

## TYPES OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN CHRISTINA PERRI'S SONGS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the types of figurative language found in Christina Perri's songs. This descriptive study used a qualitative approach. Data were taken from the lyrics of Christina Perri's songs. Content analysis was used to examine the data in this study. The results of this study revealed that there were several kinds of figurative language in Christina Perri's songs. They were metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, alliteration, assonance, consonance, hyperbole, oxymoron, and imagery. The study on figurative languages in songs provides important educational implications such as promoting language proficiency, encouraging literary analysis and critical thinking, raising understanding of cultures, stimulating the creative process, and building emotional intelligence for students and teachers during teaching and learning process.


KEYWORDS: *Christina Perri, Figurative Languages, Songs.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Literature, which can be found in poems, stories, song lyrics, and other written works constantly enrich our lives (Netta et al., 2022; Sarair et al., 2023; Trisnawati et al., 2016; Chaira & Yuniarti, 2020). Literature, in its broadest sense, refers to any form of "writings in which expression and form, in connection with ideas of permanent and universal interest, are characteristic or essential features" (Dictionary, n.d.). Since the purpose of writing literature is to express people's thoughts and feelings, authors frequently employ figurative language to evoke subtly feelings and thoughts in their readers (Literary Devices, n.d.). Figurative language typically conveys ambiguity although it is occasionally the writers' intent (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994).

Figurative language is any word or phrase that has a meaning, although not a literal one, that "consists of or includes figures of speech" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Figurative language is often found in songs. A song is a lyrical poem sung while a musical instrument is being played, and it is an extremely ancient kind of literature passed down from one generation to the next (Sharma, 2014). A song not only captivates the listeners with its melodic prowess, but also leaves an enduring impact through the meaningful narratives hidden within its lyrics (Siagian & Englishtina, 2022).



In the educational setting, learners can learn figurative language through song lyrics. When listening to song lyrics, however, they may encounter a difficulty to comprehend the meanings underlying the lyrics (Siagian & Englishtina, 2022). Thus, it is important to carry out analysis on the language used in the song lyrics.

This paper intends to analyze lyrics from Christina Perri's songs. Christina Perri, a well-known singer-songwriter, is an example of a mix of musical genius and heart-breaking storytelling. Perri has made a space for herself in the music industry, interacting with audiences on a highly emotional level with her sweet voice and evocative lyrics. This paper provides an analytical trip through Christina Perri's body of work. The study strives to investigate the song lyrics based on figurative language through a comprehensive assessment of her songs. From the haunting echoes of "Jar of Hearts" to the timeless romance of "A Thousand Years", Perri's repertoire provides a canvas for intricate lyrical exploration.

The goal of this study's analysis of Christina Perri's songs is to reveal the figurative language, thematic strands, and emotional landscapes that define her talent. By doing so, it hopes to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the nuances that transcend her music beyond just enjoyment, establishing her as a storyteller who creates musical narratives that resonate with the human experience.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *PREVIOUS STUDIES*

Several studies have been conducted related to figurative language. One of them is research entitled "Figurative Languages Found in Christina Perri's Lyrics of Songs" conducted by Risalatunni'mah (2015). This study's objectives were to: 1) identify the types of figurative language used in Christina Perri's song lyrics; 2) determine the significance of the figurative language used in song lyrics; and 3) understand the ideas the song attempts to portray through its use of figurative language. This study's research design combined a descriptive with a qualitative method. The study found that first, figurative language in Christina Perri's song lyrics included hyperbole, rhetoric, personification, repetition, paradox, allegory, irony, parallelism, and litotes. Second, Perri's song lyrics contained figurative language suggesting (a) someone in great love, (b) someone hurt by her boyfriend, (c) someone with the strength to live despite feeling lonely, (d) someone being lied to by her boyfriend, (e) someone possessive toward her boyfriend, (f) someone getting along with a boy of her ex-boyfriend, (g) someone with one side love, (h) someone fantasizing about having a boyfriend, (i) a couple reluctant to communicate their love, and (j) someone devoted to her boyfriend at all times. Third, figurative song lyrics by Christina Perri conveyed messages such as (a) Love is a wonderful thing, yet it needs proof to be

true; (b) being abandoned by a lover is painful; it requires fidelity in love; (c) someone must be brave to maintain the love, everywhere; (d) In social life, there is a personal penalty (karma), and anyone who breaks the law will suffer the consequences; (e) Being possessive is bad for relationships; to maintain love, people need to understand one another; (f) A true buddy is not a backhander but someone who can be trusted; a good dream is expected of everyone; (g) keeping a secret is the best way to maintain a relationship; (h) misunderstandings will occur if a couple doesn't communicate with one another; (i) love is faithful; and (j) everything can be done for.

