

# Figurative Language Used In Olivia Rodrigo Album Song Lyrics “Sour”

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**Abstrak**—Frase yang menarik dalam kalimat memiliki konotasi yang beragam, seperti penggunaan majas yang menggambarkan ide dalam lirik lagu. Penelitian ini fokus pada bahasa metafora yang terdapat di lirik lagu Olivia Rodrigo. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menentukan berbagai kategori majas yang ditemukan di Lirik Lagu Olivia Rodrigo serta untuk mengetahui makna gaya bahasa yang terdapat pada lagu Olivia Rodrigo dari Album “Sour”. “Sour” merupakan rekaman studio debut yang diproduksi Geffen Records di bulan Mei 2021. Produser Dan Nigro ikut memproduksi dan direkam selama masa isolasi lockdown pandemi Covid-19. Figuratif mengacu pada penggunaan kata-kata dengan cara yang berbeda dari ejaan standar atau pengertian untuk menyampaikan pesan yang dapat menciptakan efek informasi yang padat, kaya, menarik dan efektif bagi para pembaca. Data diambil dari lirik lagu Olivia Rodrigo, teori Knickerbocker dan Reninger (1963) digunakan untuk menganalisis data, sedangkan teori Leech (1981) dan Johnson (2003:4) digunakan untuk mengkaji makna kiasan yang digunakan. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif dengan metode observasi dan teknik catat untuk memperoleh data. Penelitian ini menemukan 4 bentuk bahasa kiasan dan 2 jenis makna kiasan yang ditemukan.

**Kata Kunci:** Majas, Semantik, Lirik.

**Abstract**—Fascinating phrases have distinct connotations, including the usage of figurative language to describe thoughts in song lyrics. This research examined at the metaphorical language of an Olivia Rodrigo song's lyrics. The study's objective is to determine the different forms of figurative language contained in Olivia Rodrigo Songs and examine the meaning of figurative speech in Olivia Rodrigo Songs from Album “*Sour*”. In the analysis, *Sour* is the debut studio album by Olivia Rodrigo, an American singer-songwriter. It was released by Geffen Records on May 21, 2021. Rodrigo wrote the album with producer Dan Nigro and recorded it during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown seclusion. Ffigurative refers to the use of words in ways that deviate from their traditional order or meaning to convey complex meaning, fascinating sentences, clarity, or evocative comparisons. Use regular phrases refer to something without saying it directly. The data were taken from Olivia Rodrigo Songs. Knickerbocker and Reninger's (1963) theory was utilized to analyse the data, while Leech (1981) and Johnson (2003:4) theory was used to examine the meaning of figures of speech employed. The analysis was done by applying descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods with observation and noted taking techniques to acquire data. This study discovered there were 4 categories of figurative language and 2 forms of figurative meaning.

**Keywords:** Figurative Language, Semantics, and Songs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The scientific study of meaning is known as semantics, and there are two forms of meaning: literal meaning and nonliteral meaning. Literal meanings are derived from literal words or definitions: no metaphorical is used. According to Crystal (1991:310), that semantics is indeed a subfield of linguistics that studies the significance of words. Semantics is a subfield of linguistics developed to study the significance of words. According to Leech (1981) semantics breaks down purpose in following types, with rational or theoretical interpretation took primary. He categorizes it into 7 types namely: conceptual meaning, collocative, connotative, reflective, affective, social and thematic meaning.

Figurative language; is a language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from literal interpretation. Figurative language, based on Mourner and Rausch (1991:83) theory, is phrase that comprises figures of speech such as metaphors, simile, personified, and exaggeration, namely statements that create analogies or correlations that are intended to be taken metaphorically instead of factually. There are 10 categories of figurative language, based on Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), including simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personified,

synecdoche, metonymy, irony, Allegory, and dead metaphor. All have distinct types expression qualities and functions that will disclose exceptional value. Lyrics of the song are the songwriter's means of expressing his sentiments, emotions, and views, according to Codon (1998:839).

The song's lyrics are constructed in such a way that they incorporate rhythm, tone, and harmony, particularly from the sound. Generally, people listen to music because they love the instrumental aspects or the singer's voice. Most individuals appreciate or like a song because of the message or idea it communicates. Understanding the meaning of a song is important to be able to accept what the song tells. The figurative phrases in the song lyrics were analyzed using Knickerbocker and Reninger's (1963) theory of figurative language. In addition, Leech's (1981) theory and Lakk Off and Johnson's (2003:4) theory are utilized to support the analysis. This topic is interesting because it evokes a pleasant imaginative sensation in readers when study an item that uses figurative language. This is also looking at the metaphorical meaning of song lyrics to establish the actual meaning.

