

Figurative Language Used in Taylor Swift's Album Evermore

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Abstract

The purposes of the paper are to share insights about figurative meanings that turned out to be very likely to be learned through a song. In addition, to listening to songs for personal enjoyment, it turns out that the songs can also be learnt with the insights such as figurative meanings and also new vocabulary, especially students who major in English. The data collected from five songs on Taylor Swift "Evermore" album. The method used in the paper is the data collection method. Furthermore, qualitative method used for data analysis. The main theories used for data analysis based on the theory of figurative language. The results of this study demonstrate that the meaning of figurative language is much deeper and more impressive rather than lexical meaning.

Keywords: *figurative language, song lyrics, lexical meaning*

Introduction

A song is an expression of people's feelings, ideas, and opinions. When creating lyrics, songwriters sometimes don't appreciate good grammar, because when creating lyrics, the author will surely play according to their feelings regardless of whether the lyrics are arranged correctly according to grammar. To understand a song with a variety of language styles requires special skills because everyone has their own interpretation. To analyze the meaning of a text we need semantic skills which focus on the meaning of a word in a sentence. Choosing Taylor Swift Evermore's album as the research material is very interesting because Taylor swift is one of the artists with a lot of lyric writing style using figurative words, she also writes her own lyrics which are very related to her real life.

Figurative language has a long history in literature, poetry, and storytelling, and it has naturally found its way into song lyrics as well. It adds depth and creativity to the lyrics, making them more engaging and memorable for listeners. The use of figurative language in song lyrics can be traced back to ancient times when oral traditions relied heavily on poetic devices and imagery to convey messages and emotions. Throughout history, poets and songwriters have utilized various forms of figurative language to create powerful and evocative lyrics.

In Western literary traditions, figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, hyperbole, personification, and others have been extensively employed by poets and lyricists. These devices allow songwriters to express complex emotions, depict vivid scenes, and convey abstract ideas in a concise and relatable manner. With the rise of popular music in the 20th century, figurative language became a prominent feature in song lyrics across various genres, including rock, pop, hip-hop, country, and more. Songwriters began to experiment

with different poetic devices, crafting lyrics that were not only catchy but also rich in imagery and symbolism.

Figurative language in song lyrics serves multiple purposes. It can enhance the overall aesthetic and artistic value of the song, create a sense of unity and cohesion in the lyrics, and establish a deeper emotional connection with the audience. These devices allow songwriters to communicate universal themes and personal experiences in a way that resonates with listeners. Today, figurative language continues to be a prevalent and essential element in contemporary music. From chart-topping hits to indie anthems, songwriters employ various forms of figurative language to captivate audiences, provoke thought, and elicit emotional responses.

Overall, the use of figurative language in song lyrics is rooted in the rich tradition of poetic expression and storytelling. It is an effective tool that allows songwriters to infuse their lyrics with depth, imagination, and nuance, making music a powerful medium for communication and self-expression. The research questions in this paper are:

- (a) what types of figurative language are used in Taylor Swift songs in the album?
- (b) how are the meanings of the figurative language in the lyrics?

Figurative language in song lyrics serves multiple purposes, adding depth, emotional resonance, and artistic value to the music. Here are some of the key purposes served by figurative language in song lyric. Figurative language helps songwriters convey and intensify emotions in their lyrics. By using vivid imagery and poetic devices, songwriters can create a strong emotional impact on listeners, whether it's expressing love, heartbreak, joy, or sadness. Figurative language allows songwriters to paint vivid pictures in the minds of listeners. By using metaphors, similes, and other devices, they can describe abstract concepts, events, or scenes in a way that engages the listener's imagination and enhances their understanding of the message.

Figurative language adds layers of meaning and complexity to song lyrics. It allows songwriters to convey deeper thoughts and ideas in a concise and memorable manner. By employing figurative language, lyrics can become open to interpretation and invite listeners to engage with the song on a deeper level. Figurative language often employs catchy and memorable phrases that stick in the listener's mind. Whether it's a clever metaphor, a powerful simile, or a well-crafted rhyme scheme, figurative language can make the lyrics more memorable, leading to increased recognition and popularity of the song.

