

## **HYPERBOLE IN THE LYRICS OF BILLIE EILISH'S "BIRDS OF A FEATHER" (2024)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the use of hyperbole in Billie Eilish's song lyrics, specifically in "Birds of A Feather." lyrics Hyperbole, as a form of figurative language, is often used to amplify ideas or emotions through exaggerated expressions. The study aims to identify and analyze the hyperbolic elements within these lyrics and interpret their meanings using Claridge's (2011) theory of figurative language and Leech's (1981) theory of meaning. The lyrics were sourced from Genius and analyzed using a descriptive method focused on identifying and interpreting hyperbole. The findings reveal six significant instances of hyperbole, primarily conveying affective, connotative, and reflected meanings. The study underscores how hyperbole in Eilish's lyrics intensifies the emotional impact, creating vivid imagery and conveying deep feelings of love, loss, and despair. This research contributes to a broader understanding of rhetorical devices in music.

**Keywords: Hyperbole, Figurative Language, Song Lyrics**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Humans are taught to use language since childhood so that they can convey what they want. With language, humans can communicate with other humans to build relationships. So humans are taught to use language to understand and channel thoughts to build relationships because according to Robbins and Judge's statement (2007) that communication is a way for humans to understand and comprehend a message conveyed by others. which also means that if someone's view does not reach others, then the message is meaningless. There are many ways to convey a message, one of which is by using a style of language or figurative language.

Figurative language is a tool in communication that allows writers and speakers to express ideas and emotions in a more creative and profound way. Kennedy (1979) defined figurative language as language that employs figures of speech. A figure of speech involves expressing something beyond the literal meaning of words, often used by speakers or writers to add freshness or emphasis by deviating from conventional word meanings. According to khairunnisa & juanda (2022) Figurative language involves using words or expressions with different meanings from their literal sense. It reveals hidden meanings to emphasize the intended message beyond what is directly expressed. Perrine (1981) describes figurative language as language that incorporates figures of speech. It involves expressing thoughts or emotions in an unusual or metaphorical way. From these three opinions, it can be concluded that figurative language uses expressions that are not in accordance with the literal meaning to express ideas or emotions in an unusual way, adding emphasis and hidden meaning to the message being conveyed. Perrine (1981)

identified 10 types of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole, understatement, and irony. With these 10 figurative languages categorized by Perrine, humans can use them according to their respective needs to convey an idea. but this study will only discuss one type of figurative language, namely hyperbole.

Without realizing it, hyperbole is a type of figurative language that is often used every day, for example "I'm scared to death". This sentence is said by the speaker to convey the idea that he is afraid and suppresses his fear emotionally by adding half-dead phrases using hyperbole. As according to (Claridge, 2011) Hyperbole is a form of statement that uses exaggeration or exaggeration to emphasize an idea or emotion. an idea that is emphasized or exaggerated can cause certain effects that can influence the perspective of the interlocutor or reader so that the idea intended by the speaker can be fully conveyed. Previous researchers such as Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) describe hyperbole as a form of exaggerated language used to create special effects. Not only as everyday language, musicians also express ideas and emotions into songs. As said by (Sari et al., 2022) There are many literary works that use hyperbole and one of them is song lyrics. by recognizing the hyperbole contained in the lyrics of the song and juxtaposing it with creative music, musicians can create various effects to convey ideas and emotions. Lyrics are a series of words that make up a song, usually consisting of several stanzas and a chorus. According to Luxemburg (1989), lyrics or song verses can be considered as poetry and have similarities with other forms of literary works, such as poetry texts, advertising phrases, proverbs, slogans, prayers, and song verses. Lyrics can be considered as sung poetry. Moeliono (2007) also states that lyrics are literary works that reflect personal feelings, arranged in words which then become a song. such as in billie eilish's lyric song entitled "Birds of a Feather".

Hyperbole in the lyrics of Billie Eilish's song, particularly in "Birds of a Feather," was chosen by the writer because the song is suspected to contain many hyperbolic expressions, making it a rich subject for analysis. Additionally, the song is currently very popular, ranking second on the Top 50 Global on Spotify. "Birds of a Feather" is also the most played song from Billie Eilish's latest album titled "Hit Me Hard and Soft." The popularity of this song makes it an interesting topic for readers who want to gain a deeper understanding of Billie Eilish's lyrics and writing style.

