by connecting them to physical experiences. For example, expressions such as “time is money” or “love is a journey” show how we interpret intangible ideas through tangible realities. Lakoff’s cognitive theory suggests that figurative language is embedded in everyday communication, shaping perceptions, reasoning, and even cultural norms (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

On the other hand, X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia, in *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing* (2013), view figurative language as a deliberate literary device to enrich artistic expression. They analyze its role in creating vivid imagery, emotional depth, and persuasive rhetoric in

poetry and prose. While Lakoff emphasizes the unconscious cognitive function of metaphor, Kennedy and Gioia focus on its deliberate use by writers to shape meaning and aesthetic impact. Although these perspectives differ, both highlight the importance of figurative language both as a mental framework and a creative tool /in enriching communication and interpretation.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded figurative language is the use of language that deviates from its literal meaning to convey meaning indirectly, clarify ideas, reinforce messages, and create aesthetic or emotional effects on readers or listeners. Figurative language serves to enrich communication, expand meaning, and increase the appeal and clarity of the message being conveyed.

D. Song and Lyrics

Songs are important units of form and meaning to be included in comprehensive linguistic studies. In various cross disciplinary studies such as linguistics, musicology, and anthropology songs are recognized as a structured art form capable of conveying complex meanings, far beyond everyday spoken language (Turpin and Stebbins, 2010). Not only in the tone, rhythm, tempo, and vocal quality. Elements such as accompanying instruments, dance, body movements, costumes, and visual design often reinforce the structure and meaning of songs.

What makes songs unique is their ability to reveal meanings that cannot always be captured directly or literally similar to idioms or poetry. Songs not only

convey messages through words, but also through a complex mix of musical, visual and cultural elements. For this reason, the meaning of songs is open ended and can be interpreted variously by listeners with different cultural backgrounds and knowledge (Turpin and Stebbins, 2010). In many cases, song interpretation demands contextual understanding and specialized knowledge of the event or culture in which the song is performed.

Some researchers even see songs as “packages of meaning” that are not only directly communicative, but also demand a deep process of interpretation. Song texts are often referred to as “weakly communicative”, meaning that the listener must make many inferences to capture the intent of the song. It is precisely from this process of interpretation that aesthetic pleasure arises, as listeners not only understand something new, but also reconstitute their understanding based on their own experience and knowledge (Turpin and Stebbins, 2010).

Song lyrics are not just ordinary words attached to music they are the result of complex adaptations that take into account both linguistic rules and musical structures. In practice, lyrics often have to undergo adjustments in order to harmonize with the song's rhythmic, melodic and metrical patterns. These adjustments may include changing the number of syllables, word stress, or rearranging phrases to fit the beat of the music. This process suggests a tension between the desire to maintain the original form of spoken language and the demand to adapt it to the rigid structure of music (Hayes and MacEachern, 1998).

Linguistic approaches such as Optimality Theory have been used to explain how this compromise occurs in text and music matching. For example, Rodríguez Vázquez observed that in Spanish and English folk songs, the rhythmic principles that apply in spoken language are also used in structuring the lyrics to match the rhythm of the music. In Spanish, which is considered a syllable timed language, lyrical adjustments tend to keep a consistent number of syllables between lines, even though this sometimes results in word stresses not aligning with the beat of the music. In contrast, in stress timed English, variations in syllable count are more acceptable as long as word stress remains on a strong beat.

This research confirms that lyrics cannot be separated from the sound structure of language. The way lyrics are organized is strongly influenced by the phonological nature of the language used. This supports the view that the relationship between text and music in songs has a strong linguistic basis (Fabb, 2008). However, this view has also sparked debate with other theorists who argue that sound structures in oral discourse, literature and songs may follow different principles (Kiparsky, 2006; Fabb and Halle, 2008). In other words, despite their interconnectedness, songs as a form of aesthetic expression have their own mechanisms that distinguish them from other forms of speech, both in purpose and mode of delivery.

E. Taylor Swift and The Tortured Poets Department Album

Taylor Swift is an American singer and song writer who was born on December 13, 1989 in Reading, Pennsylvania. She began her music career at a young age performing at various local events, eventually moving to Nashville, Tennessee, to pursue her dreams in the world of country music. Her debut album Taylor Swift was released in 2006 and immediately caught the public's attention. Over time, she transformed from a country singer to one of the biggest pop stars in the world, known for her honest lyrics and the life stories she shares through song. Taylor has won many prestigious awards, including Grammy Awards, and is considered one of the most influential musicians of the modern era.

