

## An Analysis of Figurative Language in the song lyric of "1989" Album by Taylor Swift

Rike Monika<sup>1,a</sup>, Eli Diana<sup>2,b</sup>, Merry Rullyanti<sup>3,c</sup>

### Affiliation

1. University of Dehasen Bengkulu
2. University of Dehasen Bengkulu
3. University of Dehasen Bengkulu

### Correspondence

- a. rikemonike25@gmail.com
- b. elidiana@unived.ac.id
- c. merry.sasing@unived.ac.id

### Abstract

*This study concerns with the descriptive analysis of figurative language in the song lyrics by Taylor Swift's "1989" Album. This research to answer two statement of problem that is (I) what of types of figurative language that is used in the song Lyrics by Taylor Swift's "1989" album? And (II) what the contextual meaning of figurative language in song lyrics by Taylor Swift's "1989" album? And the researcher explains about the review of the related theories and related studies this review is very important because it used as the basis of analysis of the study. The researcher uses a descriptive qualitative method to classify and analyze the sentence. The aim of descriptive qualitative method is to describe a place, fact and characteristic of population systematically, factually and accurately. Descriptive qualitative method employs technique of seeking, collecting and analyzing data. After investigating the sentence in the song lyric, the researcher found several findings of figurative language on it There are seven kinds of figurative language that is used in the song lyrics, they are simile, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, oxymoron, symbol, and synecdoche. The last is the dominant of figurative language that used is metaphor.*

**Keyword:** *Figurative Language, analyze method, kinds of Figurative language..*



### How to cite this article

Monike, Rike. Diana, eli. rullyanti, merry (2021). An Analysis of Figurative Language in the song lyric of "1989" Album by Taylor Swift. *Literary Criticism*, 08(01), 39-44.

### A. Introduction

Figurative language is language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from literal interpretation. Figurative language is using figures of speech, figurative language can appear in multiple form with the uses of different literary and rhetorical devices.

Beside that, Sakdiyah (2013) in her journal, An Analysis of Figurative Language in Doo-woops and Hooligans album by Bruno Mars in Journal of English and Education. Vol.2, p (1),1-10 stated that "Figurative language is a part of language that using word to mean something different from their

ordinary meaning in order to emphasize an ideas". The statement means that instead of saying something that is probably harsh or rude, we intent to use the replacement words or a way of saying thing and meaning another.

Language is very important in human life, because we cannot communicate with each other without it. One of the languages is English. English has become an important popular language, for international communication and people always call it an international language. Languages means of communication is the most important thing for human beings. It can express people's ideas, knowledge and feeling in written or spoken. According to Kreidler, (1998, p.19.) Language is a system of symbols through which people communicate. The examples of symbols. were spoken, written or sign with the hands. Human being is a social and an individual person and always communicates with each other.

Language is a way of people to communicate with others. It used by people in their daily lives to make a conversation and language is the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country area. Language is what the members of a particular society speak. (Wardhaugh,2000, p. 1).

In language, there are several to learn it more detail. Such as morphology, phonology, syntax, semantic, and sociolinguistic. If people talking about a language, then people will talk about communication, when communication with other people there is anyway meaning to be convey in the structure of language is expressed so it's important meaning in language as if speaking without meaning is speak without a clear.

Talking about meaning, it is related to semantic which is a study the meaning of language. Semantics is a knowledge that discusses about the meaning of sentence. According to Muhammad, (2011. p 126), semantics is a study about the meaning of language, such as word, phrase, clause, and sentence. So, with semantics we can learn more about sociolinguistic, especially in meaning of language itself. Meaning of the word is a field of the study that discussed in semantics. Semantics is as a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of a word. In the language, meaning is what the speakers interpret or the speakers mean. Meaning is the thing or idea that a sound, word, and sign. Meaning is the relationship between languages with the world which has been egreed by the users. so that can be understood.it can be concluded that meaning 1s result of the relationship between languages with the world.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that everything has a meaning and every sense has its own in the form of figurative language that indirectly conveyed but also has a special meaning. Figurative language can be used in poems, stories, speeches, songs and other creations. There are some similarities between a song and a poem. A song bas to be rhythmic and so does a poem. Rhythm is one of the important elements in both song and poetry. But more figurative language found in a song because the song a lot of figurative language but still has a special meaning and in the song contain rows of words strung together with: a style that is· attractive and also in the lyric contain a lot of figurative language.

