

# AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN THE LYRICS OF A THOUSAND LOVE SONGS

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## Abstract

Literature is a term that describes written text characterized by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, beautiful phrase, elegant syntax, rhymes, and aesthetic alliterations. This research analyzed the figurative language used in the lyrics of A Thousand Love Songs by The Light The Heat. The purpose of this research study is to know the types of figurative languages used. This research study using descriptive qualitative method and library research to obtain the data. Researcher searched the lyrics on internet. From the study, some figurative languages were found such as Hyperbole, Metaphor, Litotes, Personification, Symbol, and Synecdoche. Hyperbole is the most used figurative language. In this article, there are also explanations of implicit meaning of each figurative language being used based on the context.

**Keywords:** Lyric; Figurative Language; Song; Literature

## INTRODUCTION

Language is communication tool used by human. With language, human can utter their opinion, states their thinking, communicate to each other, and exchange information. Language is also used to convey any material in the process of learning and studying. Language holds big role in human's life. Besides having role in communication, language is also part of literature. According to Meyer (1997) as cited from Maryani & Setiawati (2018), literature is a term that describes written text characterized by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, beautiful phrase, elegant syntax, rhymes, and aesthetic alliterations. From the meaning, it can be concluded that literature has beautiful and artistic aspects on its body. The form of literature itself can be found in many types, such as poems, short verse, short story, rhyme, and song. Although song were still being discussed whether included in literature or not, song has the requirement it takes to be called literature. Song has careful use of language, ideas to be expressed and aesthetic alliteration. When Bob Dylan won Nobel Prize in 2016 in literature, and delivered his Nobel speech in 2017, he even wondered how related his songs to literature and what reason the Nobel Organisation gave him the award for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition. However, the Nobel Prize awarded to Bob Dylan as a musician and song-writer has been proving that song is part of literature. Different from other forms of literature that only can be read, song should be sung by a singer. It was given music and tone so people can hear it but still the song contains lyrics that consist of beautiful verse and sentences. According to Stephen Rampur (2015) as cited from Sopiensyah and Inayah (2021), song is a single (and often standalone) work of music intended to be sung by human voice with distinct and fixed pitches and patterns using sound and silence and a variety of forms that often include the repetition of sections. Song consists of lyrics and melody. The lyric has beautiful verses and choruses and also contain poetry. The poetris contain figurative language that makes the song beautiful and categorized as literature.

According to Shen (2009), as cited from Ismail, Nuraeni & Kareviati (2020), Figurative Language is a language deflection to create certain and rhetorical effects or special meanings. Figurative language can be found in any literature, such as short story, poems, and songs. The use of figurative language is to make the literature sounds more meaningful and makes reader or listener to imagine what writer or song-writer tries to convey. There are many types of figurative languages. According to Kennedy (1983) as cited from Faruk (2017), figurative language are divided into four types. They are comparative, contradictive, relation and repetition figurative language. However, in this study, the figurative languages used are only three types.

#### a. Comparative figurative language

Comparative figurative language consists of personification, metaphor, and simile.

##### 1. Personification

Potter (1967) as cited from Setiawati and Maryani (2018) stated that personification figurative language is a language in the imagination of something that has no soul, as if it has a human quality, from this statement, personification means making an inanimate objects act like human. For example, A tree waved its leaves as I left this beautiful village behind. From the sentence, a tree which is a nonhuman object has been given human characteristic for waving can only be performed by human.

##### 2. Metaphor

Kennedy (1983) affirms Metaphor is a statement that one thing is something else, which, in literal sense, it is not. This figurative language does not use 'like' or 'as'. Reader will understand this type of figurative language when he or she understands the connection between two things being compared. For example, "his smile is the ocean of happiness for me"

##### 3. Simile

As cited from Faruk (2017), James (1989) affirms simile is figure of speech in which a likeness between two objects are directly expressed with the word, as, like, than. For example, "his voice is like a smooth melody for me."

#### b. Contradictive Figurative Language

Contradictive figurative language consists of hyperbole, litotes, paradox, and irony.

##### 1. Hyperbole

As cited from Faruk (2017), Tirajoh Frederick (1988) reveals that understatement or hyperbole is an exaggeration of fact, used for serious or comic effect. It is meant that something is made greater than the fact.