Throughout her career, Taylor Swift has released many successful albums that reflect the development of her musical style. Some of her popular albums include Fearless (2008), Speak Now (2010), Red (2012), 1989 (2014), and Reputation (2017). Through the album Lover (2019), she displays a more cheerful and romantic feel to her music. 2020 and 2021 were special moments when she released Folklore and Evermore, two indie folk themed albums that received rave reviews from critics. In addition, Taylor also began re-releasing her old albums such as Fearless (Taylor's Version) and Red (Taylor's Version) as a form of struggle for the ownership rights of her own music, but on 22-05-2025 she purchased all her album and many fans praising about her patient.

The Tortured Poets Department or TTPD for short is Taylor Swift's 11th studio album released in 2024. The album covers various emotional themes such as heartbreak, self discovery, and the process of maturation. With a poetic style and a darker, more reflective musical feel, TTPD shows Taylor's deeper emotional side. The album also features interesting collaborations with artists like Post Malone and Florence Welch. TTPD was widely praised by critics for its lyrical strength and depth of themes, and scored a huge commercial success. This album is one of the important works in Taylor Swift's growing career.

F. Previous Studies

This study on figurative language was compiled with reference to findings from previous research, which not only provided a conceptual framework but also enriched the analysis through comparisons of the use of figurative language in various types of texts.

First, Yusnitasari et al. (2022) examined the lyrics of the song “You Are My Sunshine” (Anne Murray) and identified nine types of figurative language, such as metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, repetition, idiom, and imagery. The research shows how these figurative elements add emotional depth and appeal to the lyrics. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researchers classified and interpreted the figurative forms of expression. Although in line with other studies in terms of methods, this study is limited in that it only highlights nine of the thirteen common types of figurative language, leaving open the possibility of exploring less common forms (e.g. paradox or sarcasm).

Second, Teja et al. (2022) focused on the lyrics of Alec Benjamin's songs and examined five types of figurative language, namely hyperbole, simile, synecdoche, personification, and paradox. The study emphasized the connotative meaning of these language styles and their emotional impact. Just like the other studies, the approach used is qualitative, but this research is unique in that it highlights the relationship between figurative language and emotional expression. Unfortunately, this study does not discuss other important types of language styles, such as metaphor or irony, so the understanding of lyric writing style is not fully comprehensive.

Then, Muhammad et al. (2021) analyzed five forms of figurative language in the song “Nobody's Love” (Maroon 5), with hyperbole as the most dominant type. This study emphasized the role of figurative language in building the aesthetic and emotional appeal of the lyrics. The approach used remains descriptive qualitative. However, this research has not delved further into the cultural context or social background behind the use of the language style, even though this aspect can provide a more thorough understanding.

After that, Loveana et al. (2021) examined figurative language in the album “Title” (Meghan Trainor) and managed to identify types of language styles, with hyperbole and simile as the most frequently used forms. The study provides insights into how these elements reinforce lyrical content and convey messages related to love and self esteem. Despite covering a wide range of figures of speech, this study has not linked the figurative expressions to the overarching theme of the whole album, thus lacking depth in terms of thematic interpretation.

Last, Maoula et al. (2022) conducted a special study on metaphors in the song “Lost Stars” (Adam Levine). The main focus lies on semantic analysis and the philosophical and emotional meanings of the metaphors used. This study excels in depth of interpretation, although its scope is limited as it does not cover other forms of stylistics, so the analysis is less thorough though detailed.

Previous studies have had a similar methodological orientation using a qualitative approach and highlighting the important role of figurative language in enhancing the emotional impact and aesthetic quality of song lyrics. However, this study differs from previous studies in its specific focus on Taylor Swift's album *The Tortured Poets Department*. While previous studies tended to focus on individual songs or broadly selected collections of lyrics, this study analyzes figurative language throughout the album, viewing it as an integrated poetic composition. The uniqueness of this study lies in its indepth analysis of figurative language in the album *The Tortured Poets Department*, which has not received much attention in figurative language studies.