

The Study of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's Lyrics in the 'Folklore' Album: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

Being considered as one prominent literary works, songs laden with figurative language are composed to imply deeper meaning of what is being said. Therefore, this research aims to classify the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album, to analyse the implicature of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album, and to analytically describe the associative meaning of Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album. This study utilised Kennedy's Theory of Figurative language, Grice's Theory of Implicature as well as Leech's Theory of Associative Meanings. These theories uncovered how non-literal language in Taylor Swift's songs influences lyrical interpretation. This present study adopted a qualitative research method whereby the researcher conducted content analysis on the selected lyrics excerpts from the selected album to achieve the research objectives. Consequently, based on the findings, it was found that metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative language with a frequency of 31.40% while connotative meaning is the most common associative meaning with a frequency of 14.79%. Furthermore, the intended meaning of a figurative phrase can be interpreted with a slight context on what is implied through implicature pragmatics. Therefore, this study revealed that using figurative language in songs connects writers and listeners on a deeper level as it creates new connections between images, ideas or concepts that are not typically associated together with.

Keywords: *Figurative Language, Associative Meaning, Song lyrics*

1.0 Introduction

Nowadays, songs can be regarded as one prominent literary work. Hornby et al., (2005, as cited in Theresia Rospita Dwi Utami, 2021) referred to song lyrics as a type of poetry that describes one's innermost thoughts and emotions. Similar to poetry, the lyrics of a song are written to embody the singer's voice to convey messages in terms of attitudes, feelings, and personal aspirations. Songs are not only written for entertainment purposes but also to allow the listeners to relate to them. Some listeners may even depict their daily lives with distinct memories and thoughts through the lyrics of a song.

Furthermore, song lyrics tend to be written with hidden meanings. While song lyrics are intended to convey messages, it still requires the listeners to understand the in-depth meaning. Although they are left with open interpretation by the listeners, one way to understand the lyrics is through figurative language. Oftentimes, composers incorporate figurative language in their lyrics to imply that there is a deeper meaning behind what is being said. Figurative language is any form of speech that deviates from the conventional, literal means of describing people or things (Tira Nur Fitria, 2018). Rahim (2019, as cited in Erniyanti Nur

Fatahhela Dewi et al., 2020) explained that words used in figurative language are frequently used in ways that allow them to be equated, compared, or linked to meanings that are not connected. According to Noor Frida Loveana et al. (2021), lyrics that incorporate figurative language frequently employ uncommon phrases and imagery that defies simple word interpretation. There are five main branches of figurative language used in literary works, namely metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism. Other forms of figurative language include alliteration, cliché, idiom, metonymy, onomatopoeia, and synecdoche.

1.1 Problem statement

Figurative language used in songs serves as one of the most effective literary devices for artists to portray the dynamics of social change. Usually, the words in song lyrics are carefully chosen to enhance the music and attract the listeners' interest as the songwriters attempt to convey messages through the lyrics.

Previously, researchers studied figurative languages in various literary works, such as poems, songs, and movies. Most of the time, similar analyses of figurative language in song lyrics have been conducted with typically two common objectives, (1) to distinguish the types of figures of speech and (2) to analyse the functions of the figurative language used. Furthermore, these researchers also tend to identify the most dominant figurative language found in the selected song lyrics. Aside from that, when studies are done on song lyrics analysis, researchers also tend to relate the associative meaning of the lyrics with semantics. This indicates literary scholars may opine that figurative language analyses are only connected with semantics. Similarly, there are several figurative language analyses of Taylor Swift's songs. For instance, Theresia Rospita Dwi Utami (2021) also analysed figurative language in Taylor Swift's song lyrics. However, her research mainly focuses on the use of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's song 'Speak Now' through the intended meaning and theme constructed in the said song. Another study on Taylor Swift's song lyrics analysis by Wilya Setiawati and Maryani (2018) aims to identify the figurative language used in the lyrics of three selected songs from the 'Red' album and describe the contextual meaning of the song lyrics.

As of today, there has not been many studies on figurative language in songs that focus on implicature in pragmatics. Literary scholars tend to focus more on semantic analysis of song lyrics rather than pragmatics. Hence, this may cause misinterpretation of figurative language and its meaning due to a lack of previous research that intends to study the deeper meaning of the song lyrics. However, the lack of studies on this topic is not generally the main cause of misinterpretation of figurative language and its meaning. This is because misinterpretation of this literary device can occur when a reader is unable or lacks skills to distinguish figurative language from literal language. Therefore, this study aims to close the existing academic gap by not only identifying and classifying the figurative language found in Taylor Swift's song lyrics but also by analysing the implicature of figurative language in Taylor Swift's song lyrics.