Given the diverse audience of this song, misunderstandings can arise that arise from people not understanding the meaning of the hyperbole. So this research will help readers understand the meaning of the hyperbole contained in the songs "Birds of a Feather" and the ideas and emotions expressed by the speaker or the song lyrics can be felt by the speaker or listener of the song.

To analyze the meaning, the author used Leech's theory (1981) which divides meaning into seven parts: conceptual, connotative, collocative, affective, social, reflectif and thematic meaning. Conceptual meaning refers to the denotative and cognitive meaning are other terms for conceptual meaning, including dictionary definitions and basic concepts of a word. This meaning is stable across contexts. Connotative Meaning involves the additional emotional or cultural association that a word has beyond its denotative meaning. This association can vary between individuals or communities, and can be positive, negative, or neutral. According to KD Jakautama and Bustam (2022), connotative meaning is a meaning that hides the real meaning or implied meaning. Collocative meaning pertains to the tendency of certain words to pair with other words, providing additional nuances of meaning beyond the individual meaning of the word.

Affective Meaning refers to the emotional or attitudinal connotations of words and expressions, including the feelings and sentiments they evoke. Social Meaning is related to social relationships, roles, and power structures that are conveyed through language. This includes how language reflects the norms, attitudes, and hierarchies of society. Reflected meaning this is the meaning suggested by a word's use in context, reflecting the speaker's personal attitudes, emotions, or beliefs. Thematic meaning involves how word arrangement in a sentence highlights its main theme or topic, with roles like "theme" and "rheme" shaping the flow of information.

Researchers found previous research on hyperbole in songs which helped researchers to update the research that researchers would examine. The first is research written by (Pratama, 2023) entitled "Hyperbole in Album "Ambitions" by One Ok Rock". By using descriptive methods to explain the meaning and observation methods and taking notes to collect data. This research aims to identify and analyze the meaning of hyperbole used in the song. This research uses theory (Leech, 1981) to analyze the meaning and theory of figurative language put forward (Abrams, 1999). This research succeeded in finding 10 hyperboles in song lyrics and found 2 types of meaning used, namely connotative and affective meaning.

Different from the research above. The research entitled "Hyperbole in Song Lyrics of Sempiternal Album by Bring Me The Horizon" written by (Sari et al., 2022) uses an older theory of figurative language. proposed by (Knickerbocker and Renninger, 1963) and uses the same theory of meaning used by researchers, namely the theory of meaning put forward (Leech, 1981). This research uses a descriptive method with the aim of identifying and analyzing the meaning of the lyrics of Bring Me The Horizon's album Sempiternal. The researcher stated that the dominant meaning in his research was the connotative meaning and hyperbole cannot be interpreted lexically because this research found 13 hyperboles and they contained 3 types of meaning, namely connotative, affective and conceptual.

Similar research (Bian et al., 2021) entitled "An Analysis of Hyperbole in the Drama "Romeo and Juliet" By William Shakespeare" also uses the theory of Knickerbocker and Renninger, 1963) to identify hyperbole and theory (Leech, 1981) to analyze its meaning . This research used the qualitative descriptive method and succeeded in finding 8 hyperboles with the highest use of connotative meaning in 6 data with a percentage of 75%.

From the three studies above, the researcher ensures that he will update the theory of figurative language as well as update the research object. This research will focus on hyperbole in one songs, namely 'Birds of a Feather' and using hyperbole theory (Claridge, 2011) and theory of meaning (Leech, 1981) to identify hyperbole and analyze the meaning of the lyrics of the song 'Birds of a Feather'

Thus, the purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the use of hyperbole in the lyrics of the song "Birds of a Feather" and reveal the meanings contained therein, so as to provide broader insight into rhetorical devices in music.

