

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN BRUNO MARS LYRICS

**Muziatun**

*Department of English Education, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia*  
Email: muziatun@ung.ac.id

**Fahria Malabar**

*Department of English Education, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia*  
Email: fahria@ung.ac.id

**Elvian Hanny Mitali**

*Department of English Education, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia*  
Email: elvianmitali4@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** Figurative language is a language style that is used in the story and has an effect to influence the readers or listeners (Buta et al., 2018; Harun, Yusuf, & Karnafi, 2020). Figurative language is also used by people to communicate (Colston, 2015; Colston & Gibbs, 2021; Colston & O'Brien, 2000). In communication, people communicate with each other using various ways, such as by using songs (Van Thao, 2021; Ward, Price, Davis, & Crowther, 2018). It is because in the song's lyrics there are many figurative languages (Bram & Avillanova, 2019; Yaito & Termjai, 2021). Then from the songs, people could convey their feeling and their conditions. The purpose of this research is to analyze the type of figurative language using the theory from Leech cited in H.D Trisna (2016). There are seven types of figurative language are *irony*, *hyperbola*, *metaphor*, *metonymy*, *litotes*, *simile*, and *personification*. The method used in this study is qualitative, because this study focused in analyzing the written material in context, included song's lyrics. The object of this research was Bruno Mars' song lyrics. However, the research only chooses three songs to analyze, they were *Grenade*, *Long distance*, and *Talking to the moon*. The research conducted some the analysis through some steps: *Identifying*, *classifying*, and *analyzing*. The result of the study indicate there are three figurative language used by Bruno Mars song lyrics. They are *hyperbola*, *simile*, and *personification*.

**Keywords:** *figurative language, irony, hyperbola, metaphor, litotes, simile, and personification.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in communication (Gibson et al., 2019; Ito, 2021; Lawal, 2021) between individuals and other people. Musliadi (2019) argues that language is one of the most significant talents people possess, since it serves as a tool for communication (Emmanuel & Aungston, 2021), the expression of ideas as well as the expression of emotions (Yüksel, 2021). Palviainen and Bergroth (2018) said that language refers to a collection of complex rules. While it comes to communication, language is essential in our everyday lives. Without language, it is impossible to transmit our intentions when carrying out a task or activity.

In language, some people have preferences in how language has been used. According to Hardini

and Sitohang (2019) when members of a specific civilization communicate with one another, they speak the language of that community. The advantage of employing diverse language types for us is that we may gain information while also making it simpler to interact with others, which is a win-win situation. There are many various mediums through which we may observe how someone employed language style differently, including song, poetry, book, and cinema.

Language is a fully human and instinctive manner of communicating ideas (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; Levelt, 2018), emotions (Hinojosa, Moreno, & Ferré, 2020; Satpute & Lindquist, 2021), and desires (López de Aguilera, Torras-Gómez, García-Carrión, & Flecha, 2020; Rasul, 2020) through the use of a system that

generates symbols of its own will. As a result, language may be defined as the ability of humans to communicate with one another through words. This also implies that language is a human issue about which individuals communicate, express themselves, and have a clear understanding of what they are discussing. When language is utilized between people and other groups, it serves a purposeful purpose that is beneficial to both parties. Because of this, language is an essential communication tool that enables individuals and other groups to express their own unique sense of self.

This research focuses on the use of figurative language in song lyrics, specifically in the lyrics of Bruno Mars songs, since the writer has access to a large number of figurative languages that may be studied. As a matter of fact, many students are unsure of how to interpret figurative language and how to categorize the many varieties of figurative language. Every song conveys a variety of meanings, which must be recognized and appreciated. In order to acquire a mutual understanding of precisely what the songwriters were attempting to portray. It is fascinating to examine the figurative language that is employed in the song lyrics of Bruno Mars, who is believed to be a prominent musician who typically creates his own songs, in light of this occurrence.

Three songs were chosen from among his many compositions. "*Grenade*," "*Long distance*," and "*Talking to the moon*" were the three songs that were chosen. The melodies of these three songs were chosen because they are among the most beautiful in the world. While listening to these three songs, one could notice that their calm and soft pace has the potential to wash away one's thoughts and sentiments. Another reason for selecting these three songs was that the song lyrics are considered to be excellent and are likely to be chosen by young people, which was another consideration. Due to the fact that the lyrics of these three songs generally represent someone's love story and since the lyrics of these three songs may include many different sorts of figurative language.