Figurative language in song lyrics demonstrates the artistic skills and creativity of the songwriter. By using unique and imaginative language, songwriters can craft lyrics that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also demonstrate their prowess as wordsmiths. It allows them to stand out and create a distinct style or identity in their music.

Literature Review

Figurative language in song lyrics refers to the use of poetic devices, such as metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism, to convey meaning and create vivid imagery within the lyrics of songs. It adds depth, emotion, and artistic value to the music, allowing songwriters to express complex thoughts, evoke powerful emotions, and engage listeners on a deeper level (Mahmood, 2014).

The use of figurative language in song lyrics can be traced back to ancient times when music and poetry were closely intertwined. Throughout history, cultures around the world have used music and lyrics as a means of storytelling, emotional expression, and cultural preservation. Figurative language has played a crucial role in enhancing the impact and effectiveness of these musical narratives. In contemporary music, figurative language remains a prevalent and integral element of songwriting. Artists across genres, from pop and rock to hip-hop and country, employ figurative language to craft compelling lyrics that resonate with audiences. Whether it's using metaphors to describe emotions, employing similes to create vivid comparisons, or employing other poetic devices, songwriters leverage figurative language to enhance the aesthetic and emotional impact of their songs (Kalandadze, et al., 2018).

Figurative language in song lyrics serves multiple purposes. It adds depth and complexity to the lyrics, allowing for multiple layers of interpretation and meaning. It helps to evoke and communicate emotions, enabling listeners to connect with the song on a more profound level. Figurative language also contributes to the overall artistry and creativity of the music, distinguishing a song and its lyrics from others (Sabata, et al., 2018).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory suggests that metaphor is not merely a linguistic device but a fundamental cognitive mechanism that structures our understanding of abstract concepts through mapping onto concrete, embodied experiences. This theory has been influential in analyzing metaphors in song lyrics (Oktoma&Mardiyono, 2013). The cognitive processes involved in the production and reception of poetic language. His work applies cognitive theories to analyze figurative language and other poetic devices in various literary contexts, including song lyrics (Kronrod, 2013). Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics are generated to examine how language, including figurative language, is shaped by social and cultural contexts. Their work provides insights into how figurative language in song lyrics can reflect and reinforce gender norms and social identities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2013).

A comprehensive overview of stylistic analysis, including the analysis of figurative language. The book explores various linguistic and literary approaches to examining how figurative language contributes to the style and meaning of texts, including song lyrics (Yayiyanti, 2015). It's important to note that the study of figurative language in song lyrics is a broad and interdisciplinary field, and there are numerous other theories, authors, and studies that have contributed to this area of research. The examples mentioned above represent some influential works and theories that have informed the analysis and understanding of figurative language in song lyrics.

Method

Researching figurative language in song lyrics can involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, depending on the specific objectives of the study. It uses content analysis method, which involves systematically analyzing the lyrics of songs to identify and categorize different types of figurative language. Researchers can create a coding scheme or use existing frameworks to classify metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and other devices present in the lyrics. Qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis or discourse analysis, can be used to explore the underlying meanings and themes conveyed through figurative language in song lyrics. Researchers may analyze the lyrics in their cultural, social, or historical context to understand the intended messages and implications.

Researchers can design surveys or conduct interviews with music listeners to understand their interpretations and emotional responses to figurative language in song lyrics. These methods provide insights into how listeners engage with and interpret the poetic devices used in songs. Comparative analysis involves comparing and contrasting figurative language across different songs, genres, or artists. Researchers can examine how different artists employ figurative language to convey similar themes or emotions, or how the use of figurative language varies across different musical styles.

It's important to note that the choice of research method will depend on the research questions, available resources, and the desired level of analysis and interpretation. Combining multiple methods can provide a more comprehensive understanding of figurative language in song lyrics.

This data was selected from several songs listed on Taylor Swift's album *Evermore*. The songs are *Champagne Problems*, *Coney Island*, *Long Story Short*, *Right Where You Left Me*, *Gold Rush*. When conducting research on figurative language in song lyrics, there are several data sources that should be considered. It comes from song lyrics databases; online databases dedicated to song lyrics, such as Genius, MetroLyrics, or LyricFind, provide a vast collection of lyrics across various genres and time periods. These databases often allow for searching and filtering by artist, song title, or specific keywords, making it easier to gather a large sample of lyrics for analysis. Some researchers create their own curated datasets of song lyrics specifically for figurative language research.