Oftentimes, figurative language is deemed uninteresting or too complex among ESL learners. However, several studies have successfully proven that this perception shows little to no relevance to the current advent of figurative language in modern literary works, such as movie films and songs (Salwa & Ayu Liskinasih, 2016; Muhammad Sul Khan Habibi, 2016). In relation to that Salwa and Ayu Liskinasih (2016) in their study, claimed that the majority of the students prefer to learn figurative language through songs. It was found that these students agreed that analysing figurative language in song lyrics improved their comprehension of learning figurative language. They concluded that the use of songs has been shown to improve the students' comprehension, motivation, self-confidence, and autonomy in learning figurative language. Muhammad Sul Khan Habibi (2016) also stated one significant way to help students improve their comprehension of figurative language is to understand the study of meanings in-depth as this will prevent misinterpretation in meaning. Therefore, it has been established that the use of figurative language can enhance learners' language skills, broaden their vocabulary, and increase their knowledge.

1.2 Research questions

To discuss the analysis of this study, the researcher developed three research questions:

- a) What are the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album?
- b) What is the associative meaning of Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album?
- c) What is the implicature of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's lyrics in 'Folklore' album?

2.0 Literature review

This section provides reviews of related theories and studies that bring significance to the study as they were utilised as the basis of this research.

2.1 Figurative language

This present research focused on the use of figurative language meaning. In relation to that, the theory of figurative language by Kennedy (1979) allows the researcher to analyse the words with non-literal meaning in the song lyrics. The figurative language theory is the core that is employed to analyse the figurative language found in Taylor Swift's song lyrics in 'Folklore' album.

In his book entitled *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, Kennedy (1979) defined figurative language as "language that uses the figure of speech". He referred to figurative language as a means of speaking that deviates from the literal interpretation of the word. According to Kennedy (1979), figurative language can be categorised into three classifications, namely comparative, contradictive, and correlative. Comparative figurative language consists of the most common ones which are personification, met-

aphor, and simile. Meanwhile, hyperbole, litotes, paradox, and irony are classified into contradictive figurative language and correlative figurative language including metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allusion, and ellipsis.

Firstly, the comparative figurative language includes personification, metaphor, and simile. Kennedy (1979) described personification as figurative language whereby an object, animal, or abstract is humanised. For instance, “The leaves of the tree are waving back at me,”. The word ‘waving’, which is a human characteristic, is used to describe the leaves. Thus, this indicates the word contains a connotative meaning. Next, metaphor, as defined by Kennedy (1979), is when something that is stated does not indicate the literal meaning. For example, “I struggled to keep my head above the watery grave that almost engulfed me,”. This sentence indicates that that person is drowning whereby the phrase ‘watery grave’ refers to the river, lake, or sea. Furthermore, simile is often used to compare the resemblance of two things (Kennedy, 1979). As an example, “Like a jolt of electricity, the pain shot through my veins”. The phrase ‘like a jolt of electricity’ is used by the songwriter to describe stinging pain.

On the other hand, there are four types of figurative language that were identified as contradictory, namely hyperbole, litotes, paradox, and irony. As stated by Kennedy (1979), hyperbole is used to exaggerate or put emphasis on something. “I’m freezing to death” is an example of hyperbole whereby ‘freezing to death’ is used to exaggeratingly describe the extreme cold one is feeling. In comparison to hyperbole as an overstatement, litotes is an understatement of when someone uses the negative of a word ironically. For instance, “He is not the brightest among his classmates,”. Since the word ‘bright’ is another synonym for ‘clever’, this simply means that the person is not very clever compared to his classmates. Next, Kennedy (1979) suggested that paradox is concerned with a sentence that appears to be self-contradictory at first but eventually makes sense after further consideration. For example, “A little goes a long way” signifies that using a small amount of something will suffice. In addition, irony indicates a presentation of an idea can contradict its intended meaning. For instance, “The fire hydrant is on fire!” is an example of irony. This is because, generally, a fire hydrant is expected to put out a fire. However, in this case, it cannot serve its designated purpose as it caught on fire itself.

Lastly, correlative figurative language typically consists of metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, allusion, and ellipsis. Metonymy refers to a form of a figure of speech whereby a word is replaced by another that is closely linked to its original definition. For instance, the word ‘cover’ can indicate bed sheets or blankets. Next, synecdoche, as affirmed by Kennedy (1979), occurs when a part is used to refer to the whole or vice versa. For example, if someone says, “Check out my kicks!”, this could either mean that they just acquired some kicking skills and intend to show them off or they want the other person to look at their new pair of shoes. Moreover, a symbol signifies an object that refers to something more abstract. For example, the rose is a symbol of love. In this case, the rose does not represent love in itself; it represents the idea of love. Oth-

er than that, allusion is the art of using words to refer to something else, but not directly. For example, a songwriter may write "He gives me a Cheshire cat smile as he walks away," which alludes to the fictional cat character from Alice in Wonderland. Aside from that, an ellipsis is a figure of speech that omits words or parts of sentences. As an example, one could say "I want to go to the concert, but I can't." and the intended message in the sentence can still be conveyed by the audience.