The term of figurative language refers to a language that makes extensive use of figures of speech (Markert & Hahn, 2020; Palguna, Juniarta, & Candra, 2021; Roberts & Kreuz, 1994). Figurative language is a figure of speech that refers to a language that makes extensive use of figures

(Harrington, 2018; Rahayu, 2021). The conventional and literal language used to describe persons or objects. The language of figurative poetry is the language in which poets express anything other than literary meaning. According to the description above, figurative language is a figure of speech that cannot be totally deduced from the words that comprise it. They are metaphorical or sometimes sarcastic in nature and are not taken literally.

#### *Types of figurative language*

##### *Irony*

Irony is one type of figurative language. Irony is a kind of figurative language in which something is said that is not true (Wilson, 2017; Wilson & Sperber, 1992). It is often used to quietly communicate or convey mockery. Thus, irony is a kind of sarcasm (Dane, 2011) in which genuine facts are concealed or subtle insinuation is expressed. Some examples of irony: (1) Jakarta is very beautiful with rubbish. (2) In this prison we are happy, actually.

##### *Hyperbole*

Hyperbole is the opposite of litotes, which is a form of language that expresses or explains a purposeful exaggeration (Claridge, 2010; Ibrakhimova, 2019; Turayevna, 2019). It is employed for dramatic effect and to emphasize the point. A hyperbolic figure of speech is one that is exaggerated to a great extent. Here are a few instances of hyperbole: (1) My love for you is as deep as the ocean, as large as the ocean. (2) He loves he for thousand years.

##### *Metaphor*

Using visuals, tales, or real-life examples, metaphors are one of the figurative languages that may be used to communicate the characteristics of someone or something (Burgers, Konijn, & Steen, 2016; Díaz-Peralta, 2018; Modell, 2009; Semino, DemjÉN, & Demmen, 2016; Steen, 2002). A metaphor is a figure of speech in which words or groups of words are used without regard to their real meaning, and in which something is expressed directly in the form of analogical analogies by omitting words where appropriate. Therefore, in the concept of metaphor, you should never trust anything you say. Here are a few of examples of metaphor: (1) Words are poisonous snakes. (2) The stages of love are stepping stones to death.

### *Metonymy*

Metonymy is a kind of figurative language in which one term is substituted for another that is closely linked to it (Gabidullina, Sokolova, Kolesnichenko, Zharikova, & Shlapakov, 2021; Radden & Kövecses, 1999). Thus, metonymy is a figure of speech in which one term is substituted with a closely similar one. Example of metonymy: I spent the night reading Shakespeare.

### *Litotes*

Litotes is a figure of speech that works in conjunction with other figures of speech to create new meaning (Mokhlola & Mukheefb, 2020; Monakhova & Pavlenkova, 2019). It is intended to fulfill the same function as other rhetorical forms in general, which is to demonstrate a rhetorical form as one of the components of language style. As a result, litotes is the language that is used to communicate a message meant to humiliate oneself. A few instances of metaphor may be found following: (1) This tea is not hot. (2) It is not bad.

### *Simile*

A simile is a figure of speech that contrasts two things, by using conjunctions (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang, Cai, Chen, Chen, & Song, 2019). Thus, a simile is a figure that expresses something indirectly by an explicit comparison expressed explicitly using conjunctions, for instance, *like*, as an example. The following are a few examples of simile: (1) They fight like dogs and cats. (2) My love for you is like the depth of the ocean, and the breadth of the ocean.

### *Personification*

Personification is one kind of comparison, that is, the way in which one item is compared to other things (Deyin, 2018; Fata & Aprilya, 2021). Thus, personification is a figure of speech that humanizes or imbues anything that is not human with human essence. Listed below are a few examples of personification: (1) My teddy bear gives me a big hug. (2) The sky full of dancing star.

## **METHOD**

The qualitative method was used in the design of this study. It was concerned with comprehending phenomena that cannot be quantified. This research used a qualitative approach in order to analyze the textual content in context. For the purposes of this

study, the content was limited to three chosen Bruno Mars lyrics. In summary, a qualitative technique is a sort of study that utilizes non-numerical data to obtain information. A descriptive approach is a kind of research strategy that entails looking for, gathering, categorizing, and evaluating data before making conclusions (Chelliah & Willem, 2010; Grimes & Schulz, 2002).

### *Identifying*

At this step, each sentence from the lyrics of three selected Bruno Mars' songs was recognized in order to classify them as figurative language. However, before recognizing the sentences to each song, these three songs' lyrics have been read and comprehended in order to familiarize oneself with their lyrics. Following that, the procedure of identifying the various types of figurative language was carried out. They were classified according to seven different forms of figurative language: irony, hyperbola, metaphor, metonymy, litotes, simile, and personification.