These datasets can be compiled from various sources, including commercial lyrics databases, publicly available lyric websites, or contributions from research participants. Creating your own dataset allows for more control over the data collection process and the inclusion of specific genres or time periods of interest. Academic databases and repositories, such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, or academic libraries, may contain scholarly articles, dissertations, or conference papers that explore figurative language in song lyrics. These sources can provide theoretical frameworks, analytical approaches, and insights from previous research studies. In cases where specific song lyrics are not available in existing databases or platforms, researchers may manually transcribe the lyrics from audio recordings or live performances. This method requires careful listening and accurate transcription of the lyrics for further analysis.

Collaborating with songwriters, artists, or music enthusiasts can provide access to unpublished or lesser-known song lyrics. Working directly with individuals or communities involved in music creation can offer unique insights into the use of figurative language in specific songs or genres. When using these data sources, it's essential to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the lyrics. Cross-referencing multiple sources and verifying the lyrics with official releases or authorized publications can help maintain the integrity of the data.

The method used in collecting this journal data started from selected 5 songs on Taylor Swift's album *Evermore*, then read each lyric carefully in the 5 songs via the web www.genius.com. Listen carefully and repeatedly listening to every song I choose is also what I do. To clarify, feel, and understand what is the song mean in order to be able to explain the lyrics that are figurative. It is also taken from YouTube of *Evermore* album analysis from Taylor Swift fans in order to capture the perspective of Taylor Swift fans. Finally, types of figurative begin in groups and break down their meaning.

There are several steps to analyze this study. First, in order to understand the figurative wording that exists it is very important to listen to and reread each of the lyrics repeatedly so that it is easy to group into each figurative class and interpret the veiled meanings of each lyric. Second, after the lyrics are grouped into each figurative class, start looking for the meaning of each word in the lyrics and make lexical meaning as a comparison material taken from oxford lexicon dictionary. Finally, the analysis is complete and produces a conclusion that successfully answers the problems mentioned earlier.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of figurative language in song lyrics involves several steps to understand the types, patterns, and effects of poetic devices used. Here is a general outline of the data analysis process for studying figurative language in song lyrics.

1. Simile

Data 1

"We were like the mall before the internet." (Coney Island).

The sentence above shows the use of simile because it is a comparison using the word "like". In lexical meaning, "mall" means a building that contains stores, a place where people can shop with many choices and have fun and "internet" means communication network that covers the whole world. This is contrasted with its meaning of figurative language; the writers want to convey that the writers' relationships were colorful and full of happiness before it turns to something empty and lonely.

Data 2

"And he feels like home." (Long Story Short)

This sentence shows the use of simile because it compares "he" and "home" using the word like. In general, we know "he" is a pronoun word for a man and In lexical meaning, "home" means The need for a place to live for every human being is composed of building materials. This is contrasted with its meaning of figurative language, the meaning of "house" in this lyric is that the writer wants to convey that "he" gives the writer impression of comfort, tranquility, and a place to rest. Home is where we rest after the days we've passed.

2. Metaphor

Data 3

"your midas touch on the chevy door." (Champagne Problems)

This sentence shows the use of metaphor because there is an implied comparison. The word "midas" comes from the legend of king Midas which comes from Greek, he can turn anything he touches into gold, so "midas" can be interpreted with a touch of gold and "chevy" stands for Chevrolet, which is a prestigious vehicle brand. The writer wrote this song for her partner which she always describes her partner in gold, so a touch of gold here means perfect, something valuable, or he can make any situation positive.

Data 4

"I fell from the pedestal right down the rabbit hole." (Long Story Short)

This sentence shows the use of metaphor because there is an implied comparison. In lexical meaning, “fell” means a verb that describes a situation where you feel down “pedestal” means reference to a situation in which someone is greatly or uncritically admired and “rabbit hole” means to refer to a bizarre, confusing, or nonsensical situation or environment, typically one from which it is difficult to extricate oneself. What the writer means is that the idiom of “rabbit hole” she fell into a disadvantageous situation.

Data 5

“Rumors fly to new skies.” (Right Where You Left Me)

This sentence shows the use of metaphor because there is an implied comparison. In lexical meaning, “rumors” means a currently circulating story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth, “new” means the first time; not existing before and “skies” means The region of the atmosphere and outer space seen from the earth. The writer wants to convey that the rumors of her are endlessly circulating even to her new life.

