

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five sub-chapters. There are background of the study, statement of the research problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, as well as its scope and limitations. In this chapter, the general understanding of the analysis of this thesis will be introduced.

1.1 Background of the Study

A human being is a social creature that must communicate with their environment. People communicate by using language as a method of communication. People can share their thoughts, sentiments, ideas, opinions, arguments, and criticisms with others to interact. Language is an important part of humans because humans need it to communicate. According to Alejandro (2024), language is the tool for communicating in human habit that compounds signs of a system of sounds. For them, language has two important roles, for communication and for the thought or mindset. Hurlock (1980) also stated that people always express their feelings and thoughts through sign, spoken, and/or written language. Language is a crucial element in communicating that people use for every activity to express their actions or reactions.

Language serves various functions, including informative, expressive, and directive roles. It allows individuals to convey messages, emotions, and commands effectively according to Leech (1981). By interacting, having conversations, and socializing with other people, or just talking to ourselves, people can be recognized by their existence. They can be recognized through their personalities, thoughts, information, background, characters, origins, etc. People experience overwhelming thoughts and seek ways to express them, and they use language to communicate their feelings.

In the field of linguistics, language is studied as a structured system that conveys meaning. According to Sapir (1921), language is a uniquely human and non-instinctive system used to express ideas, emotions, and desires through symbols. One important branch of linguistics is semantics, which focuses on meaning. Linguistics provides various choices of vocabulary and diction that help individuals communicate more precisely

and effectively according Numonjonovna (2026). In daily life, meaning plays a crucial role, especially in understanding how language is used in different contexts, including literary works according Eragamreddy (2024).

In accordance to the theory of Semantics, Lyons (1982), semantics is the study of meaning in language. It looks at how words, phrases, and sentences carry meaning and how people understand them in communication. Lyons explains that semantics also examines how language connects to real-world references as well as how meaning is organized and shaped within a language system. And at that phase, a person that express their thoughts or ideas would find a kind from what they wrote. With how language is used to express every thought and emotion, people would understand one another very well. Many artists express their thoughts and feelings through articles, novels, poems, songs, or short story. According to what has long been the most widely accepted theory of semantics, meanings are ideas or concepts that can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the listener by embodying them, as it were, in the form of one language or another.

One important aspect of language studied in linguistics, as well as semantics is its branches of figurative language that enhances expression and meaning. Figurative language is defined by Perrine (presented by Johnson and Arp, 2018) as any way of saying something other than the ordinary way, using figures of speech. It is distinguished from literal language by its intent to mean something more than (or different from) the dictionary definitions of the words used. Perrine also emphasizes that figurative language is not "flowery" or "ornamental" fluff. Instead, it is a more precise way of communicating experience. While literal language is often used for scientific or legal precision, figurative language is used for literary precision, capturing the complexity of human experience that literal words often fail to describe.

According to Nchindila & Torto (2020), figurative language uses figures of speech to increase effectiveness and persuasiveness, while Keraf (2009) states that it serves to clarify, strengthen, and beautify expressions. Figurative language is commonly found in literary works, including song

lyrics. Since music is widely heard in daily life, figurative language in song lyrics becomes the focus of this study. Songs often blend into the atmosphere, and listeners tend to enjoy them without analysing their deeper meanings (Céspedes-Guevara, 2023).

This study focuses on data from Taylor Swift's *Reputation* album. It aims to interpret the meanings using Laurence Perrine's theory in line with the research objectives. According to Sapir (1921), language is a fundamentally human and non-instinctive approach to transmitting ideas, emotions, and desires through some kind of system of intentionally generated symbols. Through the development of language, social encounters or daily communication are consistently loved by others. One form of the use of figurative language is the use of figurative language in various types of literary works, one which we often hear and read in song lyrics.