2.2 Associative meaning

In this section, the researcher explained the definition and the types of associative meaning, namely connotative meaning, stylistic meaning, affective meaning, reflective meaning, and collocative meaning. In order to achieve the second objective of this study, the researcher implemented Geoffrey Leech's (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning. This theory helped the researcher to analytically describe the associative meaning of the song lyrics in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' Album.

Based on this theory, Leech (1985) claimed that associative meaning is temporal and varies depending on the individual's experiences. Associative meaning is classified into five types, including connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, and collocative meaning. Firstly, connotative meaning, as defined by Leech (1985), refers to what is communicated by virtue that is contained within an expression. For instance, 'blue' has connotative meanings such as 'colour' or 'sadness'. Secondly, the language used by people in communication that is related to the social conditions of the speaker's culture is referred to as social meaning (Leech, 1985). To put it simply, this meaning is concerned with several language variation aspects, such as dialect variations and style variations. For instance, 'home' is used for general meaning, while 'residence' is typically used in a formal setting. Thirdly, affective meaning is normally used to convey feelings or express attitudes to the hearer. For instance, utterances in a professional setting are normally measured based on politeness, such as, "Our most sincere apologies, we regret to inform you that we will not be progressing your application for the Internship Programme to the next stage." Next, according to Leech (1985), reflective meaning is defined as the emergence of meaning when one or more conceptual meanings respond to a different sense of the word. As an example, the sentence "I wish to have your confidence despite being a plus-sized person," indicates a backhanded compliment and contains a hidden meaning. Lastly, Leech (1985) argued that collocative meaning signifies the meaning that a word attains when it is associated with other words. For example, the word 'adorable' can be associated with 'pets' or 'toddlers. Based on these examples and explanations, it can be inferred that language oftentimes serves as a communication tool whereby it helps people to convey their thoughts and feelings based on the communicative value as proposed in Leech's (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning.

In conclusion, by incorporating Leech's (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning, the researcher could investigate and analytically describe the associative meanings of the song lyrics in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album.

2.3 Implicature

In this section, the researcher elaborated on the definition and the types of implicature, namely conversational and conventional implicature, as proposed by Paul Grice (1989). By employing this theory for the present research, the researcher was able to scrutinise the implicature of the figurative language found in the song lyrics in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' Album.

In essence, this theory discusses the distinction between what is meant literally by a sentence and what is only implied using the same phrase or sentence. According to Grice (1989), the Total Significance of an Utterance is the combination of what is said and what is implicated in an utterance of the same sentence. He affirms that implicature is concerned with a variety of ways whereby literally unspoken utterances can be interpreted. Hence, implicature is made up of conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Conversational implicature deals with something that is implied but left unstated in a discourse. This theory was initially developed by Grice in 1967 to elaborate and demonstrate how conversational implicature can be comprehended. To comprehend this type of implicature, it is important to understand Grice's theory on "meaning", which refers to natural and non-natural meaning. In addition to that, Wang (2011) describes natural meaning as the meaning that is normally perceived by the participants in discourse, meanwhile, non-natural meaning refers to the intended meaning of the speaker that must be deduced by the listener on their own. In relation to that, these participants are expected to adhere to the cooperative principle, the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. However, if one is found to be violating these, it must have been done intentionally. Correspondingly, conventional implicatures are not tied to the maxims in the same way that conversational implicatures are since their meaning is more influenced by convention than by circumstance.

According to Grice (1989), conversational implicature is normally prompted by "certain general aspects of conversation". Conversational implicature, as asserted by Grice (1989), refers to meanings that are constituted by cooperative activity between speaker and hearer. In other words, they are not just words but rather a way of speaking or communicating with others. Therefore, Lalić (2020) suggested that the hearer ought to discern the speaker's intention and understand the implicature. Furthermore, Grice (1989) identified that the Cooperative Principle and Maxims are significant in this type of implicature. The cooperative principle (CP) suggests that communication should be as clear and relevant to the audience as possible. In other words, the speaker should make their meaning as clear as possible so that their listener can understand what

they mean (Megah & Wahyuni, 2018). This simply indicates that it is important for the participants in discourse to be cooperative with each other.

With regard to this, the cooperative principle is concerned with four maxims, which are, maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. According to Grice (1989), the maxim of quantity proposes to contribute to the conversation as informative as is necessary. This means that one is expected to provide an informative response without saying too much or too little. Next, the maxim of quality is concerned with uttering something that is believed to be true. For example, the interlocutor is expected to respond only if they are certain of their answer. Moreover, Grice (1989) affirmed that the maxim of relation requires interlocutors to say only what is pertinent to the queries. This means that it is important to remain on the topic discussed without straying away. For instance, the question asked, and the answer given in a conversation must show relevancy to each other. Lastly, the maxim of manner requires the conversation to be brief, show clarity and avoid ambiguity. This can be demonstrated by giving a simple but clear and unambiguous response to something in a discourse. Nevertheless, in order to achieve a meaningful and effective conversation, interlocutors are expected to adhere to the rules of each maxim. However, if any rule is not followed, this will cause a violation of the maxim.