3 previous studies were chosen for the evaluation. The first, entitled: "*figurative language used in Ed Sheeran's selected songs*," was authored by Monika Heni, et al. (2022). The Purpose of this research concerns the descriptive analysis of figurative language found in Ed Sheeran's selected songs. According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), also Leech's theory of meaning (1974), this study's findings revealed there are 14 sentences of six kinds of the most common type of figurative language in song lyrics is hyperbole (5 items or 35%), followed by personification (3 things or 21%), metonymy (1 item or 8%), and irony (2 items or 14%). Meanwhile, based on the meaning analysis, it is discovered that the majority of the figurative language found in Ed Sheeran's songs has connotative meaning. The distinction between the previous research and so this study is that the earlier study only found one sort of meaning in the song lyrics, which is connotative meaning, but this research discovered two different types of meaning, in the song's lyrics: connotative and affective meaning.

Abdul Wahab, et al. (2022) published the second research findings, "*an analysis of figurative language in Lady Gaga's song lyrics*". The aim of this study is to analyzed figurative in Lady Gaga song. According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367), that is used to identify the different types of figurative language, and the second theory is the theory of meaning, which is supported by Leech (1974) to examine the meaning. This research employed both formal and informal data collection methods. The research found several types of meaning in Lady Gaga's song included intellectual meaning, connotative meaning, emotional meaning, and mirrored meaning. It is possible to prove that metaphorical language had an important role in the production of music lyrics. In the previous study, the data was collected by downloading the song, listening intently, reading the lines, underling, and classifying the lyrics, whereas in this study, the data was collected by using descriptive qualitative and quantitative methodologies using observation and note taking techniques.

Rusadi, et al. wrote the third previous research, "an analysis of figurative language found in twilight saga poem by Stephenie Meyers" (2022). This research aims to analyze the types of figurative language found in the Twilight Saga's poem adapted from Stephenie Mayer's novel. The findings were gathered through observation techniques, with the following methods: downloading and reading the poem, and afterwards identifying the data that use figurative language. In concerns of the analysis, this study utilized two theories: Perrine's (1977) theory of Figurative Language and Leech's (1977) theory of Meaning (1981). The findings revealed 16 instances of metaphorical language used in the poem. The previous study found 7 types of figurative language, while this study discovered 4 types of figures of speech also 2 types of meaning found in the song lyrics.

This research is particularly interesting based on the research background since some people have difficulties recognizing the various types of figurative language and meanings utilized within music verses. Olivia Rodrigo also employs metaphorical language in her songs to make them more intriguing, innovative, motivating, and visually appealing. Song lyric analysis is required to comprehend the meaning and message that the composer wishes to express to the reader.

## **2. METHOD**

The data was gathered from Olivia Rodrigo's "Sour" album. The research focuses on studying Olivia Rodrigo's song lyric "Sour.", is the debut studio album by Olivia Rodrigo, an American

singer-songwriter. Rodrigo wrote the album with producer Dan Nigro and recorded it during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown seclusion. Originally intended to be a mini-album, Rodrigo expanded Sour into a studio album following the popularity of “Driver’s License.” Some song titles have picked, such

as:” *Brutal*”, *Traitor*”, *Driver License*”, *I Step Forward 3 Steps Back*”, *Déjà Vu*”, *Good 4 U*”, *Enough for You*”, *Happier*”, *Jealousy-Jealousy*”, *Favorite Crime*”, *Hope You are Ok*”. They were chosen as a data source because the song Olivia Rodrigo includes a lot of simple words, thus the writer wanted to analyze the different types of words in the song Olivia Rodrigo.

The theory of Knickerbocker and Reninger was utilized to differentiate the forms of figurative language observed in the data source for this analysis (1963). There are 10 varieties of figurative language, and the meaning of figurative language is examined in the second phase using theory Leech (1981).

The outcomes were presented including both informal and formal formats. An informal presentation was utilized to convey the results with explaining the different sorts of figurative language and the meaning found in Olivia Rodrigo's "Sour" album. Tables were used to implement the formal technique. The data in the table used to present the result of data analysis in arrange to make obvious and simple for better understanding.

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed the study's findings based on the analysis of figurative language in the data. Those are defined using the "Knickerbocker and Reninger" theory of figurative language patterns (1974) in addition to the "Leech" theory of meaning (1947). The study utilized the algorithm below to calculate the percentages of each figurative phrase used in the lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's albums "Sour."