According to Perrine's explanation (2018), figurative language refers to the use of figures of speech in which words convey meanings beyond their literal sense. Rather than expressing ideas directly, figurative language communicates meaning through comparison, substitution, exaggeration, personification, irony, and other rhetorical devices. Its purpose is to make language more vivid, forceful, imaginative, and emotionally expressive. Perrine argues that people use figurative language because they can often say more and say it more effectively through figures of speech than through literal statements. Figurative language used in literature books shows how important it is in beautifying and clarifying the meaning in the language. This following citation illustrates the figurative language in the book context. Additionally, it can convey how to understand every type can enrich our appreciation of literary works. Example at Perrine's books (1992):

Simile example: "The man with the guitar... / As a man with a
maid."

In the Semantics study, Perrine (1992), explains that the simile (using "as") shows the guitarist's careful, intimate relationship with his instrument. He uses this to illustrate that a figure of speech always has a literal term (the guitarist) and a figurative term (a man with a maid/girl)

Hyperbole example: “And I will love thee still, my dear, / Till a’ the seas gang dry.”

Perrine (1992), explains that while the seas will likely never go dry in semantics, the *intent* of the statement is to communicate the literal truth of the speaker's deep commitment. From that example, we know how the function of figurative language works in daily life. Keraf's (2009) work emphasizes that figurative language is not merely decorative but a fundamental aspect of how meaning is created and conveyed.

Figurative language is a use or application of a wealth of language where the meaning of the language does not refer to the meaning of a sentence directly but rather to the understanding of implied meanings Tarigan (1985). Figurative language becomes vital in vocabulary learning, while mastering vocabulary aids in understanding meanings. Besides that, Kennedy (1983) concludes that a figure of speech occurs when a speaker or writer breaks from the standard meanings of words just for novelty or emphasis. Harya (2017) also adds that several terms in figurative language have meanings that are not literal. It necessitates the use of the reader's imagination to deduce the author's meaning. Furthermore, Perrine (Johnson and Arp, 2018) defines metaphorical language as "any means of conveying something other than the regular way". It is more precisely defined as a

means of saying one thing while implying another. Thus, figurative language is a method of expressing meaning that differs from literal meaning.

Figurative language allows readers to enjoy the creative delight of literary works (S.S. Aubakir et al., 2024). It is also a method of incorporating more imagery into verse, making the conceptual literal and literary works more sensual. Additionally, figurative language adds emotional dimension to otherwise purely informational sentences and conveys attitudes as well as information. It is a technique of stating a lot in a small amount of time. According Perrine's theory as presented by Johnson and Arp (2018), there two categories of figurative language i.e. types and functions. The use of figurative language in this study will be described, as well as how it was utilized to analyze the data. Those following are the twelve types of

figurative language: Hyperbole, Metaphor, Metonymy, Simile, Apostrophe, Synecdoche, Symbol, Allegory, Paradox, Understatement, Personification, and Irony.

Nowadays, the presence of Spotify as one of social media platforms becomes the most popular and the most visited by people in the world based on Alexa (2020). Spotify is a online platform communication that connects people around the world by sound. The profession as a Spotify user has increasingly become one of favourites of gadget users. Many Spotify channels display interesting content and many Spotify user and Podcasters are increasingly competing to create content that can increase listeners and followers. Through the music and podcast that are shared by content creators, people could listen and give any responses by following, liking, and commenting. Perez (2020) states that Spotify is a digital audio streaming platform that offers a large collection of music and podcasts. The platform's podcast catalog has surpassed one million titles, demonstrating Spotify's continuous expansion of audio content for users.that include a lot of experiences and worldwide knowledge.

Therefore, songs available on digital platforms such as Spotify can be examined as objects of literary and linguistic study. In this research, the songs from Taylor Swift's *Reputation* album were accessed through Spotify, while the written lyrics were collected and checked through Genius.com. Song lyrics may contain meanings that are not expressed directly, allowing listeners to interpret them in different ways. In literary studies, lyrics can be analyzed as poetic texts because they use carefully selected words, images, emotions, and figurative expressions. By examining the words, phrases, and sentences in the lyrics, the researcher can identify both their literal and deeper meanings. Songwriters often communicate feelings, experiences, and ideas indirectly through figurative language, enabling listeners to relate the lyrics to their own emotions and experiences. For this reason, the lyrics in the *Reputation* album are relevant for analysing the types and functions of figurative language.