On the contrary, conventional implicature refers to “the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, besides helping to determine what is said” (Grice, 1989). In relation to that, Grice (1989) signified adverbs ‘therefore’ and conjunction ‘but’ may function as indicators to determine whether a particular statement provides a conventional implicature or not. For instance, conventional implicature may be constructed based on the ‘X, therefore, Y’ sentence. This can be supported with an illustration of an example in his book, *Studies in the Way of Words*, whereby he stated, “He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave.” This statement conventionally implicates, instead of literally stating that the man’s bravery stems from him being an Englishman. The presence of the word ‘therefore’ indicates that this statement is a conventional implicature. Although this form of statement with the word ‘therefore’ implies that X is the cause of Y, the speaker refuses to state the fact because they are concerned about the possibility that X would be true and Y untrue. Another example of conventional implicature is “She is intelligent but lazy.” Based on this sentence, it can be observed that it contains the word ‘but’, implying that her intelligence is in contrast with her productivity. Thus, this shows that it is rather ironic that she is both intelligent and lazy. To put it simply, the conventional implicature proposed by Grice demonstrates how they are conventionally connected to certain linguistic phrases or words.

As for the present study, the researcher analysed the implicatures of the figurative language of the song lyrics in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album using Grice’s Theory of Implicature. Considering how this study required the researcher to analyse song lyrics, it was more appropriate to apply the conventional implicature theory rather than the conversational theory in the analysis. This is because conventional implica-

ture is concerned with the non-literal meaning that implies what is meant without being stated explicitly. It could be used to convey complex thoughts or emotions in a very succinct way, by using hints and allusions which are more closely related to this present study.

3.0 Methodology

The researcher employed a qualitative method for the research design of this study. Qualitative research analyses non-numerical data and is typically associated with meaning. Crossman (2020) stated that qualitative research is done to allow researchers to study meanings, interpretations, symbols, as well as relations of social life. This study is descriptive research as it aims to identify the figurative language, analyse the implicature of the figurative language and describe the associative meaning of the song lyrics.

3.1 Research instrument

This study employed a coding template study as the research instrument. Content analysis is used to identify specific words, topics, or concepts in each set of qualitative data. The researcher utilises song lyrics in Taylor Swift’s ‘*Folklore*’ album as the material of this study. The lyrics of these songs will be analysed for pragmatic analysis. The coding template that was employed in this study is as follows:

Table 3.1: Example of Coding Schemes of Comparative Figurative Language

| Types of Comparative Figurative Language | Code |
|--|-------|
| Personification | Pers. |
| Metaphor | Meta. |
| Simile | Sim. |

Table 3.2: Example of Coding Schemes of Contradictory Figurative Language

| Types of Contradictory Figurative Language | Code |
|--|-------|
| Hyperbole | H |
| Litotes | L |
| Paradox | Para. |
| Irony | I |

Table 3.3: Examples of Coding Schemes of Correlative Figurative Language

| Types of Correlative Figurative Language | Code |
|--|------|
| Metonymy | M |

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| | |
|------------|------|
| Synecdoche | Syn. |
| Symbol | Sym. |
| Allusion | A |
| Ellipsis | E |

Table 3.4: Examples of Coding Schemes of Associative Meaning

| Types of Associative Meaning | Code |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Connotative Meaning | Con. M |
| Social Meaning | SM |
| Affective Meaning | AM |
| Reflective Meaning | RM |
| Collocative Meaning | Col. M |

Table 3.5: Data Analysis Coding for Comparative Figurative Language

| Lyric excerpts | Pers. | Meta. | Sim. |
|--|-------|-------|------|
| “Loving him is like trying to change your mind once you’re already flying through the free fall” | | | ✓ |

Table 3.6: Data Analysis Coding for Contradictory Figurative Language

| Lyric excerpts | H | L | Para. | I |
|------------------------|---|---|-------|---|
| “Faster than the wind” | ✓ | | | |

Table 3.7: Data Analysis Coding for Correlative Figurative Language

| Lyric excerpts | M | Syn. | Sym. | A | E |
|---------------------|---|------|------|---|---|
| “Loving him is red” | | | ✓ | | |

Table 3.8: Data Analysis Coding for Associative Meaning

| Types of Figurative Language | Lyric excerpts | Types of Associative Meaning | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|----|----|----|--------|
| | | Con. M | SM | AM | RM | Col. M |
| Metaphor | The rust the grew between telephones | ✓ | | | | |