According to the finding tabulation data table below, there are 4 different types of figurative language present in song lyrics. The quantity and percentages of figurative language used in a song lyric Olivia Rodrigo’s song namely: simile (2 items or 0,18%), allusion (2 items or 0,18%), hyperbole (5 items or 0,45%), metaphor (2 items or 0,18%). The most prevalent figurative language used in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyric in album "Sour" was hyperbole, with a total of (5 items, 0.45%), while the least frequent figurative language used are allusion, simile, and metaphor, with a total of 2 or 0.18% in percentages..

**Tabel 1.** Finding Figurative Language utilized in Olivia Rodrigo’s song “Sour” lyrics

| Type of figurative language | Quantity of data | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Simile                      | 2                | 0,18%      |
| Allusion                    | 2                | 0,18%      |
| Hyperbole                   | 5                | 0,45%      |
| Metaphor                    | 2                | 0,18%      |
| Total                       | 11               | 36,36%     |

The researcher discovered 11 data points in the table above. As a result of this research, it is possible to infer that the song lyrics contained in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics are extremely imaginative since all statements in various types of figurative language in the song lyrics may be interpreted by the song writer. The findings for each sort of figurative language in song lyrics will be provided in the following discussion.

#### 1. Simile

A simile is a comparison of two basically dissimilar objects, acts, or traits that have some feature of similarity, as indicated by the words "like" or "as."

**Data 1**

Show her off like she's a new trophy

(Traitor, lines:23)

Because the singer compares two things, the statement above is categorized as a simile., namely "Show her off" and "she's a new trophy". The term "like" is used to compare two separate items in this statement. The phrase "show her off" might be characterized as an exploited objective. The phrase "she's the new trophy" can be synonymous with other terms such as someone romantic. The sentence, show her off like she's a new trophy, could be regarded as someone who is in love with their lover.

According to Leech's (1974) theory, the data is classified as having connotative meaning because the statement extends beyond literal meaning. Exactly "Show her off like she's a new trophy" can be interpreted that he is also a cynic, with all the brilliance. The verse of the song describe someone passionate in a love connection and the singer feels loved by his spouse like a statement that a part of me should adore, according to the connotation, "Show her off like she's a new trophy." The line "Show her off like she's a new trophy" represents the songwriter's feelings of being loved by his spouse, which makes it tough for her to walk away from him.

**Data 2**

Don't act like we didn't do that too

(Déjà vu, lines: 17)

The preceding lyrics is classified as similes since the lyric comparing different things, namely "you swap jackets" and "we used to do it." The word "you are trading jackets" can be interpreted as someone who is in business, and "we used to be" can be considered as a person who is heartbroken and refuses to be present with his lover. The conjunction "like" is used to distinguish two things that are mentioned.

It has the connotative meaning of "You trade jackets like we used to do." The lyrics of the song describe someone who experiences heartbreak since their loved one is abandoned and tries to accept the situation.

**2. Allusion**

Allegory is a figure of speech that refers location, occurrence, or person. Neither a comparative in the proper sense, but a symbol with more significance than its narrow meaning (Knickerbocker and Reninger, 1963).

**Data 3**

I feel like no one wants me

(Brutal, lines:27)

The line of the aforementioned song is classified as allusion since it compares two things, such as "I feel" and "no one wants me." The phrase "I feel" might refer to a person who has a bad feeling, whereas "no one wants me" can refer to someone who is having problems.

Because the meaning in this line goes transcend its actual interpretation, the phrases of the lyric above have a connotative value. "I feel no one wants me," means every since my best friend moved away, I feel like there is no one to talk to. According to the connotation, the phrase refers to her life journey that has experienced any difficulties.

**Data 4**

God, I don't even know where to start

(Brutal, lines: 40)

This phrase was written utilizing an allusion. The phrase God (as used in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) refers to the entity or spirit that is worshiped and is said to have created the world. He

breathes life into humans. God is the creator of everything in the universe. According to the lyrics, the singer claims that God created everything in this world.

According to the explanation, the lyrics are related to connotations since its meaning is broader than the actual purpose. In a natural context, the sentence "God, I don't even know where to start" indicates the writer of a song pleading for assistance. "God, I don't even know where to start" tends to imply more than real interpretation. "I don't even know where to start," the lyrics tells the audience about Deity, who is devoted to assisting her in all of her difficulties. She believed that the Creator was capable of creating everything on Earth, including people and other living things.

### **3. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is an overplayed figure of speech used to conjure up intense emotions or generate a powerful perception. Hyperbole are not taken as fact. Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963)

#### **Data 5**

That I'll die before I drink

(Brutal, line:s 2)

This data is categorized as hyperbole because, based on the lyrics above, it is evident that the singer wishes to communicate her emotions to listeners in ways that are impossible to attain in reality. Data 5 includes the phrase "I will die before I drink." In this line, the singer informs the audience that she will die. That was a truth before she drank; she would likely die before she grew old. We drank here because that's what grownups do. In such circumstances, the singer suggests that he will likely die before she matures.