In this thesis, the song lyrics from Taylor Swift songs on *Reputation* album Spotify songs list was chosen by the researcher as the main data of

this analysis. Taylor Swift is well known as the most popular female singer in America and almost all nations know her name and existence. Taylor Allison Swift was born in Pennsylvania, December 13th, 1989, United States (Britannica.com). Taylor was born as a first daughter of Stockbroker, Scott Swift and housewife, Andrea. She loved singing when she was child. At that time, it turned out that Taylor had appeared bravely to entertain tourists by singing a song titled *I Just Can't Wait to Be King* which was one of the soundtracks for the film *The Lion King* (1994). Taylor admitted that this reckless action was inconsequential and random are considering that she was still 3 years old. As she gets older, her skills kept growing. Then she succeeded to win the karaoke singing contest when she was 11. When she was teenager, she started her debut as a professional singer and released her album *McGraw* (2006).

In this research, the researcher wants to solve and find out the figurative language used by Taylor Swift's song lyrics on *Reputation* album on Spotify. The researcher will categorize words in Taylor Swift songs with the nine types of figurative language found, which are irony, paradox, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile, metonymy, allegory, and symbol in accordance to Perrine's theory. After that, the researcher analyzes about the reason why Taylor Swift's song lyrics used that figurative language using Perrine's theory. Moreover, the researcher chose Taylor Swift's song lyrics as the source of data because of the abundance of figurative language found in them. Taylor Swift is one of the most popular musicians, and her song lyrics and speaking style have become a standard and reference for the younger generation who want to be good speakers, musicians and writers, as well as critical thinkers.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher identifies two main problems as follows:

1. What are types of figurative language in the song lyrics of *Reputation* album by Taylor Swift?
2. What are the functions of figurative language in the song lyrics of *Reputation* album by Taylor Swift?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statements of the problem, the purposes of these studies are:

1. To identify the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's song lyrics.
2. To explain the functions of figurative language in Taylor Swift's song lyrics.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study investigates the uses of figurative language within song lyrics, specifically focusing on Taylor Swift's work to provide accessible yet significant literary insights.

Theoretically, the analysis clarifies the definitions, types, and functions of these devices, illustrating how they are woven into music to enhance meaning. By examining these elements, the research helps readers bridge the gap between abstract literary concepts and their practical use in contemporary pop culture.

Practically, by observing this data, the researcher wants to serve as a valuable academic reference for students and researchers in English study programs. By utilizing the framework provided by Perrine (2018), the study offers a structured approach for those interested in analysing linguistic patterns in modern media. Ultimately, it aims to enrich the existing body of literature and support future scholarly inquiries into the mechanics of figurative language.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study concentrates on the analysis of figurative language from a semantics perspective in the song lyrics of Taylor Swift's *Reputation* album. The data consist of lyrics that contain figurative expressions, which are systematically identified and analyzed. The researcher employed only Perrine's (Johnson and Arp 2018) theory to classify the types and examine the functions of figurative language, including irony, paradox, apostrophe, understatement, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, allegory, and symbol. This study is intended to provide a deeper understanding of how figurative language contributes to meaning construction in song lyrics.

Nevertheless, this study is subject to several limitations. It is confined to the analysis of a single album, namely *Reputation*, and does not encompass other works by Taylor Swift or other artists. The album consist 15 songs it is; *Ready for it*, *End Game* (feat. Ed Sheeran and Future), *I Did Something Bad*, *Don't Blame Me*, *Delicate*, *Look What You Made Me Do*, *So It Goes...*, *Gorgeous*, *Getaway Car*, *King of My Heart*, *Dancing with Our Hands Tied*, *Dress*, *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things*, *Call It What You Want*, *New Year's Day*. In addition, the analysis is restricted to the categories of figurative language proposed by Perrine (2018) and is examined solely from a semantics perspective, without incorporating other linguistic approaches such as pragmatics or discourse analysis. Furthermore, the interpretation of the data is based on the researcher's perspective, which may result in a degree of subjectivity in the findings.