Puspitorini and Hamdani (2021) conducted a study entitled "An Analysis of Figurative Language on the Lyrics of Coldplay's Selected Song". The aims of the study were to analyze the most figurative language used in the lyrics of Coldplay's songs and identify the common messages conveyed through the lyrics of Coldplay's songs. Most of the figurative language used in Coldplay's songs was hyperbole. Coldplay's songs were classified into connotative meanings. Figurative language is useful in the lyrics of some of Coldplay's songs in order to comprehend the music. The messages sent through the lyrics of Coldplay's songs were about human social life, which consists of love, sadness, happiness, spirit, and other feelings.

#### *FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE*

Figurative language refers to "a type of communication that does not use a word's strict or realistic meaning" (Ellis, 2023). Figurative language deviates from traditional, literal ways of describing people or objects through the use of numerous figures of speech (Reaske, 1966). In this context, figures of speech is defined as "any expressive use of language, as a metaphor, simile, personification, or antithesis, in which words are used in other than their literal sense, or in other than their ordinary locutions, in order to suggest a picture or image or for other special effect" (Collins, n.d.).

Figurative language, a linguistic phenomenon that includes numerous expressive forms such as metaphors, similes, and idioms, has received a great deal of academic attention. According to Kalandadze et al. (2018), using figurative language may enhance one's capacity for social communication and change readers' or listeners' perceptions of words or concepts by comparing them with different perspectives.

In the context of songs, songwriters employ figurative language to evoke feelings and facilitate listeners in creating mental images, so that they can form an attachment with the listeners in order for them to immerse themselves in the thoughts of the writers (Literary Devices, n.d.). Several examples of the types of figure of speech found in songs are shown in the following. In the song "My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion, the songwriter uses *hyperbole* in the line 'near far, wherever you are...' aimed to exaggerate the main

character's presence. In the song "Move Like Jagger" by Ben Minadeo, the writer uses the *simile* in 'I've got the moves like Jagger', to compare the singer's dancing skills with Mick Jagger's since Mick Jagger is famous for a unique dancing style. In "Skyscraper" sung by Demi Lovato, the line 'Skies are crying' contains *personification* as the 'skies' is portrayed to have a human trait, which is crying. In "Fire Work" by Katy Perry, there is a *metaphor* in the line, 'Do you ever feel, feel so paper thin', in which the writer tries to compare the weak-minded people to a thin paper (Literary Devices, n.d.). These examples show that literary and lyrical works benefit from figurative language since it helps boost their aesthetic and communication properties.

#### RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Data came from the lyrics of Christina Perri's songs. The data collection process started from reading the lyrics, and then finding the words, phrases or sentences containing types of figurative language. Then, the author classified the words, phrases or sentences into their figures of speech. The study analyzed the data by means of content analysis.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figurative language contribute to the richness and emotional depth of Christina Perri's song lyrics, creating a tapestry of meaning and resonating with listeners on a profound level. Christina Perri, a well-known singer-songwriter, has captivated fans with her expressive and heartfelt compositions, which are sometimes laced with a variety of figurative language. Her lyrical brilliance extends beyond mere words, as she expertly employs metaphors, similes, and other figurative elements in her music to portray complex emotions and narratives.

There are several types of figurative language found in Christina Perri's songs as follows:

##### *Metaphor*

Example: In "Jar of Hearts," Perri uses the metaphor of a "jar of hearts" to symbolize emotional baggage after a heartbreak.

##### *Simile*

Example: In "A Thousand Years," she employs simile with the line, "How to be brave, how can I love when I'm afraid to fall?" comparing love to bravery.

##### *Personification*

Example: In "Human," Perri personifies vulnerability with the line, "I'm only human, and I bleed when I fall down."

##### *Symbolism*

Example: In "The Lonely," she uses the symbol of a butterfly to represent personal transformation and overcoming loneliness.

##### *Alliteration*

Example: Alliteration is evident in "Arms" with the repetition of the "r" sound in "I hope that you see right through my walls."

*Assonance*

Example: In "A Thousand Years," there is assonance in the repetition of the long "i" sound in "I have died every day, waiting for you."

*Consonance*

Example: Consonance is present in "The Words" with the repetition of the "s" sound in "Say what you need to say, say what you need to say."

*Hyperbole*

Example: Hyperbole is used in "Human" with the exaggerated statement, "But I'm only human, and I bleed when I fall down."

*Oxymoron*

Example: An oxymoron is found in "Burning Gold" with the phrase "burning gold," juxtaposing elements of destruction and value.

*Imagery*


Example: Throughout various songs, Perri employs vivid imagery, such as in "The Lonely," where a butterfly symbolizes personal growth.