Song is a piece of music with words that usually sung by the singer. Its is should be one of ways to appreciate the one's idea that will be known by others. Quinn, (2006) states that, "song is a term for a type of lyric poem, not necessarily designed to be set to music". (p. 393) in the reality, song is usually accompanied by music as the collaboration between writers and composer. A composer makes a nice tone for bearing while the writers create the song lyric with beautiful words. Songs also can be applied in teaching English by using song, students understand more to analyze beautiful words in learning literature. sometimes the students feel bored to analyze kind of poetry, for example poem, but by 'songs the students can comprehend the meaning of beautiful words because they do not only read the lyric but also listen to the music of the song. It means that they can enjoy nice tone in the song that help them to get motivation to analyze those beautiful words. in song. Beautiful words of the song consist of literature terms like metaphor, simile and others. They are called figure of speec1l or figurative language.

## **B. Methods**

### **1. Research Instruments**

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. The data source is Taylor Swift 1989 Album. The process of data analysis in qualitative research began with all data collected from various sources, ie from observations that have been written in the field notes, personal notes and so on. The techniques of

the data analysis are used to analyze the figurative languages in the songs: 1. Listening the songs to understand the song. 2. Selecting sentences which indicates the figurative language, in the course of the scene and conversation. 3. Analyzing the contexts of dialogues. 4. Concluding the results.

## 2. Data Collection

The Researcher used figurative language theory; Figurative language uses "figure of speech" a way of saying something other than the literal meaning of the word. It is a word or phrase that depart from everyday literal language for the sake of comparison, emphasis, clarity, or freshness. According to Wren & Martin, 1995, p. 297. Figure of speech is departure from the ordinary from expression, or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect. Figurative language is not intended to be interpreted in a literal sense. Appealing to the imagination, figurative language provides new ways of looking at the world. It always makes use of a comparison between different things. Figurative language compress two things there are different in enough ways so that their similarities, when pointed out, are interesting, unique and or surprising.

The Webster's New World College Dictionary (1996), explains that figurative speech is an expression (as metaphor or euphemism) that substitute a variation of points of view by which things or notions which is referred to as if it is different in some ways (in identify, degree, shape) from what it actually is or seems to be but so related to the expression successfully implies an intended meaning of effect either or greatly different from what is uttered said (p.571).

Rozakis (1995) says Figurative language - saying one thing in terms of another. It means that figurative language is an expression used by person or the author indirectly by using a comparison. It cannot be interpreted literally because the comparison in figurative language expression has the meaning. Figurative language is language that uses figures of speech. A figure of speech is a way of saying something other than the literal meaning of the world and figurative language is not intended to be interpreted in a literal sense.

Research method presents the methodology which is used by the researcher to analyze the data. This is very important to do research, the researcher need to apply the right method. The method which is used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive analysis means to describe what actually happen to procedures about method which are useful in research. Descriptive qualitative approach does not apply the detail arithmetic calculation or statistic contains. sentences or description of the objects (Moleong, 2011, p.11).

The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method in this research. The aim of descriptive qualitative method is to describe a place, fact and characteristic of population systematically, factually and accurately. Descriptive qualitative method employs technique of seeking, collecting and analyzing data. The analyses in qualitative research concern in understanding the result of found data rather than calculate the result of found data. (Moleong, 2009, p.3)

The unit analysis of research is the figurative languages which are found in the song lyric by Taylor Swift in "1989" album. In this research the researcher analyze ten songs in the "1989" album. The title of the songs are: Welcome to the New York, Blank space, style, out of The Woods, All You to Do was Stay, Shake It Off, I Wish You Would, Bad Blood, Wildest Dreams, How You Get The Girl.

In this case the researcher used study document as the way to collect the data. According to Arikunto, (1990), study document is getting the data about case or variable as note, transcripts, book, magazine, etc. (p.321). The researcher analysis 1989 Lyric's to collect the data which related with this research. For collecting the data, the writer ran observation through these steps as follow: 1. Reading the song lyric of "1989" album. 2. Selecting the figurative language. 3. Writing down the data. 4. Arranging data into several parts based on classification. 5. Calculating 6. Interpreting 7. Concluding.

According to Arikunto, (1990), in doing analysis, the researcher uses procedures as follow: 1. Identification After collecting the data, the researcher identified the data based on the kinds of figurative languages, which focus on meaning of figurative languages to make it easier to classifying data. 2. Classification, the researcher classifying each figurative language according to some of the points based on the kinds of figurative languages.

## 3. Data Analysis

According to Arikunto, (1990), in doing analysis, the researcher uses procedures as follow: 1. Identification After collecting the data, the researcher identified the data based on the kinds of figurative

languages, which focus on meaning of figurative languages to make it easier to classifying data. 2. Classification, the researcher classifying each figurative language according to some of the points based on the kinds of figurative languages.

