

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, the writer is going to discuss the theories of Figurative Language, Uses of Figurative Language, Types of Figurative Language, Music, “Cardigan,” “August” and “Betty” song, and the previous studies.

2.1 Figurative Language

In this chapter, the writer goes through with the underlying theories to support the subject of this research used for data analysis. The researcher has done some literature review in many sources such as books, journal and internet websites. This chapter attaches some definitions, descriptions, and elaborations as foundation of the study. The first theory of this thesis is Figurative Language.

Figurative language is a technique in writing and speech that conveys ideas in a non-literal, imaginative way, enhancing emotions, themes, and imagery. Rather than using straightforward meanings, it adds layers to help readers or listeners visualize and emotionally connect with concepts, making language more memorable and impactful. Key types include similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, and onomatopoeia. Similes compare two things using “like” or “as.” Metaphors directly equate two things, such as “Life is a journey,” to emphasize certain traits. Personification gives human qualities to non-human objects, like “The night crept in slowly,” while hyperbole uses exaggeration, as in “I’ve told you a million times.”

Recent scholarly definitions of figurative language highlight its significance as a cognitive tool, essential not only for rhetorical flourishes but also for shaping our thought processes. In their book *Interpreting Figurative Meaning* (Gibbs and Colston, 2012), argue that figurative language encompassing metaphors, similes, idioms, and other figures of speech is integral to human cognition. Their research suggests that figurative expressions are fundamental to how we conceptualize and process complex ideas, allowing individuals to communicate abstract thoughts and emotions in ways that are more vivid, nuanced, and accessible than literal language

alone. They stress that figurative language is not simply a matter of stylistic choice but is rooted in cognitive mechanisms that shape the way we experience and understand the world. According to Gibbs and Colston, figurative expressions facilitate the mental mapping of one concept onto another, making abstract ideas more concrete and easier to grasp.

Additionally, in a book *Figurative Language and Thought* (Katz *et al.*, 1998), expands on this by exploring how figurative language taps into deep cognitive processes, such as metaphorical reasoning. They assert that figurative expressions mirror the mental patterns people use to make sense of abstract or metaphorical concepts, and by engaging with figurative language, individuals draw from their sense of literacy to interpret meaning. The research highlights how figurative language helps people make connections between familiar experiences and new, unfamiliar ideas, which fosters greater understanding and communication.

These scholars collectively assert that figurative language is far more than a stylistic tool or decorative feature in speech and writing. It is an essential part of human cognition that enables us to express and interpret complex emotions, thoughts, and ideas in more impactful, multidimensional ways. Far from being limited to poetic or literary uses, figurative language plays a key role in everyday communication, problem-solving, and conceptual development.

2.2 Uses of Figurative Language

A Figurative language is a powerful tool in linguistics that enriches communication by going beyond literal meanings to convey abstract ideas, emotions, or relationships. It allows speakers and writers to create vivid imagery, emphasize ideas, and express complex concepts in a more relatable and engaging way. Figurative language serves various purposes across different forms of communication, from linguistic studies and everyday speech to media and advertising. Here are some of the uses of Figurative Language:

1. Enhancing Communication and Expression

Based on Gibbs, R. W., & Colston, H. L. (2012) in *Interpreting Figurative Meaning*, a figurative language enhances communication by making it more vivid, impactful, and relatable. It allows speakers and writers to simplify complex ideas and emotions through creative associations. For example, metaphors like "time is money" transform the abstract concept of time into a tangible, relatable resource, helping audiences connect with the idea on a deeper level. Similarly, similes such as "as brave as a lion" create immediate visual imagery, making descriptions more engaging and memorable.

This use of figurative language is particularly valuable in persuasion and storytelling, where emotional resonance is crucial. Politicians, advertisers, and public speakers often rely on metaphors and analogies to simplify complex topics and connect emotionally with their audiences. Figurative language's ability to condense multifaceted ideas into relatable imagery underscores its importance in effective communication across all domains.

2. Cultural Representation and Identity

Based on Colston, H. L., & Katz, A. N. (Eds.). (2005) in *Figurative Language Comprehension*, figurative language is deeply rooted in cultural experiences, reflecting the shared values, traditions, and worldviews of a community. Metaphors, idioms, and proverbs are often tied to specific cultural contexts, making them powerful markers of cultural identity. For example, the English idiom "raining cats and dogs" may seem nonsensical to non-native speakers, while other cultures have unique equivalents that resonate with their environmental or societal experiences, such as "it's raining rope" in Malagasy.