### *Classifying*

At this point, all of the sentences contained in the lyrics of these three Bruno Mars songs were categorized according to seven different types of figurative language.

Irony is one of the earliest forms of figurative language. The irony in the sentence was categorized based on the following parameters: (1) It contains an untrue term; (2) It employs temporal conjunctions such as *so*, *to say*, *then*; (3) It hides or conceals the true meaning of the truth; (4) It is subtle yet has a reasonably straightforward meaning. For example: *In this prison we are happy, actually*.

The second is hyperbola. The hyperbole in the sentence was classified using the following criteria: Exaggerated in its expression. For example: *He loves her for thousand years*.

The third is metaphor. The following criterion was used to classify the metaphor in the sentence: A comparative expression in which one of the comparison components makes use of connotative or associative terms. For example: *the stages of love are stepping stones to death*.

Metonymy is the fourth. A criterion was used to categorize the metonymy in the sentence was: An object or idea is represented or substituted by another thing that is widely thought to have a strong

resemblance to the notion or thing being expressed. For example: *I spent the night reading Shakes pear.*

The fifth is litotes. A number of factors determined the method by which the researchers discovered the litotes in a sentence: (1) To diminish or denigrate another person; (2) This figure of speech often seems overdone and contradicts the speakers' true reality. For example: *This tea is not hot.*

The sixth is simile. The following criterion was used to classify the simile in the sentence: Parables in which the terms *like* or *as* are used. For example: *They fight like dogs and cats.*

The seventh is personification. The personification in the sentence was classified using the following criterion: The sentence gives a glimpse of the thing as if it were alive. For example: *My teddy bear gives me a big hug.*

#### Analyzing

This section analyzes the seven types of figurative language using the following criteria:

**Irony.** The data include the example of irony that was analyzed based on its meaning using the stated criteria for irony. For instance, *"Jakarta is very beautiful with rubbish"*. This statement is classified as an irony since it is subtle yet conveys a very straightforward message.

**Hyperbole.** The data included an example of hyperbole that was analyzed for its meaning using the criteria for being identified as hyperbole. For instance, *"He loves her for thousand years"*. This statement is defined as a hyperbole according to the hyperbola definition, which states that a hyperbole

communicates an exaggerated way.

**Metaphor.** The data for metaphor was gathered and analyzed using the previously described criteria. For instance, *"the stages of love are stepping stones to death"*. This statement is a metaphor, since it meets the definition of a metaphor by including a comparison term. One of the comparison's components makes use of terms with connotative or associative meanings that are contained in that phrase.

**Metonymy.** Metonymy in the data presented and analyzed according to the metonymy criteria. For instance: *"I spent the night reading Shakespeare"*. This statement is a metonymy, since it contains an item or idea that has been represented or substituted by another entity that is commonly thought to have a close connection with the concept or thing being stated.

**Litotes.** Litotes in the data given and analyzed based on litotes criterion. For instance, *"This tea is not hot"*. This statement is litotes, since it implies lowering or demeanor oneself toward someone.

**Personification.** Personification presented and analyzed in accordance with the criteria for personification. For instance, *"My teddy bear gives me a big hug"*. This statement is an example of personification, since it creates an image of the thing as if it were living.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Following the completion of various procedures as outlined in the section on methodology, the following explanation of results might be explored in detail:

Table 1. *Figurative language in the data*

Songs	Lyrics	Types of Figurative Language						
		Irony	Hyperbola	Metaphor	Metonymy	Simile	Litotes	Personification
Grenade	I'd catch grenade for ya			✓				
	Throw my hand on a blade for ya			✓				
	I jumped in front of train a for ya			✓				
	You know I'd do anything for ya			✓				
	I would go through all this pain			✓				

	Take a bullet straight through my brain	✓	
	Yes, I would die for you baby	✓	
Long distance	This long distance is killing me		✓
	Now the minutes feel like hours	✓	
	And the hours like days	✓	
Talking to the moon	Talking to the moon		✓

Based on the table above, the usage of the types of figurative language in those songs are different. These types of figurative language have been circulated differently in these three songs of Bruno Mars. In these three songs of Bruno Mars, irony has not been used. It is also the case for the metaphor, as Bruno Mars has not integrated any metaphors in his three songs. Metonymy and litotes are also the same. It can be seen that in these three songs, Bruno Mars has not used metonymy and litotes at all. However, for the case of hyperbole, simile and personification are a little bit different. Hyperbole, simile and personification have been utilized in these three songs by Bruno Mars, although, they have been used in different way by the singer.