## **METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the use of hyperbole in the lyrics of Billie Eilish's song "Birds of a Feather". According to Moleong (2007) Descriptive research is a research method that utilizes written passages to examine data. The descriptive method was chosen because it is suitable for describing and analyzing

language phenomena in a particular context, namely the use of hyperbole in song lyrics. The main data source in this research is the lyrics of the song "Birds of a Feather" by Billie Eilish. The song lyrics are taken from the Genius platform. This song was chosen as the object of research due to its high popularity and allegedly contains many hyperbolic expressions, making it a rich subject for analysis.

Data was collected by repeatedly listening to the song "Birds of a Feather" to understand the overall context of the lyrics. After that, the song lyrics were analyzed to identify expressions containing hyperbole. Data collection was done systematically by recording every hyperbolic expression found in the song lyrics.

Data analysis was conducted using Claridge's (2011) theory of hyperbole to identify the forms of hyperbole in the lyrics. Furthermore, Leech's (1981) theory of meaning was used to analyze the meaning of the hyperbole found.

The research procedure involved the following steps:

- a) Data Collection: Identifying and collecting hyperbole expressions from the lyrics of the song "Birds of a Feather".
- b) Data Analysis: Analyzing each hyperbole expression found by using Claridge's (2011) and Leech's (1981) theories to understand the meaning behind the expression.

With these steps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the use of hyperbole in Billie Eilish's song lyrics and contribute to a broader understanding of rhetorical devices in music.

## RESULTS

Based on the analysis conducted, six hyperbole expressions were found in the lyrics of birds of a feather by billie elish. before analyzing more deeply, the author mentions some selected meanings of the 6 hyperbole expressions. the following data is presented in the form of a table containing the type of meaning of each hyperbole identified.

**Table 1.** Identification of Hyperbole and Types of Meaning in "Birds of a Feather" Song Lyrics

No	Lyric	Types of meaning
1	I want you to stay/Till I'm in the grave/Till I rot away, dead and buried/Till I'm in the casket you carry	Affective and Connotative
2	If you go, I'm goin' too, uh/ Cause it was always you (Alright)	Affective and Connotative
3	Nothin' left to lose without my baby	Affective and Reflected
5	I don't think I could love you more	Affective
6	I'll love you 'til the day that I die	Affective
7	I knew you in another life	Connotative

## DISCUSSION

### Data 1

"I want you to stay/Till I'm in the grave/Till I rot away, dead and buried/Till I'm in the casket you carry"

This expression can be categorized as hyperbole where the phrases "Till I'm in the grave," "Till I rot away, dead and buried," and "Till I'm in the casket you carry" exhibit an excessive use of language to depict the prolonged time someone wants another person to stay with them by using clear and extreme imagery of death. Literally, no one can stay with another person until they die and are buried.

The meaning of the above expression cannot be translated into denotative or literal meaning. Seen from the sentence "Till I'm in the grave," it is impossible for someone to want to stay with their partner while in the grave. Thus, the connotative meaning of this sentence is that the songwriter wants to always be with "you," which is clearly seen from the sentence "I want you to stay." Additionally, the sentences "Till I'm in the grave/Till I rot away, dead and buried/Till I'm in the casket you carry" indicate an exaggerated love and desire to be with "you," which is likened to the fact that even until death the writer wants to be with the person he is referring to, namely "you". This expression has **affective and connotative meanings**.

### Data 2

If you go, I'm goin' too, uh/ Cause it was always you (Alright)

This lyric is identified as containing hyperbole. because the phrase "If you go, I'm going too" exaggerates by implying that the departure of one person will automatically lead to the sending of another, which is literally impossible. This is an emotional expression that shows how deep the writer's suffering and dependence on her lover is, making life without her lover seem unthinkable. In addition, the phrase "Cause it was Always you" can also be considered hyperbole because it implies that no one else has ever meant or could mean as much as her lover, which is a very absolute and emotional statement.

These lyrics fall under **affective Meaning** because they are full of emotional nuances and feelings. The phrase "If you go, I'm going too" indicates an unwillingness to part and anxiety about loss. The sentence "it was always you" reflects deep love and dedication. These lyrics express strong feelings of attachment and commitment between two people.