Linguists studying figurative language use these cultural expressions to explore how societies conceptualize their realities. They reveal the collective experiences that shape language and how language, in turn, preserves cultural identity. Figurative language thus serves as both a reflection and a repository of

cultural knowledge, making it an invaluable subject in anthropological linguistics and cross-cultural studies.

3. Creative and Literary Expression

Based on Gibbs, R. W., & Colston, H. L. (2012) in *Interpreting Figurative Meaning*, in literature, poetry, and other creative forms, figurative language is essential for crafting vivid imagery, evoking emotions, and exploring complex themes. Devices such as metaphors, similes, and personifications add layers of meaning that engage readers on multiple levels. For example, in Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" metaphor, life is likened to a theatrical performance, offering profound commentary on human roles and mortality.

Linguists analyzing figurative language in literature uncover how authors use these devices to enhance storytelling and thematic development. Figurative language adds aesthetic beauty and symbolic depth, making it an indispensable tool for creative expression and a rich area for linguistic study.

2.3 Types of Figurative Language

Figurative language includes a variety of techniques that go beyond the literal meaning of words to create more powerful, memorable, or vivid expressions. The classification of figurative language varies depending on the scholarly source or book, as different fields and authors emphasize various categories. Several scholars have provided theories categorizing the types of figurative language, and many of these works identify 10 essential types.

Scholars have developed detailed theories on the classification of figurative language, often identifying around ten fundamental types. Kennedy and Gioia's *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing* (August 1999) also outlines approximately ten essential figures, emphasizing their role in making language engaging and meaningful. Their list includes metaphor, simile, personification, irony, hyperbole, symbolism, synecdoche, metonymy, paradox, and oxymoron. This approach highlights how figurative language adds narrative depth and interpretive richness.

Tom McArthur's *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (May 14, 2018) identifies similar core types, such as metaphor, simile, personification, irony, hyperbole, symbolism, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, paradox, and alliteration. His focus is on the sensory and emotional dimensions of figurative language, underscoring its role in enhancing auditory, visual, and emotional appeal.

In summary, across these scholars and works, ten fundamental types of figurative language frequently cited include metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, irony, symbolism, metonymy, synecdoche, oxymoron, and paradox. This classification underscores the versatility and richness of figurative language in enhancing expressive and literary communication.

Across these scholars and sources, 10 fundamental types of figurative language frequently mentioned include:

1. Metaphor

According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson, 2008), a metaphor is not just a literary device but a fundamental way of understanding one concept in terms of another. It involves mapping knowledge from one domain (the source) to another domain (the target). In figurative language, a metaphor is a figure of speech that describes one thing as if it were another, highlighting a connection between two concepts without using comparison words such as "like" or "as." By directly equating the two, metaphors encourage readers or listeners to understand abstract ideas in relatable terms, often creating powerful imagery. For instance, in "Time is a thief," time is likened to a thief to emphasize how it takes moments from life subtly and irreversibly. Metaphors are central to both creative and everyday language, enabling complex ideas to be communicated with simplicity and emotional resonance.

2. Simile

As described in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Richards, 1936), a simile is a figure of speech that explicitly compares two unlike things using the words "like" or "as" to highlight similarities. A simile is a form of comparison that explicitly

uses the words "like" or "as" to connect two different things, emphasizing similarities between them. Similes are instrumental in creating vivid imagery and helping audiences visualize or emotionally connect with abstract concepts. For example, "Her smile was as bright as the sun" draws a parallel between the radiance of a smile and sunlight, evoking a clear and relatable image. By making such connections, similes not only enhance descriptive language but also add clarity, richness, and emotional depth to communication.

3. Personification

According to *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Abrams and Norton, 1961), personification attributes human characteristics to non-human entities, abstract ideas, or inanimate objects to create vivid imagery and emotional resonance. Personification assigns human qualities or actions to non-human entities, objects, or ideas, effectively bringing them to life and making them more relatable. This figure of speech enables writers to craft vivid, emotional, and imaginative descriptions. For instance, "The wind whispered through the trees" attributes the human ability to whisper to the wind, creating a serene and intimate atmosphere. Personification is widely used in literature, poetry, and storytelling to deepen readers' emotional engagement and foster creative visualization.