3.2 Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure for this research involves several steps. First, the researcher listened to the songs in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album on an online music application, namely Apple Music, in order to understand the lyrics. Next, the researcher retrieved the lyrics of the selected songs from Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album from a musical website called genius.com. Genius.com is one of the established websites that provides song lyrics used globally. Then, the researcher carefully read and analysed the lyrics of the selected songs from Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ Album. The figurative language used in the lyrics will be identified and the researcher filtered only the lines in the songs that contain figurative language to be selected for this study. The selected lines were classified according to their type of figurative language according to Kennedy’s (1979) Theory of Figurative Language in a table for discussion. Based on the selection, the data was then tabulated into another table for associative meaning, whereby the lyric excerpts were also classified into their respective type of associative meaning as proposed in Leech’s (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning. The data samples used for the third research question were selected from the tabulated associative meaning data.

4.0 Findings

This section presents the findings of the study and the data analysis based on the selected theories elaborated in the literature review.

4.1 Types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s lyrics in the ‘Folklore’ album

The first research question aims to classify the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s lyrics in ‘Folklore’ album. Out of the 12 types of figurative language based on Kennedy’s (1979) Theory of Figurative Language, 9 different types of figurative language have been identified in the lyrics of the songs in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album, namely personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, and allusion.

Table 4.1: Total Frequency of Figurative Language

| Types of Figurative Language | Occurrences | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Personification | 7 | 8.14 |
| Metaphor | 27 | 31.40 |
| Simile | 12 | 14.00 |
| Hyperbole | 22 | 25.58 |
| Litotes | 0 | 0 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Paradox | 5 | 5.81 |
| Irony | 0 | 0 |
| Metonymy | 4 | 4.65 |
| Synecdoche | 2 | 2.32 |
| Symbol | 4 | 4.65 |
| Allusion | 3 | 3.50 |
| Ellipsis | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 86 | 100 |

In total, there are 86 occurrences of figurative language of all categories: comparative, contradictory and correlative. The findings in Table 4.1 reveal that the most common figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album is metaphor with 27 (31.40%) overall occurrences. Following closely behind, hyperbole recorded the second highest frequency of 22 (25.58%). Meanwhile, simile was identified with 12 (14.00%) occurrences and personification approximately 7 (8.14%) occurrences in this album. Additionally, paradox is identified with 5 (5.81%) occurrences. Alongside that, metonymy and symbol share the same frequency of usage in this album which is 4 (4.65%) and allusion is identified with 3 (3.50%) occurrences. Finally, synecdoche is identified as the least common figurative language used in this album with only 2 (2.32%) total occurrences. Thus, referring to Kennedy’s (1979) Theory of Figurative Language, which consists of 12 types of figurative language, only 9 out of 12 types of figurative language were identified in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album, namely personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, paradox, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, and allusion. The remaining types of figurative language that were not found in this album are litotes, irony, and ellipsis.

4.2 Associative meaning of Taylor Swift’s lyrics in the ‘Folklore’ album

Next, the second research question intends to unveil the associative meaning of Taylor Swift’s lyrics in the ‘Folklore’ album. Based on the findings, several lyric excerpts from Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album have been selected to be analytically described according to its associative meaning from Leech’s (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning. Out of five types of associative meaning in the theory, only three kinds, including connotative meaning, affective meaning, and collocative meaning were identified in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album.

Table 4.2: Total Frequency of Associative Meaning in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ Album

| Types of Associative Meaning | Occurrences | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Connotative Meaning | 43 | 70.49 |
| Social Meaning | 0 | 0 |
| Affective Meaning | 9 | 14.75 |
| Reflected Meaning | 0 | 0 |
| Collocative Meaning | 9 | 14.75 |
| Total | 61 | 100 |

Based on Table 4.2, 61 lyric excerpts were selected to be analysed and classified into their respective types of associative meaning. Prevalently, connotative meaning was identified to have a total of 43 (70.49%) occurrences. On the contrary, the findings depicted that both collocative meaning and affective meaning share the same frequency of 9 (14.75%) out of 61 occurrences. Therefore, this shows that connotative meaning is the most dominant type of associative meaning in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album.

4.3 Implicature of figurative language Taylor Swift’s lyrics in the ‘Folklore’ album

Finally, the third research question was designed to analyse the implicature of figurative language Taylor Swift’s lyrics in ‘Folklore’ album. Selected lyric excerpts from the album are presented in Table 4.3 to unfold the implicature of the figurative language pragmatics of the lyrics based on Grice’s Theory of Implicature.