### Data 3

And if I'm turning blue, please don't save me / Nothin' left to lose without my baby

The lyric "Nothing left to lose without my baby" is also hyperbole because it exaggerates the feeling of loss. The author states that without her lover, she feels like she has nothing left to lose, which is a very extreme and emotional statement, indicating that losing her lover is the greatest loss she could experience. Both of these phrases show how deep the author's feelings of loss and despair are without her lover, using hyperbole to express intense emotions.

The lyric "Nothin' left to lose without my baby" can be analyzed under **affective Meaning and reflected Meaning**. This lyric expresses deep emotional devastation. The speaker feels that without their loved one ("my baby"), they have lost everything that matters. The phrase "nothin' left to lose" indicates a state of complete emotional emptiness or despair, where the absence of the loved one has rendered everything else meaningless. The affective meaning here lies in the intense sorrow and desolation conveyed by the speaker, reflecting their emotional state.

In addition, the phrase also carries a reflected meaning in its expression of total loss. "Nothin' left to lose" implies that the speaker has already lost what they valued most, which reflects a sense of finality and resignation. The lyric suggests that the speaker's identity or purpose was deeply tied to their relationship, and without it, they feel they have nothing left to hold onto. This reflective aspect of the meaning emphasizes the depth of the speaker's connection to their "baby" and the profound impact of that loss.

#### **Data 4**

"I don't think I could love you more"

This expression can be categorized as hyperbole because the singer states that their love is at its maximum limit, which is an exaggeration. This statement is not meant to be taken literally but rather to convey how deep the speaker's love is.

The expression "I don't think I could love you more" falls under **affective meaning** because it conveys feelings or emotions. Affective meaning relates to the emotional or attitudinal associations of words and expressions. This includes feelings, sentiments, or emotional nuances that words can convey. This expression states a deep level of love and affection, possibly at its maximum level, towards someone. The speaker is expressing that their love is at its highest level.

#### **Data 5**

I'll love you 'til the day that I die

This expression can be categorized as hyperbole because it exaggerates by stating that love will last until the end of life, which is a very long and uncertain period. While this statement could be taken literally that love will last until death, in the context of figurative language, it is more a way to express deep and endless love.

The lyric "I'll love you 'til the day that I die" is best categorized under **affective Meaning** as well. This phrase expresses a strong, enduring emotional commitment. The speaker is conveying a deep and lasting love that will persist until their death, which highlights the intensity and permanence of the emotion. The primary focus of this lyric is on the emotional sentiment behind the promise of eternal love, making it a clear example of affective meaning, where the emotional and attitudinal aspects of language are central.

#### **Data 6**

I knew you in another life

The lyrics "I knew you in another life" contain hyperbole. This phrase exaggerates by implying that their relationship or connection is so strong that it feels like they have known each other in a previous life. Literally, this is impossible, so it is a dramatic way to express the depth and intimacy of their relationship.

The lyric "I knew you in another life" can be categorized under **connotative Meaning**. This phrase suggests a sense of familiarity or a deep connection that transcends the current life, implying a past or spiritual connection with someone. The idea of "another life" carries connotations of reincarnation, past lives, or a timeless bond, which are not part of the literal or dictionary meaning but rather evoke certain cultural, spiritual, or emotional associations. These additional layers of meaning and the imagery it evokes align with the concept of connotative meaning, where the focus is on the broader, often subjective associations that words and phrases carry.

## CONCLUSION

This study successfully identified six forms of hyperbole in Billie Eilish's song lyrics "Birds of a Feather." These hyperboles are used to express deep emotions such as love, loss, and despair in a dramatic and exaggerated manner. The author found affective, connotative, and reflective meanings, with affective meaning dominating the use of hyperbole in the lyrics, which serves to strengthen the emotional message and create strong imagery in the listener's mind. This research is consistent with the aim of analyzing the use of figurative language in song lyrics and provides new insights into how rhetorical devices like hyperbole can influence listeners' perceptions and emotions. The findings of this study enrich the understanding of the role of figurative language in music and how lyrics can be used to convey complex emotions.

Future research should include comparative analysis of different rhetorical devices across various music genres to enhance understanding of how different language styles create specific emotional effects. Additionally, research could explore how listeners from diverse cultural backgrounds interpret hyperbole in song lyrics.

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