### C. Result

The researcher found 39 data of figurative languages from 10 songs of Taylor Swift. The detail of the finding can be found below.

Table 1. Table Example

Nr	Song title	Figurative Language	Total
1	Welcome to newyork	Simile	2
		Synecdoche	2
2	Blank Space	Personification	1
		Hyperbole	1
		Metaphor	1
		Simile	1
3	Style	Oxymoron	1
		Hyperbole	1
4	Out of the Woods	Personification	1
		Hyperbole	1
		Simile	1
		Synecdoche	1
5	All you had to do was stay	Metaphor	1
		Personification	2
6	Shake it off	Hyperbole	1
		Metaphor	1
		Synecdoche	1
7	Wish You Would	Simile	2
		Personification	1
		Symbol	1
8	Bad Blood	Simile	1
		Metaphor	7
		Hyperbole	2
9	Wildest Dreams	Synecdoche	1
		Metaphor	1
		Hyperbole	1
10	How you get the girl	Metaphor	1
		Personification	1

### D. Discussion

the researcher would like to discuss about kind of figurative language in the song lyrics by Taylor Swift "1989" album and its meaning. Figurative language use figure of speech a way of saying something other than meaning of the word.

There are many kind of figurative language, but not all of kind figurative language is used in the song lyric by Taylor Swift "1989" album. The researcher only found 7 kinds of figurative language that is found in the song lyric by Taylor Swift "1989" album, they are hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile, symbol, synecdoche, and oxymoron.

From the lyric of 1989 album by Taylor Swift the researcher found many data show figurative language in the song of this album are consist 10 songs. The researcher has selected 10 lyrics, entitled Welcome to New York, Blank Space, Style, Out of the Woods, All You Had to do was Stay, Shake it Off, I Wish You Would, Bad Blood, Wildest Dreams, How You Get the Girl.

From the title of Welcome to New York can be inferred that the song tells about love story. In that song the song writer uses two types of Figurative Language, namely simile and synecdoche. From the tabulated data above, the researcher finds that the song uses two simile with the word "Like".

*"Like any great love"*

*"Like any real love"*

From the lyric above, it can be seen that the song writer uses Figurative Language firs simile with the word "like" refer to that the person talking about love and great desire. The second word "like" is

one of deictic expression which meaning to belief in a feeling. "Like" applied by the song writer for indicate that the song writer uses Figurative Language simile.

Other Figurative Language are two synecdoche that usually indicates something to refer to the whole.

*"It keeps you guessing"*

*"Put them in a drawer"*

From that lyric it can be seen if the song writer uses fist synecdoche with the meaning still waiting for an uncertain answer in that song will be not know what the song tell about, whether talk about the song writer herself or other person. Second, types of Figurative Language synecdoche are used by the song writer with the meaning want to trying to hide and forget.

The other song with title Blank Space. The song talks about who possesses a love for someone, where love and emotion the song writer is smolder and cannot be described. From the tabulated data above the writer founds four the kinds of Figurative Language used by the song writer, those are Personification, hyperbole, metaphor, and simile. First, the song writer uses personification

*"Ain't it funny rumors fly"*

the meaning of the whole lyrics is rumors cannot fly, because they're just word. Second, the song writer uses hyperbole with the word "I get drunk on jealousy we'll take this way too far and leave you breathless or with a nasty scar" from the lyric above it can be seen that refer to you cannot drink on jealously and you cannot take a relationship far enough where it leaves you breathless or with a scar unless they actually hurt you. Third, the lyric uses metaphor with the word "love's a game" and that lyric have meaning is saying that there is a lot that goes into love, it can be easy or hard, like a game. Last, there is simile are used by the song writer is "like" and "a" with the word "I can read you like a magazine" from lyric above it can be seen that simile explain that the person she is talking about doesn't hide the way they feel very easily. The uses of figurative language will make the song listener easy to understand of the whole lyrics.

From the title Style can be inferred that this song describes about the song writer feeling for someone who loved by her. After reading the lyrics, the researcher can conclude that the song writer very loves her boy and do not care that he is a playboy. It can be seen in the line of song "you got that James Dean daydream look in your eyes, and I got that red lip classic thing that you like". The song writer knows that there will be no success but she does not care and still love the man. From the tabulated data above, it can be seen that song writer uses two kinds of figurative language. Two are figurative language are Oxymoron and Hyperbole. Oxymoron are used by song writer is "I" and "You". It expressed in the following lyrics.