These lyrics categorized as connotative meaning. The songwriter wants to explain how he can die before he grows up. When we grow up, we normally drink, thus the term drink might represent when we are growing up. With the lyrics above, it can be inferred that the singer wants to express what he wants and feels by using phrases or sentences that may not occur to make song lyrics more interesting to the listeners when the song is heard.

#### **Data 6**

She was tired cause she was brought into a world where family was merely blood.

(Hope you are Ok, lines: 20)

The lyrics are classified as hyperbole due to being exaggerated. Relatives are only blood, songwriters presume that family is only blood as humans, which is an irrelevant point. The phrase "she is tired because she was brought into the world" is defined as an activity performed by an individual to start changing a life, whereas "relatives is just blood" is a component of the human organ systems.

Because the meaning extends further than the plain interpretation, this lyric is classified as having a connotation. "She was brought into a world where family was merely blood," essentially interpreted, means she was tired of keeping everything to herself. From this sentence that tired is not the result of someone bringing the world into being as the world is the entire earth. Generally, "family was merely blood" is sometimes expressed as the songwriter's perspective of causing hurt to someone. In this case, the songwriter wishes to convey that someone is suffering from a heartbreak.

#### **Data 7**

I'd say you broke my heart but you broke much more than that

(Enough for You, lines 4)

The data is categorized as hyperbole because, in data the songwriter wants to tell the listeners how her ex broke her heart, which is, it is just purely for expressing their feelings. The singer wants to tell how her ex hurt that feeling and a human also can't break anyone's heart only by attitude or treatment.

According to Leech (1981) defines of connotative meaning, the data above 8, could be categorized as connotative meaning. In other words, the word may have a different meaning or be connotative of something else. Moreover, data 8 says that the heart broke more than that, which means the hurt and sadness of disappointment to worsen more severe heartache.

**Data 8**

I'm so sick of my self

(Jealousy, jealousy, line: 4)

The data is categorized as hyperbole because, in case data 9, the singer expresses her dissatisfaction with herself to the listeners. It may be stated that the statement had a hyperbole figure of speech because the singer used the word "sick" to indicate how upset and deceived she felt in that scenario. In that case, the songwriter used that term to illustrate the song's mood to the listeners.

Furthermore, verse that identifies affective language displays feelings that cause reactions related to feelings such as fear, the phrase used in this lyric is classified as having an affective meaning. Regardless of the specifics of the event, emphasize that someone she loves makes her jealous, which causes her to feel betrayed, and she becomes displeased and quite frustrated with herself, towards the point where she feels sick.

**4. Metaphor**

Metaphor is a form of figurative language used to construct meaning expect for the logical definition of the term or phrase used. Also, Metaphor is an implied comparison. A metaphor is a stated comparison of two things, such as living beings and objects. The term is similar to simile, but the comparison does not use the phrases "like" or "as." (Knickerbocker and Reninger; 1963:367).

**Data 9**

If I looked like the other prom queens

(Enough for You, lines: 3)

The data is categorized as Metaphor because, there is stated comparison between two things, human and human, "If I looked like the other prom queens". The singer wants to tell listeners how her boyfriend feels about changing and wanting another woman, whom he finds more attractive and doesn't love himself anymore. The singer wanted to share how she tried to look as beautiful as someone her ex had hoped for.

These lyrics above categorized as Connotative meaning, because there is comparing "If I looked like the other prom queens" connotes means, she thought about what if she could look like someone his lover thought was much more attractive and whom he loved before.

The singer here wants to convey a message to the listener that at that time he felt hurt due to the actions caused by his lover, but in this type of figurative language, metaphor means that it has a different meaning where heartache is meant, namely the heart is not really broken; but just feeling hurt and sad.

Based on the lyrics above that could be categorized as Affective meaning, because the above lyrics represent affective language doing feelings that cause affective reactions according to the context of the incident, the above words "broke my heart" means someone that she loves already broke her heart it was a feeling of sadness.

**4. CONCLUSION**

This research is aimed about Olivia Rodrigo's album Sour. According to the discussion and analysis of data in the preceding chapter, research showed 11 data with four types of figurative language namely; similes, allusion; hyperbole, and metaphor.

"Brutal" and "Enough for you" are two dominant songs that use various sorts of metaphorical language. With a total of 11 data sets, researchers have found two types of meaning: affective meaning and connotative meaning. All two categories are present in the data, with the connotative meaning being utilized more frequently than the affective meaning.

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