Table 4.3: Implicature of the Figurative Language

| Types of Figurative Language | Lyric Excerpts | Implicature |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Hyperbole | You know the greatest films of all time were never made | The songwriter believes that a perfect relationship does not exist |
| Metaphor | Second, third, and hundredth chances, Balancin' on breaking branches | ‘Breaking branches’ is a metaphorical phrase for ‘broken trust’. This indicates the struggle of two people in an almost failed relationship to trust each other again despite the many chances given |

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| Metaphor | We gather stones, never knowing what they’ll mean, Some to throw, some to make a diamond ring | The ‘stones’ may refer to ‘romantic partners’ whereby it can be implied that the songwriter goes through one relationship after another until they find the one they can be wedded to as ‘diamond ring’ can be associated with marriage |
| Simile | And it’s hard to be at a party when I feel like an open wound | Everyone appears to live their lives when the songwriter struggles to heal from their hardships while feeling vulnerable |
| Metaphor | You’re a flashback in a film reel on the one screen in my town | The ‘film reel’ may be associated with writer’s memories and ‘the one screen’ refers to the songwriter’s mind, whereby metaphorically, this implies that the memories of the addressee replays in her mind over and over like a film reel |
| Hyperbole | And my words shoot to kill when I’m mad | A hyperbolic description of how powerful words could be, especially when one is feeling angry as what is uttered may hurt the addressee |

Based on Table 4.3, certain words are associated with another to convey the meaning behind the lyrics. The selected excerpts for the findings consist of hyperbole, metaphor, and simile. Some of the figurative phrases, namely metaphor and hyperbole, require context to be interpreted, meanwhile simile provides slight similarities in the comparison of the two things.

5.0 Discussions

5.1 Research question 1

In this study, the first research question entails to analyse the songs in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album and classify the lyric excerpts into the types of figurative language according to Kennedy’s (1979) Theory of Figurative Language. For each type of the most dominant figurative language, one lyric excerpt was selected to be analysed. Therefore, this section discusses the four most dominant types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album, namely metaphor, hyperbole, simile and personification.

Metaphor

The findings of this study revealed that metaphor recorded the highest frequency of occurrences of 31.40%. This indicates that metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative language used in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folk-

lore' album. Similarly, in a study on "An Analysis of Figurative Language used in the lyric of "A Whole New World" by Zayn Malik and Zhavia Ward" by Siti Norsolihat and Evie Kareviati (2020), the findings indicated that the most used figurative language in the lyric is metaphor with a percentage of 40%. Based on the context of their findings, they opined that, given that metaphor is a type of analogy figurative language and that this song is a creative song about a princess and Aladdin in a flying carpet, it should come as no surprise that the songwriter uses metaphor frequently. Correspondingly, in another study on figurative language analysis by Deni Arnita Hulu et al. (2021) entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language in Ariana Grande's album "Thank U, Next," it was also found that metaphor is the most dominant figurative language used in the album. This shows that the "Thank U, Next" album mostly incorporates metaphor in the lyrics. For this present study, an example of metaphor was identified in a lyric excerpt from Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album,

*"We never painted by the numbers, baby,
but we were making it count,"*

Taylor Swift – The 1

Based on the excerpt above, the phrase 'painted by the numbers' is not meant to be taken literally. In the literal sense, paint by numbers is a form of art whereby one is required to paint each spot according to the numbers provided on the painting template. Consequently, this phrase implies that the songwriter and their romantic partner did not have a typical relationship like others, but they were cherishing every moment they had together by 'making it count'. Thus, a clear relationship between the two concepts can be depicted through this lyric excerpt.

Davidson (2001, as cited in Nur Muhammad Ardiansyah and Vidya Mandarani, 2018) affirmed that metaphor is a common type of figurative language as it can be found in almost every utterance in a language. This can be supported with Yaito and Termjai's (2021) view on metaphor being the most common type of figurative language in British and American pop songs. It was found that the frequent use of metaphors in pop songs is most likely due to the fact that metaphor is regarded as how individuals think and react to their surroundings instead of merely language factors. Therefore, it is established that metaphors are incorporated in songs by selecting suitable terms that are euphemised in order to implicitly deliver the meaning of the lyrics.

Hyperbole

Based on the findings of the study, hyperbole recorded a frequency of 25.58%. This means that hyperbole is the second most used figurative language in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album. In order to illustrate hyperbole, a lyric excerpt from the album containing this figurative language was selected as follows,

"We'll move to India forever,"

Taylor Swift – Seven

Referring to the lyric excerpt above, the word 'forever' indicates that this lyric contains basic hyperbole as it can be considered a time domain. The hyperbole in this lyric excerpt represents deliberate exaggeration whereby the songwriter wishes to move to India from the beginning until the end of time. In truth, one would not be able to move to a certain place forever literally, but the word 'forever' exaggerates the statement by creating emphasis on the songwriter's desire. Thus, hyperbole is used to describe bizarre things in order to convey meaning beyond the words used (Putu Indira Cika Mantika Sari et al., 2022). Therefore, based on the lyric excerpt above, the songwriter exaggerates their intention to add emphasis.