For example, "The thunder just heard shocked me as if my heart can explode from inside."

##### 2. Litotes

Potter (1967) said litotes is a figurative language that contains a sentence that minimizes the actual reality. This figurative language shows humility to the people. For example, "I am sorry for gifting you such an invaluable present."

##### 3. Paradox

As cited from Faruk (2017), Kennedy (1983) states that Paradox is apparent self-contradiction or deliberate inconsistency. A statement or situation containing apparently contradictory or incompatible elements, but on closer inspection may be true.

For example, "Indonesia is a rich country with poor people."

#### 4.Irony

According to Kennedy (1983), irony Irony has meanings which extend beyond its use merely as a figure of speech. Irony means the opposite of one's means. For example, Anne is a smart student, she gets 3 for math test.

#### c. Correlative Figurative Language

Correlative Figurative Languages consists of Metonymy, Synecdoche, Symbol, Allusion and Ellipsis.

##### 1. Metonymy

Metonymy is figurative language that uses character or name of thing that relate to name of person, something as pronoun, uses words to describe another things closely associated with it (Faruk, 2017). According to Kennedy (1983), metonymy is the name of things substituted for another closely associated with it. For example, "I love to read J.K Rowling."

##### 2. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is figurative language that say name of partial to represent whole or oppose. (Faruk, 2017) For example : "China often become the winner of may sport olympics."

##### 3. Symbol

As cited from Faruk (2017), Frederick (1988) reveals that A symbol is a sign that points to a meaning beyond itself. In this sense all words and all signs of every kind are symbols. Example: When she I loved looked every day, fresh as a rose in June.

##### 4. Allusion

Allusion is a figurative language that show indirectly forwards a person or event that people have known together. (Faruk, 2017) Example : "North Korea killed its people easily."

##### 5. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is figurative language that omits word or part of sentences. This elimination still makes the sentence understandable. For example, "The paint by Van Gogh."

Some studies have been done before by some researchers about this figurative languages in song lyrics. A research study done by Setiawati & Maryani (2018) analyzed the figurative language in Taylor Swift's Songs. They found seven figurative languages being used by Taylor Swift in the lyrics. Researcher also shows the analysis of implicit meaning of every sentence it has. Another resarch study about anyzing figurative language in song lyrics done by Ismail, Nuraeni & Kareviati (2020) in Maher Zain song titled Awaken. In this article, they stated to have found four figurative languages, namely hyperbole, personification, rhetoric, and repetitions. The last research study article observed is The Analysis of Figurative language in 'Girl on Fire' Song Lyrics by Alicia Keys. From this article, the researcher mentioned they have found 10 types of figurative languages.

In this article, the song selected to be analyzed is song by The Light The Heat titled A Thousand Love Songs. This song is selected due to the numbers of figures of speech can be found

compared to other songs. This song has many expressions that make listeners feel moved with the message a lyricist tried to send. Besides, this song is about someone who is falling in love. Love makes people ecstatic that inspire them to create such beautiful words with figure of speech that depicts the happiness they feel.

## METHOD

The method used for this research study is descriptive qualitative. As cited from Maryani and Setiawati (2018), according to Moleong (2010), qualitative method is used as a research technique that obtains a description of the words and the performance of people that can be observed. Descriptive qualitative approach does not apply the detail arithmetic calculation or statistic. The data collection method in this research study is the library study. As cited from Setawati and Maryani (2018), according to Rasmusoni (2017), library research includes process stage used to gather information fro writing articles, making presentations, or completing a project. The sources for this research study are internet and journal articles. The object being studied is the song sung by The Light The Heat titled “Thousands Love Songs” from the album of the same title “Thousand Love Songs”. The researcher analyzed the figurative language used in this song by the songwriter. This song was being chosen because of the familiarity of it to the researcher since it was almost listened every day. First thing done of this research study was the search of the song lyrics in internet. After finding the lyrics, researcher listened to the song and read it by heart. Then, researcher made note of the figurative language used in the song lyrics. Next step is the classification of the figurative languages used whether they are personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, litotes, paradox, irony, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allusion, or ellipsis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

From the analysis being done, here is the result found. There are some figurative languages used by lyricist in making this song.