4. Hyperbole

In her book, *Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-based Study of Exaggeration* (Claridge, 2010), linguist Claudia Claridge provides an academically robust definition of hyperbole, describing it as "an expression exceeding the literal reality of what is being described, often to convey strong feelings or create a strong impression." Claridge's definition underscores the functional role of hyperbole in both everyday language and literary contexts, where it serves to heighten the communicative impact of speech or writing. Hyperbole transcends factual precision, instead leaning on imaginative and dramatic expression to make an idea memorable. For instance, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" emphasizes extreme hunger through a humorous and clearly exaggerated claim. Hyperbole enriches

language by adding emphasis and intensity, making descriptions more impactful and memorable.

5. Irony

In *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Booth, 1975), defines irony as a rhetorical device where the intended meaning is opposite to the literal meaning. Irony is a figure of speech where the intended meaning contrasts sharply with the literal meaning, often for humorous, emphatic, or thought-provoking effect. There are several types of irony, including verbal irony, where what is said is the opposite of what is meant, and situational irony, where the actual outcome is contrary to expectations. For examples, “A fire station burning down” is situational irony, as it is unexpected given the fire station’s purpose. Other example of irony is “A traffic cop gets a speeding ticket.” means that the person responsible for enforcing traffic laws ends up breaking them, which is unexpected. Irony adds depth, complexity, and often humor to language, encouraging readers to explore underlying meanings.

6. Symbolism

In *Anatomy of Criticism* (Frye, 1990), describes symbolism as the use of symbols to represent abstract concepts or ideas beyond their literal sense. Symbolism involves the use of symbols objects, actions, or characters to represent broader ideas or concepts, adding layers of meaning beyond the literal interpretation. For example, “The dove is a symbol of peace” uses the dove as a stand-in for the abstract idea of peace, making it more tangible and emotionally evocative. And other example is “A key” means unlocking new opportunities, knowledge, or secrets. Symbolism is a cornerstone of both literature and visual storytelling, enriching narratives by offering deeper interpretations and connections to universal themes.

7. Metonymy

In *A Grammar of Motives* (Burke, 1969), Kenneth Burke defines metonymy as a figure of speech in which one term is substituted for another that it is closely associated with. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is

used to represent another that is closely associated with it. This substitution creates a shorthand for complex ideas, simplifying expression while maintaining conceptual connections. For instance, "The crown will decide" uses "crown" as a metonym for the monarch or royal authority. Metonymy enriches language by drawing on established associations, allowing for concise and evocative expression.

8. Synecdoche

According to *Understanding Poetry* (Brooks and Warren, 1963), synecdoche is a figure of speech where a part represents the whole or vice versa. Synecdoche is a figure of speech where a part of something is used to refer to the whole, or vice versa. This device emphasizes a connection between the part and the whole, creating impactful imagery. For example, in "All hands on deck," "hands" refers to the sailors as a whole. Synecdoche provides a way to focus attention on a specific element while representing broader ideas, offering precision and depth in communication.

9. Oxymoron

As explained in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Abrams and Norton, 1961), an oxymoron is a combination of two contradictory terms to create a paradoxical effect, such as "deafening silence." Oxymorons highlight complexity or duality, encouraging readers to reflect on nuanced ideas. An oxymoron combines two seemingly contradictory terms to create a paradoxical effect that highlights complexity or duality. This juxtaposition provokes deeper reflection and encourages audiences to explore nuanced meanings. For example, "deafening silence" combines the opposing concepts of loudness and quiet to emphasize a profound stillness that feels overwhelming. Oxymorons are used to intrigue readers, add depth to descriptions, and convey multifaceted ideas in a succinct manner.

10. Paradox

A paradox is a statement, situation, or set of statements that, despite appearing logically valid and based on seemingly true premises, leads to conclusions that are contradictory, counterintuitive, or unacceptable. It challenges the boundaries of logic, reasoning, and common understanding. In her book *Paradox* (Cuonzo, 2014), Margaret Cuonzo, an esteemed philosopher specializing in paradoxes and logic, defines a paradox as "a set of mutually inconsistent claims, each of which seems true." For example, "This is the beginning of the end" seems contradictory at first, as beginnings and ends are opposites, but it effectively conveys the idea of something starting to conclude. Paradoxes are valuable for provoking thought, exploring ambiguity, and illuminating deeper truths within apparently contradictory ideas.

2.4 The Importance of Music in Figurative Language

Music has long been regarded as one of the most expressive art forms, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers to communicate universal themes and emotions. At the heart of this power lies figurative language an essential element in lyrics and composition that deepens the meaning, evokes emotions, and paints vivid imagery. Figurative language in music goes beyond the literal, using devices such as metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism to create layered interpretations that resonate with listeners on cognitive, emotional, and cultural levels. This essay explores the significance of music as a vehicle for figurative language and its multifaceted importance in communication, cultural preservation, and emotional expression.