According to Maudy Yaser Fajrin and Aseptina Parmawati (2021), hyperbole refers to an exaggeration that is normally incorporated in writing to highlight a point. Besides, this statement can be supported by Unpris Yastanti et al., (2018), whereby they opined that, although hyperbole is not meant to be perceived literally, it is an effective tool to elevate a sense of action, quality or feeling in fiction writing. Knickerbocker's and Reninger (1963, as cited in Riky Astina et al., 2021) also asserted that hyperbole is regarded as one of the most common types of figurative language as it is prevalent in everyday life and the entertainment industry. Evidently, hyperbolic expressions in songs elicit amusing reactions from listeners due to the exaggeration of the lyrics.

Simile

Similes are used to compare two things by highlighting their similarities (Noor Frida Loveana et al., 2021). In the Theory of Figurative Language, Kennedy (1979, as cited in Rohmah Desi Ekoyono, 2019) described simile as a comparison of two things that can be identified by some connective or verbs. In addition to that, Laila Alviana Dewi (2020) affirmed that similes and metaphors can be similarly defined. However, the distinction between similes and metaphors is that similes are statements that typically contain comparative words, such as, 'like' or 'as', meanwhile metaphors compare two different things without the said indicators. According to the findings of the study, simile was revealed to have 14.00% frequency in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album. One of the examples of simile found in the album is as follows,

“And when I felt like I was an old cardigan under someone’s bed,”

Taylor Swift – Cardigan

Based on the example above, ‘like I was an old cardigan’ is classified as a simile due to the presence of the word ‘like’ that functions to indicate a comparison. In this phrase, the songwriter compares herself to an old cardigan under someone’s bed as the feeling of being neglected, implying the fact that an old cardigan under someone’s bed is unused and left to be forgotten.

Correspondingly, in a study by Bintang Rizki Mukti and Deden Novan Setiawan Nugrahan (2022) entitled “Figurative Language Analysis in “Sing 2” Movie by Garth Jennings: A Semantics Study”, the authors suggested that incorporating similes may elicit an exciting connection in reader’s mind. Thus, this indicates that instead of stating the feeling of abandonment straightforwardly, it was described in a rather interesting manner by incorporating simile into the lyrics.

Personification

The findings of this study show that personification recorded a frequency of 9.19% in Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album. For example, a personification can be identified through a lyric excerpt from Taylor Swift’s ‘Folklore’ album,

“Holiday House sat quietly on that beach,”

Taylor Swift – The Last Great American Dynasty

In the above example, ‘sat quietly’ is a personified term. This is because, logically, a house does not possess the ability to sit as it is a concrete, inanimate object. Additionally, the action of sitting is typically involved with human beings. In relation to that, Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963, as cited in Charissa Bonita Yenita Resi and Adrallisman, 2021) affirmed that personification occurs when a lifeless object, an animal, or abstract ideas are described to function like humans in order to give animation, vividness, and closeness to those things that are typically thought of as impersonal and do not possess human traits. Thus, the meaning behind this lyric does not indicate that the holiday house is sitting quietly on the beach, in fact, the songwriter intends to describe where the holiday house is located.

Hence, this type of figurative language affects the way readers, or in this case, listeners, imagine things based on the lyrics. Nida ul Zafar et al. (2022) referred to personification as a stylistic technique that is incorporated in writings to personify inanimate objects. In accordance, Unpris Yastanti et al., (2018) also asserted that inserting personification in one’s writing elevates the interest of the reader as the personifica-

tion brings the description to be brought to life. Therefore, this shows that incorporating personification in songs enhances listeners' imagination to depict the meaning of the song.

5.2 Research question 2

On the other hand, the second research question aims to analytically describe the associative meaning of the songs in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album with Leech's (1985) Theory of Associative Meaning being the basis for this study. For each type of associative meaning found in this album, one lyric excerpt was selected to be analysed. Thus, this section unfolds the analysis of the associative meaning behind the lyrics in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album, which are connotative meaning, collocative meaning and affective meaning with their respective descriptive analyses.

Connotative Meaning

According to the findings of the study, connotative meaning recorded a frequency of 70.49%, making it the most dominant type of associative meaning in this analysis. Similarly, in a research conducted by Nur Ma'rifah Fahri (2020) entitled "An Analysis of Associative Meaning in Glee TV Series Main Song", the findings revealed that connotative meaning is the most frequently used with 9 out of 22 occurrences. On the same note, connotative meaning was also revealed to be the most dominant in the study of "The Analysis of Semantics Meaning found in Comments of Instagram Account of Info Denpasar" by Ni Wayan Swarniti (2021). Subsequently, the author reported that the commenters on the account tend to express their problems implicitly. Thus, to illustrate connotative meaning, a lyric excerpt from Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album has been selected to be connoted as follows,

"I can go anywhere I want. Anywhere I want, just not home."