Table 1

No	Expression/Lyric	Figurative Language
1	I was a stranger in the crowd	Paradox
2	You were a star up in the clouds	Metaphor
3	And when our eyes they finally met	Personification
4	I could see our story miles ahead	Symbol
5	You showed me world I never knew	Metaphor
6	You turned my darkness into blue	Metaphor
7	And I feel 10 feet tall	Hyperbole
8	Since you said you'd be my all	Synecdoche
9	You're magical	Hyperbole
10	You steal the show, my heart aglow	Hyperbole
11	I cannot look away	-
12	You're beautiful	-
13	The way you move, I'm lost in you	Hyperbole
14	My heart is here to stay	Personification

15	I would sing a thousand love songs, but none would measure up to you	Litotes
16	I could write a thousand stories of all the times I fell for you	Hyperbole
17	I would brave the fiercest ocean to my find my way back to you	Personification
18	I would cross the darkest desert for you to know I'm here for you	Hyperbole

From the classification of the figurative language used in The Light The Heat song titled 'Thousand Love Songs', there are 16 figurative language found. They are one litotes, three metaphors, three personifications, one paradox, one symbol, one synecdoche, and six hyperboles. Those 16 figurative languages make the song more beautiful and meaningful.

### Discussion

After observing the result, here is the discussion of the lyric in The Light The Heat Song titled A Thousand Love Songs.

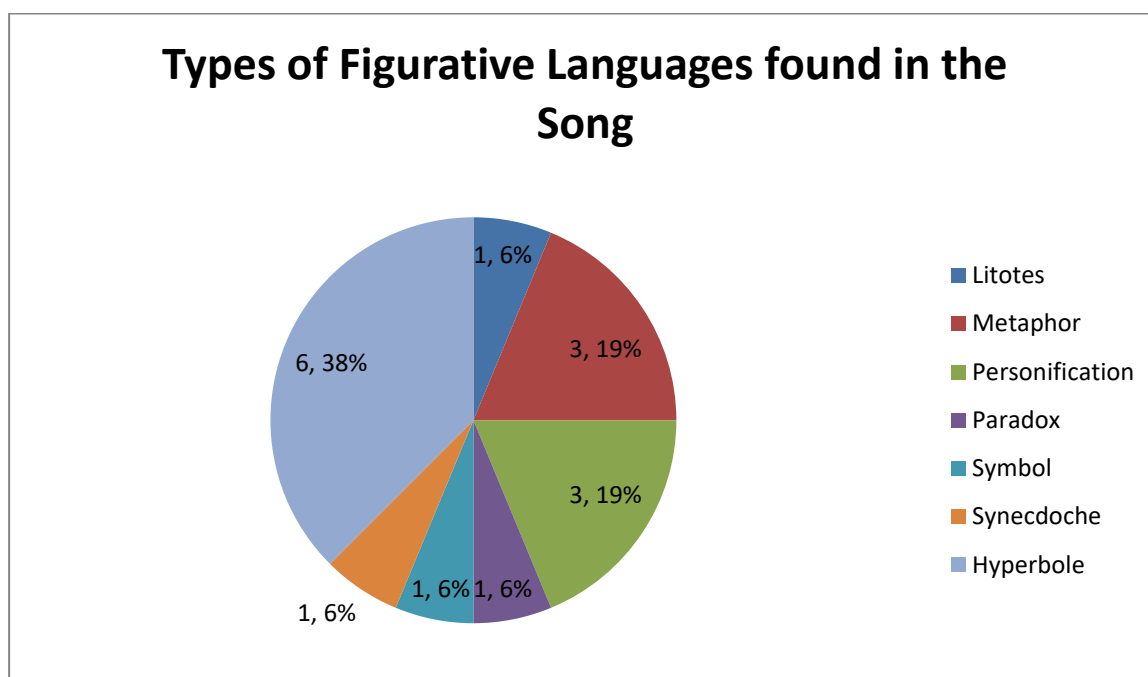


Chart 1

Based on the pie chart above, the Hyperbole is the most used figurative language in the lyric. It is about 38%. The other figurative languages consist of litotes 6%, Metaphor 19%, Personification 19%, Paradox 6%, Symbol 6%, and Synecdoche 6%.