The usage of metaphor is a significant characteristic in Perri's song writing. In her hit single "Jar of Hearts," for example, she employs the image of a jar full with hearts to represent the emotional baggage that comes with heartbreak. The striking imagery of a jar and shattered hearts gives a powerful visual portrayal of the song's agony and betrayal.

Similes also play a significant role in Perri's lyrical repertoire. In "A Thousand Years," she compares love to a timeless journey, using the simile "How to be brave, how can I love when I'm afraid to fall?" The comparison of love to bravery and the fear of falling adds depth to the theme of enduring love, creating a poignant and relatable experience for the listeners.

Christina Perri's songs are known for their dramatic and contemplative lyrics, which frequently use metaphorical language to communicate complex feelings and experiences. Below is the descriptions of figurative language in Christina Perri's songs.

1. "Jar of Hearts"
  - *Metaphor*: The entire song revolves around the metaphor of a "jar of hearts," symbolizing the emotional pain and heartbreak stored in a past relationship. The metaphorical use of a jar implies the containment and preservation of these emotions.
2. "A Thousand Years"

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- *Simile*: The lyric "like a thousand years" in the line "I have loved you for a thousand years" uses a simile to emphasize the enduring nature of love. It compares the duration of the love to an extended period.
3. "Human"
    - *Personification*: The line "But I'm only human, and I bleed when I fall down" personifies the concept of being human, attributing qualities such as vulnerability and the ability to bleed (experience pain) to humanity.
  4. "Arms"
    - *Symbolism*: The repeated reference to "arms" in the song symbolizes comfort, security, and emotional support. The arms represent a metaphorical place of refuge and safety within the context of a relationship.
  5. "Burning Gold"
    - *Imagery*: The imagery of "We're on fire like a thousand suns" creates a vivid mental picture of intensity and passion in a relationship. The comparison to a thousand suns emphasizes the magnitude and brilliance of the emotional connection.
  6. "The Words"
    - *Metaphor and Symbolism*: The entire song revolves around the metaphor of "the words" as symbols of love and the challenges of expressing one's feelings. The lyrics explore the power and limitations of language in conveying complex emotions.
  7. "I Believe"
    - *Metaphor and Hyperbole*: The line "I believe if I knew where I was going, I'd lose my way" combines metaphor and hyperbole. The metaphor suggests a lack of clarity in life's journey, while the hyperbolic statement emphasizes the idea of embracing uncertainty.
  8. "Ave Maria"
    - *Allusion*: "Ave Maria" is a classical piece with lyrics that allude to the traditional Catholic prayer. The song combines Perri's unique interpretation with classical elements, creating an allusion to a well-known religious text.

These examples demonstrate how Christina Perri employs figurative language to convey nuanced thoughts, generate emotional depth, and engage listeners in a reflective and relatable manner. Her ability to blend metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, and other figurative devices contributes to the poetic and evocative nature of her song writing. Moreover, Perri demonstrates a keen sense of personification, giving human qualities to abstract concepts. In "Human," she personifies her vulnerability, singing, "I'm only human, and I bleed when I fall down." By recognizing common experiences, this personification of vulnerability helps to build a connection between the artist and the audience in addition to humanizing the emotional challenges.

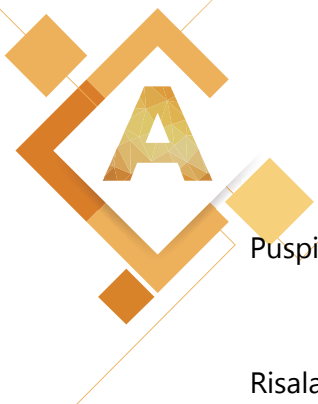
Additionally, Perri's songs often incorporate symbolism to enhance their lyrical impact. In "The Lonely," she uses the symbolism of a butterfly to represent personal transformation and overcoming loneliness. The butterfly's transformation into a powerful emblem of resistance and self-discovery adds layers of meaning to the song's tale. Finally, Christina Perri's songs demonstrate her skilled use of figurative language. Through metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism, she constructs rich storylines that connect with listeners on a deep emotional level. Her ability to paint vivid images with words enhances her music, making it more than just a musical feast but also a rich tapestry of emotions and storytelling.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the types of figures of speech used Christina Perri's songs. The findings revealed that there are many figures of speech employed in the songs, ranging from metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, alliteration, assonance, consonance, hyperbole, oxymoron, and imagery. The study on figurative languages in songs provides important educational implications such as promoting language proficiency, encouraging literary analysis and critical thinking, raising understanding of cultures, stimulating the creative process, and building emotional intelligence for students and teachers during teaching and learning process.

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