Taylor Swift – My Tears Ricochet

In the above example, the lyric excerpt has a connotative meaning due to the fact that it contains a figurative meaning rather than the literal meaning. Derived from the Oxford dictionary, the definition of 'home' is a place where one resides permanently. However, the connotation of the word 'home' in this excerpt suggests a meaning beyond dictionary definitions. Lyrically, the song entails a narrative revolving around divorce told by the ghost of a dead woman. Based on the selected excerpt, the word 'home' does not literally mean a house, instead, it refers to a 'romantic partner' whereby the narrator implies that her relationship with her partner has ended due to her death. Usually, a normal conception of a ghost is that it can haunt a specific person or place, however, this line indicates the opposite. Therefore, the connotation of this

excerpt suggests that the narrator can haunt anywhere she wishes but she is never able to return to her partner anymore now that she is dead.

In essence, connotative meaning is regarded as the use of a certain word that suggests a different association with the actual meaning of the word. Connotative meaning functions to establish the mood in a writing piece that contains figurative language because helps to emphasise the context of the writing. Hence, connotative meaning helps readers to depict the meaning of figurative language incorporated in the writing to allow them to feel a certain way while reading.

Collocative Meaning

The findings indicate that collocative meaning is used in the album with a percentage of 14.75%. For example, a collocative meaning can be identified through a lyric excerpt from Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album as follows,

“Even on my worst day, did I deserve, babe, all the hell you gave me?”

Taylor Swift – My Tears Ricochet

In the above example, the phrase 'worst day' indicates that this is a collocation. This is because the adjective 'worst' depicts the poorest quality of something, such as 'worst choice', 'worst teacher', etc. Based on this example, the collocation describes that the songwriter questioned the mistreatment she received from her partner by comparing her situation of hardship to 'hell' implying that she was in despair. This can be seen through Deni Kurniawan Harefa and Immanuel Ginting's (2018) perspective whereby collocative meaning is referred to as the umbrella term which consists of abundant examples of co-occurrence of meaning. Consequently, this kind of meaning occurs when co-occurrence differences in linguistics take place in an expression.

Affective Meaning

Similar to collocative meaning results, this type of associative meaning shares the same frequency of 14.75% in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album. An instance of affective meaning can be identified through a lyric excerpt from the album as follows,

“I don't know anything, but I know I miss you,”

Taylor Swift – Betty

Referring to the lyric excerpt above, the affective meaning of the expression can be identified for this analysis with the word 'miss' serving as an indicator for affective meaning. In addition to that, the word 'miss' represents an emotion felt by the songwriter whereby the songwriter goes through the yearning for the addressee in their absence. Hence, this means that the songwriter implements affective meaning in order to express their feelings and explicitly convey the meaning through the conceptual content of the words used.

5.3 Research question 3

Other than that, the third research question of this study involves analysing the implicature of the figurative language in Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' album. In accordance, the analysis is conducted based on Grice's (1989) Theory of Implicature. Therefore, this section provides the description of the interpretation of the selected lyric excerpts.

Implicature of Metaphor and Hyperbole

Implicature is defined as an expression that conveys a message other than what the speaker intended. Norhidayu Hasan et al., (2021), suggests that implicature employs metaphors, proverbs, and other literary devices to create figurative sentences. Consequently, understanding the elements of the figurative or proverb that has been used is required for interpretation of the figurative sentence implicature.

"You're a flashback in a film reel on the one screen in my town,"

Taylor Swift – This Is Me Trying

In the example above, the lyric excerpt aims to convey metaphorically, this implies that the memories of the addressee replay in her mind over and over like a film reel. In accordance with the interpretation, the 'film reel' may be associated with the writer's memories and 'the one screen' refers to the songwriter's mind.

"And my words shoot to kill when I'm mad,"

Taylor Swift – This Is Me Trying

Referring to the example above, the lyric excerpt functions as a hyperbolic description of how powerful words could be, especially when one is feeling angry as what is uttered may hurt the addressee. The implicated meaning of the lyrics refers to the speaker possibly lashing out at the addressee which could have offended the addressee. In relation to that, lashing out on someone indicates a form of self-sabotage whereby the speaker might have ended up pushing away the addressee or the people who genuinely cared about them.

6.0 Recommendations

In essence, using figurative language in songs connects writers and listeners on a deeper level as it forges fresh connections between images, ideas or concepts that are not typically associated together with. Furthermore, figurative language in songs improves listeners' experience and helps them understand the lyrics better with the fresh insights offered and it also enhances one's ability to visualise the content in their minds. In relation to that, the researcher hopes that future researchers can utilise this analysis as reference to fill in the research gaps by comparing with other theories of figurative language. Aside from that, the scope of this study could be expanded in order to gain more justification as there are branches in linguistics that can be explored.

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