Based on Fonagy (1975) as cited from Nemesi (2004), The Hyperbole use in most of the text means first the characteristics of excited mental state that resulted in strong emotion. Here the lyricist wants to show the strong emotion he has for the one he loves. He expresses his

emotion through the exaggerating words so the girl can feel it. Next goal according to Fonagy (1975), similarly to such emotional agitation, the long-lasting thrill of love makes the speaker distort the perspective. From this goal, it can be implied that the lyricist was willing to color the perspective of listener to wider horizon. He wants to display wider perspective of his love to a girl to the listeners. Third goal according to Fonagy (1975), the consistent use of hyperbole renders speech dramatic, solemn, and thus idealizing, making the style too lofty for ordinary use. Here, lyricist wants to make lyric sounds greater, extraordinary, unique and different from the typical sentences. Hyperbole makes the lyrics sounds dramatized and solemn. Fourth, the goal of using hyperbole according to Fonagy (1975) is to be expressive. This can stimulate the speaker to augment the intensity of words. Using hyperbole, lyricist wants to show the power of words in his song. With the intensity of words, meaning of lyric can be conveyed better and more meaningful. Sixth goal of using hyperbole is, rhetorical hyperbole serves the goal of persuading the audience. According to Fonagy (1975), using hyperbole can persuade listeners, convincing them about the argument or saying lyricist wants to deliver. It means, the song maker of A Thousand Love Songs wants to persuade the listener about love he has. Finally, as a feature of style, hyperbole can characterize the lyricist. Telling listener what kind of persons he is.

Below, there is analysis of the meaning of the every figurative language found.

#### Lyric 1

“I was a stranger in the crowd”

The figurative language found here is paradox. The sentence contains paradox figurative language. The person in the song is actually among many people but he thinks that he is alone, not know anybody. From the lyric, researcher can feel the disconnection of him with the world around. This sentence shows the paradox or contradictory. Usually, when we are in the crowd we don't feel lonely. However, the man in the song feels that way.

#### Lyric

“You were a star up in the clouds”

The figurative language found here is metaphor. Literally, star is an astronomical object that emerges light to everywhere. In this lyric, among the clouds that have white color, star become the center of attention due to its color. Related to this, It means the girl is so great and amazing person. People know that star is big and radiates light to the universe. So, the girl is like a star.

#### Lyric 3

“And when our eyes they finally met”

This lyric means the two people in the song see each other in an occasion. It can be in a party or in school. They meet and accidentally see one another. The figurative language found here is personification. In this sentence, there is a saying that their eyes can meet. Meet is a performance can be done by human.

#### Lyric 4

“I could see our story miles ahead”

This lyric literally means someone can see his journey of life when he takes a walk. The figurative language found here is symbol. The lyric here uses ‘miles’ to show the length of journey they are about to pass. He compares miles with long road.

#### Lyric 5

“You showed me world I never knew”

The figurative language found here is metaphor. In metaphor, someone associates a thing with something bigger to see how meaningful the thing is. Lyricist compares things or stuff with the world. World means ‘everything’ and ‘all’, bigger compared to anything. The lyricist shows that there is something bigger he does not know being viewed by a person loved by him.

#### Lyric 6

“You turned my darkness into blue”

Darkness means dimness, no light. Blue is the color of sky and sea. The figurative language found here is metaphor. Lyricist compares sadness and happiness into darkness and blue. As we know, blue sky means bright mood. From this lyric, lyricist tries to show his grief, sorrow has been turned into happiness, joy, and blissfulness.

#### Lyric 7

“And I feel 10 feet tall”

10 feet tall is a height. Usually, something with 10 feet tall can be a ceiling or ladder. The figurative language found here is hyperbole. In hyperbole, the thing is made to exaggeration. Being happy is exaggerated to being so tall. The lyric shows how happy and proud the man and how good he is feeling. Feels like he is in the sky to show how much happy he is.

#### Lyric 8

“Since you said you'd be my all”

Literally, the lyric means the girl said she wants to be his everything. The figurative language found here is synecdoche. In synecdoche, a word is used to represent a whole of things. It is classified as synecdoche because ‘my all’ mentioned here represents that the girl will be his girl or wife (a person). All here represents girl or wife.