1. Figurative Language as a Creative Tool in Music

Figurative language as a creative tool in music serves as a critical creative tool in music, enabling lyricists to convey complex ideas, abstract emotions, and intricate stories within the confines of a song. Unlike direct language, figurative language allows for multiple interpretations, giving listeners the freedom to connect lyrics to their own experiences. For instance, in Taylor Swift's song "Cardigan," the

metaphor “*You put me on and said I was your favorite*” transforms the cardigan into a symbol of comfort and nostalgia, representing a relationship filled with fleeting yet cherished memories. Such metaphors enrich the listener's understanding, turning a simple narrative into a poignant reflection on love and loss. Figurative language in music thus transforms words into art, allowing songwriters to craft compelling and emotionally resonant stories.

2. Emotional Depth Through Figurative Devices

Music's ability to evoke emotions is often heightened through figurative language. Devices like hyperbole, personification, and oxymorons intensify feelings, helping listeners to connect with the themes of a song. Hyperbole, for example, exaggerates emotions to emphasize their intensity, as seen in the Beatles' “*I want to hold your hand*” or Adele's “*I set fire to the rain.*” These lines transcend literal meaning, creating dramatic effects that mirror the overwhelming nature of love and heartbreak. This captures the duality of human emotions, reflecting the coexistence of joy and sorrow. Such devices add layers to music, making it a powerful medium for emotional expression.

3. Cognitive and Linguistic Impact of Figurative Language in Music

Music with figurative language stimulates cognitive engagement, challenging listeners to interpret layered meanings and draw connections. This interpretive process enhances language comprehension and cognitive flexibility, making music an educational tool. Children's songs often use figurative devices to teach concepts in a memorable way. For example, “*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*” employs personification and metaphor to captivate young minds while fostering an understanding of celestial objects. Figurative language in music thus contributes to cognitive and linguistic development, enhancing the appreciation of language's richness and versatility.

2.5 Songs of Folklore

The album *Folklore* by Taylor Swift comprises 16 tracks, each exploring intricate narratives and profound emotions. However, this research specifically

focuses on the songs “Cardigan,” “August,” and “Betty” due to their interconnected nature, which collectively narrates a love triangle from three distinct perspectives. These songs stand out because they share thematic and narrative continuity. “Cardigan” offers a reflective and nostalgic viewpoint, “August” presents the fleeting beauty of a summer romance, and “Betty” conveys a tale of regret and attempts at reconciliation. The selection highlights the ability of figurative language to enrich storytelling, making these tracks central to the study’s aim of examining the interplay between lyrical creativity and comprehending the trilogy narrative of the story from each perspective through the figurative language study.

1. Cardigan

"Cardigan" is a nostalgic, introspective ballad that tells the story of a complex, youthful romance from the perspective of a character named Betty. It's part of a trilogy within the album, along with the songs "August" and "Betty," which together narrate different angles of the same love triangle involving three characters: Betty, James, and August/Augusta. The song captures Betty's perspective as she reflects on a relationship that has left her both hurt and hopeful. Through its lyrics, "Cardigan" explores themes of young love, betrayal, forgiveness, and emotional resilience. Swift uses the imagery of a well-worn cardigan to symbolize comfort, warmth, and familiarity, reflecting how Betty feels about the relationship despite its ups and downs. The song portrays the lasting impact of youthful, first love and the complicated emotions that come with it, emphasizing feelings of nostalgia, longing, and reconciliation.

2. August

"August" is part of a narrative trilogy within the album, alongside the songs "Cardigan" and "Betty." This trilogy explores a teenage love triangle from the perspectives of three characters: Betty, James, and August/Augusta who narrates "August." In "August," Swift tells the story from the perspective of August/Augusta that had a summer romance with James, even though he is still in a relationship with Betty. The song captures the narrator's longing, excitement, and eventual

heartbreak, as she reflects on the brief yet intense relationship that was never truly hers to keep. Through evocative lyrics and wistful production, "August" conveys the bittersweet feeling of holding onto a fleeting love, full of hope and longing, yet overshadowed by the reality that it was destined to end. The song is about the emotional impact of unrequited or temporary love and the narrator's struggle to come to terms with a love that, while cherished, was always out of reach.