3. Hyperbole

Data 6

“I don’t like that falling feels like flying ‘til the bone crush.” (Gold Rush)

From the sentence above we can see the use of hyperbole because it seems to be excessive. In lexical meaning, “bone crush” means a series of bones forming a skeleton that is blown to pieces. The writer doesn’t really have a broken bone or her bones are shattered but what she means is that he hates feeling of fall in her life again and again because of the deep pain she felt.

4. Synecdoche

Data 7

“But you’ll find the real thing instead.” (Champagne Problems)

From the sentence above we can see the use of synecdoche because the sentence using the real thing stand for the thing. In this case, “real thing” stand for "She would've made such a lovely bride, What a shame she's messed up in the head," they said (line 38). In lexical meaning, “real thing” means emphasize the significance or seriousness of a situation. The point of the lyrics above is that the writer feels that she is reviled, mocking, ridiculed, by those around her because she does not accept the proposal of her ex-lover and “real thing” means that she told his ex-lover that he will get someone better than her (the writer).

Data 8

“They expected me to find somewhere, some perspective, but I sat and stared.” (Right Where You Left Me)

From the sentence above we can see the use of synecdoche because the sentence using somewhere stands for some perspective. In lexical meaning, “somewhere” means in or to some place. The lyrics means people give her (the writer) advice to go from her (the writer) past, to forget everything that happened, to see things from another perspective but she doesn't even move a bit and riveted by her (the writer) past.

5. Personification

Data 9

“Your heart was glass, I dropped it.” (Champagne Problems)

This line shows the use of personification which involves objects depicting humans. In lexical meaning, "glass" means hard, brittle substance, typically transparent or translucent, It is used to make drinking containers, and other articles. Here the writer describes the feelings of her partner with a glass, where an object that is intact and hard but simply dropped which will cause severe damage such as the feeling of the partner being hurt.

Data 10

"Eyes like sinking ships, on waters so inviting." (Gold Rush)

This line shows the use of personification which involves objects and nature as the word of figurative. In lexical meaning, "sinking ships" means a large boat for transporting people that go down below the surface of something, become submerge. The writer wants to convey that the author has crushed on someone which she also does not know fully about the man she had crush on. The "eyes" here means that he is very interesting and inviting her feelings than she willingly sinks into it but she does not know yet about her crush.

Conclusion

This analysis resulted conclusions, there are several types of figurative. There are 5 types of figurative in the 5 selected songs including simile, metaphor, hyperbole, synecdoche, personification. It can be seen that figurative is very contrary to lexical meaning itself. The use of figurative words in songs is indeed more interesting because the meaning will be deeper than using lexical only.

Figurative language plays a significant role in song lyrics, adding depth, emotion, and artistic value to the music. The use of metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and other poetic devices allows songwriters to convey complex thoughts, evoke powerful emotions, and create vivid imagery.

Figurative language in song lyrics serves multiple purposes. It enhances the emotional impact of the lyrics, engaging listeners on a deeper level and eliciting strong emotional responses. It creates vivid imagery, allowing listeners to visualize and connect with the themes and messages conveyed in the song. Figurative language also adds layers of meaning and nuance, making the lyrics open to interpretation and encouraging listeners to engage actively with the music.

Furthermore, figurative language in song lyrics showcases the artistic expression and creativity of songwriters. It sets songs apart, creating unique identities and styles that resonate with audiences. Additionally, the use of figurative language enhances the memorability of songs, with catchy and impactful phrases becoming easily recognizable and memorable to listeners.

Research on figurative language in song lyrics utilizes various methods, including content analysis, qualitative analysis, corpus linguistics, surveys, and comparative analysis. These methods enable researchers to explore the different types and functions of figurative language in songs, as well as the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which they are embedded.

Overall, figurative language in song lyrics is a powerful tool for songwriters to convey emotions, tell stories, and express complex ideas. It enriches the listening experience, creating a deep connection between the artist and the audience. The study of figurative

language in song lyrics provides valuable insights into the artistic and communicative aspects of music, and it continues to be a fascinating area of research in the field of language, literature, and music studies.

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