#### Lyric 9

“You're magical”

This lyric means the girl is enchanting. The man is awestruck by the beauty. The figurative language found here is hyperbole. Hyperbole is always exaggerates what comes to someone visual. This lyric is classified as hyperbole because the lyricist wants to show how amazing and mesmerizing the girl is by saying ‘magical’.

#### Lyric 10

“You steal the show, my heart aglow”

This lyric means someone steals the attention of all people in the place, makes someone else’s heart contented and thrilled. The figurative language found here is hyperbole as well. Because of being so mesmerized by the girl’s beauty, the man’s attention focuses on the girl until his heart happy. The word used in the lyric using hyperbole to make listener feel how beautiful the girl is.

#### Lyric 11

“The way you move, I’m lost in you.”

From this lyric, the style of a girl’s move is being depicted and making the guy who sees it carried away by the situation. Lost here literally disappeared. Disappeared in a girl. The figurative language found here is hyperbole. The lyric says the man too mesmerized by the girl so he said he lost in her.

#### Lyric 12

“My heart is here to stay”

Literally, this lyric means the man's heart is always in the same place which is inside the body. However, actually this lyric means his heart (not his liver) is always waiting for the girl. From this sentence, the figurative language found is personification. Human can stay somewhere. In any place they want. This lyric tries to utter that man's heart want to be with the girl."

#### Lyric 13

"I would sing a thousand love songs, but none would measure up to you."

In this lyric, literally the man wants to sing literally a thousand love songs to the girl to show his love but to make the girl happier, he said it would not be enough. Litotes is the figurative language found here. A thousand songs cannot be compared to the girl, said the man. Like the meaning of litotes, the thousand love songs made smaller although actually they are a lot of songs and it may enough for the girl.

#### Lyric 14

"I could write a thousand stories of all the times I fell for you."

Literally, The lyricist can write many stories even thousands of the times he fell in love to a woman. This lyric shows hyperbole in the way that the man falls n love to the girl so many many times. To exaggerate it, he stated the falling in love process happened in thousand stories. Therefore it is hyperbole. There is always exaggeration in hyperbole.

#### Lyric 15

"I would brave the fiercest ocean to my find my way back to you."

Literally, the lyricist will sail the most tumultuous ocean by boat to find the way to come back to his origin. However, actually this lyric means he can go through any rough situation to go back to his half. This lyric contains personification. Here, it is explained that the ocean is fierce. We know that fierce is character that human has." Beside personification, it also contains hyperbole to show his perseverance to chase after his girl no matter what by saying fiercest ocean.

#### Lyric 16

"I would cross the darkest desert for you to know I'm here for you."

Literally, the man here would walk to desert even if it is hot and hard to. This lyric contains hyperbole. In fact, this sentence means the man in the song would like to face any problems and obstacles that might block him in the trial of meeting the girl. It is shown by words of darkest desert, darkest desert means the worst problem might happen. It is known by people that desert is a place less of water, extremely hot. It is seldom human can survive in desert due to the lack of water. The lyricist wants to show his strong determination, therefore he uses hyperbole.

### CONCLUSION

From analyzing this song, there are seven figurative languages found. They are paradox, litotes, metaphor, personification, symbol, synecdoche, and hyperbole. The most dominant figurative language is hyperbole with six findings. The second mostly used figurative language is metaphor and personification with 3 (three) findings for each. Next is litotes, paradox, symbol and synecdoche with 1 (one) finding for each. With hyperbole as the most used figurative language, it can be concluded that lyricist has strong willing to reveal how much love he has. He has strong emotion to be shown and to be heard through lexicons and figure of speech. The thrill of love can be felt in every lyric moreover the ones using hyperbole. Generally, with these figurative languages, the expression of the singer become more beautiful and deeper. 'Thousand



love songs' impresses listeners with its choice of words and figurative languages so listener can feel the depth of love that singer wants to convey. Listeners can feel how beautiful the girl the man loves and how deep the adoration the man has to her through the beautiful language. After analyzing the figurative language inside the song, now people can understand and comprehend the hidden meaning behind this song lyric.

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