3. Betty

"Betty" is part of a narrative trilogy on the album, alongside "Cardigan" and "August," which collectively tell the story of a teenage love triangle. In this song, the perspective shifts to James, a character who reflects on his relationship with Betty after having been unfaithful to her during a summer fling with another girl (the narrator of "August"). In "Betty," James, a 17-year-old boy, expresses regret and attempts to reconcile with Betty, whom he truly cares about despite his mistake. The song details James's inner conflict, guilt, and youthful confusion, as he acknowledges his wrongdoing and hopes for forgiveness. Through a narrative-driven style, "Betty" captures James's vulnerability and desire to reconnect with Betty, even as he questions whether she will ever take him back. The lyrics depict the innocence, impulsiveness, and mistakes of young love, with Swift's storytelling offering a compassionate view of James's attempts at redemption. Ultimately, "Betty" is about forgiveness, self-reflection, and the complexity of teenage relationships, emphasizing themes of growth, second chances, and emotional sincerity.

2.6 Previous Studies

Some researchers are related to the writer's research, among others are: The study of "A Semantic Analysis of Lexical Relations in Muse Selected Song Lyrics" (Husein, 2019) conducted. The aim of this study was to describe the types of lexical relation found in Muse selected song lyrics and dominant of lexical relations used in Muse selected song lyrics. The outcome of this analysis, first is the profile of lexical relations with numerous results in 6 branch of semantics that include Synonym, Antonym, Polysemy, Homonymy, Meronymy. And the result showed

that the dominant of relation of lexical relation is Polysemy with 12 occurrences, and the rest is Homonym in 10 occurrences, Antonym in 7 occurrences, Synonym in 6 occurrences, Hyponym and Meronym in 1 occurrence.

The study “Analysis of Polysemy of the Song Lyrics in the Album of “*Folklore*” by Taylor Swift” (Septiandari, 2021). The aim of this study is to analyzing the polysemy words and takes the research object to give the closest understanding of what the song meant because there are many polysemy words in song lyrics of “The 1” by Taylor Swift which could cause misunderstanding for the listener when they interpret the meaning of the words, thus, could lead to misinterpretation of the song lyrics itself. The outcome of this research is, by learning Polysemy, it gives the reader the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary knowledge and escalate readers’ literary level. Most importantly hoping for the readers to understand what types of Polysemy used in the song and what is the most dominant type of Polysemy used in the song lyrics of “The 1” by Taylor Swift.

The study “Interpersonal Meaning of Mood Choices on Taylor Swift’s Song Lyrics in “*Folklore*” Album” (Kamaliah, 2021). The aim of this study is to analyzing interpersonal meaning, people are able to understand language use, social relationship, and social status. Moreover, the attitude of the speaker can be found by analyzing interpersonal meaning. The researcher is interested in carrying out the current study about the interpersonal meaning of mood choices. Mood consists of Mood structure and Residue structure. The outcome of this research is to identify what are the mood types used in Taylor Swift’s song lyrics in *Folklore* album and what are the speech functions used in Taylor Swift’s song lyrics in *Folklore* album. And theoretically supposed to enhance the scientific understanding of interpersonal meaning for the listener of *Folklore* and reader of this research.

Previous research has underscored the critical role of semantic analysis in understanding relationships between words and meanings in various contexts. For instance, “A Semantics Analysis of Lexical Relations in English Textbook Grade X by Kemendikbud RI” (Septiria, 2022) explored how lexical relations like hyponymy, synonymy, and antonymy contribute to textual comprehension. Using

a descriptive qualitative method, she identified and categorized 34 instances of lexical relations in the textbook's reading comprehension sections. Her findings emphasized the importance of understanding lexical relations for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and reading skills. This research approach provides valuable insight into analyzing semantics in creative texts, such as song lyrics. Building on such methodologies, the present study investigates figurative language in Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album, focusing on the love triangle theme in the songs "Cardigan," "August," and "Betty." It seeks to uncover how devices like metaphor, symbolism, and hyperbole shape the emotional and thematic resonance of the narratives, extending the scope of semantic studies from textbooks to artistic and emotional expression.

And lastly, the study "Look What You Made Me Do"; A Rhetorical Analysis of Taylor Swift's Persona" (Risher, 2023). The aim of this study is to understand the ways persona has previously been defined and studied creates a foundation for analysis of how a rhetor's persona changes over time and the researchers focus is specifically on roles and images of the singer. The researcher used the concept of persona as a theoretical framework and gathered prior research about image's importance to a rhetor and how an individual can use the role he or she is in to either appease their audience or to provide critiques of unfair social standards. The outcome of this research is to take the understanding of a rhetor's persona and added standpoint theory to create additional context for how a rhetor can use his or her projected persona to critique the systems around him or her.