*"You got that James Dean daydream look in your eyes, and I got that red lip classic thing that you like"*

From the lyrics above, it can be seen the song writer uses figurative language for knowing how the use of oxymoron affecting the meaning she expects us know who he is to help us understand what she's trying to point out. The other figurative language that uses in song lyric

*"Could end in burning flames or paradise"*

In these lyrics, it can be seen the song writer uses hyperbole, in song above have meaning literally end up in burning flames or paradise. She is meaning that it will end either good or bad.

Out of the woods song tell about how love is complicated that cannot be explained, the song writer love story that breaks and connects, by reading the lyrics, it can be seen that the lyric describe feeling of the song writer who love the man but he is betraying the women, it is the song writer. The song writer feels that the man was in trouble when the women now.

By reading the lyric, it can be seen that the song writer uses four figurative language there are personification, hyperbole, simile, and synecdoche. In the first lyric the song writer uses personification, it expressed in the following

*"Two paper airplanes flying"*

In those lyrics, it can be seen the song have a meaning if paper airplanes cannot flying, they're just words. Then the hyperbole in the song lyric Out of the Woods is

"Are we out of the woods?" the use of hyperbole affecting the meaning of the whole lyric is you cannot get out of the forest if you do not find a way out of the forest that is forced is out of a problem. Next is lyric that use simile with the word

*"Like we stood a chance"*

From those lyrics, it can be seen if the song writer uses simile with the meaning consider returning together. With that lyric the song writer wants to describe something and the listener know how to use simile in the song lyrics.

The next song with title All you had to do was stay tells about love story's the song writer. By the reading the lyric, it can be seen that the researcher found that the song writer uses two kinds of figurative language there are metaphor and personification. The researcher find on word representing metaphor, it is "palm" in the lyric is to describe someone, that mean that someone not want to let go or lose. With the meaning of song lyric will be easily to understood.

*"Lock me out when I let you in".*

*"Picking up the pieces of the mess you made".*

In those lyrics the researcher tries to omit the meaning in each lyric. It can be seen that it the song not use personification it will affect the meaning of the whole lyric. With use personification the meaning of the song lyric will be clear, and the listener understand the meaning of the whole lyric.

From this lyric 'Lock me out when I let in' it has meaning that human cannot be locked in this lyric is just word that means a person has been rebound by partner. But from this lyric picking up the pieces of the mess you made' have mean that chaos can only be felt cannot be picked up like a piece of glass is just a word.

### E. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the researcher has made final conclusion to explain about figurative language. The song lyric by Taylor Swift's "1989" album consists of seven kinds of figurative languages they are types of figurative language found in song lyrics of Taylor Swift's "1989" album there are 6 hyperbole, 12 metaphor, 6 personification, 6 simile, 1 symbol, 5 synecdoche, and 1 oxymoron. in this research in the lyrics using the word in the real sense but rather as a metaphor based on similarities and comparisons by which metaphor is so widely used in ten Taylor swift lyrics on the "1989" album and the least figurative meaning used in "1989" album are symbol and oxymoron. The dominant of Figurative language that is used in the song lyrics by Taylor Swift's "1989" album is metaphor because most of the songs written by Taylor swift itself and most of those song describes about the writer's own experience, especially about love.

The researcher concludes that the figurative language meaning can be analyzed semantically to know how the substantively meaning and how the effect of the use figurative language for the whole lyrics. Song lyrics analysis is multi interpretative depending on the reading of the song lyrics.

### F. References

- Arikunto, S. (1990). *Metode penelitian*. Penerbit angkasa : Jakarta.
- Chaer, Abdul. (1989). *Tata Bahasa Praktis Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bhratara Niaga Mega.
- Diyannir. (2004). *Literature approach to fiction, poetry and drama*. New york: mcgraw-hill
- Harley, Prayudha. (2004). *Suatu Pengantar Untuk Wacana dan Praktik Penyiaran*. Malang: Bayumedia.
- Hornby, A. S. (1986). *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kridalaksana, harimurti. (2001). *Kamus Linguistik*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kreidler, Charles. W. (1998). *Introducing English Semantic*. Routledge: New York.
- Moleong, Lexy J. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: Depdikbud Press
- Muhammad. (2011). *Metode Penelitian Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Parrine, (1978). *Literature structure, sound and sense. (6th Edition)*. New york : Harcourt Brace Javanovich, inc.
- Quinn, Naomi, (1987). *"Convergent Evidence for a cultural model of American Marriage"*. Cultural model in language and thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Rozakis, Luurie. E. (1995) *how to interpret poetry*. New york: A Simon & Schuster Macmillan Company
- Saleh, Syaiful. (2008). *A smantic analysis of figurative language expression in Ernest Hemingway's the old man and the sea*. Medan : fakultassastra USU.