### Hyperbole

The first type and the most used of figurative language in the data was hyperbole. Hyperbole has been included by Bruno Mars in his three songs differently. Hyperbole is only found in his “Grenade” song, while it has never been found in other two songs – “Long distance” and “Talking to the moon”. There were seven data that are included in the hyperbola found in “Grenade” song. Those hyperboles in the data are:

- (Data 1) I’d catch grenade for ya
- (Data 2) Throw my hand on a blade for ya
- (Data 3) I’d jump in front of a train for ya
- (Data 4) You know I’d anything for ya
- (Data 5) I would go through all this pain
- (Data 6) Take a bullet straight through my brain
- (Data 7) Yes, I would die for you, baby.

The analysis of each hyperbole found in “Grenade” song is as followed:

Data 1. *I’d catch grenade for ya*. The first hyperbole used by Bruno Mars in his “Grenade” song is “I’d catch grenade for ya”. This sentence could be found in the lyric of “Grenade” song line nine. The reason for why “I’d catch grenade for ya” has been categorized as hyperbole in the data is because this sentence has fallen into the criteria of hyperbole as provided in methodology section. The sentence “I’d catch grenade for ya” has been categorized as an exaggerated sentence. It is because the singer seems to exaggerate his intention using this hyperbole sentence when expressing his intention about something in the lyric. In another sense, it could be stated that this sentence “I’d catch grenade for ya” refers to someone who does anything (and willing to do anything) for the person he loves, even though it could put his life at risk.

Data 2. *Throw my hand on a blade for ya*. The next hyperbole sentence used by Bruno Mars in his “Grenade” song was “Throw my hand on a blade for ya”. This second hyperbole sentence could be found in the line ten of the lyric of “Grenade” song. The reason of including “Throw my hand on a blade for ya” as a hyperbole in the data is because this sentence has fallen into the criteria of hyperbole as per explanation in the section of methodology. Similar to the previous explanation of the first hyperbole sentence found in “Grenade” song, this “Throw my hand on a blade for ya” sentence is also exaggerated in terms of meaning associated in the lyric. In another sense, this sentence “Throw my hand on a blade for ya” expresses a situation in

which a person who still does anything for someone he loves the most, even though it could endanger his life.

Data 3. *I'd jump in front of a train for ya*. The third hyperbole sentence in the data was "*I'd jump in front of a train for ya*". This sentence was appeared in the line 11<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Grenade*" song. The explanation of why this "*I'd jump in front of a train for ya*" has been considered as hyperbole in the data is mostly similar as the previous explanations of the two hyperbole sentences. As "*I'd jump in front of a train for ya*" has met the criteria of hyperbola per justifications in methodology section. The sentence "*I'd jump in front of a train for ya*" has a purpose to embellish the meaning by exaggerating. By using "*I'd jump in front of a train for ya*", it could be seen that someone wanted to do anything for the love one, although the actions may take his soul.

Data 4. *You know, I'd do anything for ya*. The fourth hyperbole sentence in the data found the sentence "*You know, I'd do anything for ya*". This sentence "*You know, I'd do anything for ya*" could be found in line 12<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Grenade*" song. In the data analysis, this sentence "*You know, I'd do anything for ya*" has been classified as hyperbole based on the criteria of hyperbole in methodology section. In addition to that, "*You know, I'd do anything for ya*" has been applied by Bruno Mars in his lyric song in order to show how big his love to his beloved on. He then conveyed the feeling by overstressing it using hyperbole. It is not a big deal for him to sacrifices himself.

Data 5. *I would go through all this pain*. The next hyperbole in the data taken from the lyric of "*Grenade*" song by Bruno Mars was the sentence "*I would go through all this pain*". This sentence "*I would go through all this pain*" has been appeared in line 13<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Grenade*" song. It is clear from the meaning that this sentence has fallen into hyperbole, as it is fitted to the description to be called as hyperbole from the explanation in the methodology section. It can be seen that Bruno Mars wanted to illustrate a situation in which he is exaggerated his love to someone by willingness to endure the pain he feels for the sake of those person he loves.

Data 6. *Take a bullet straight through my brain*. The next hyperbole found in the data from the lyric of "*Grenade*" song was the sentence "*Take a bullet straight through my brain*". This sentence "*Take a*

*bullet straight through my brain*" was found in line 14<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Grenade*" song. The reason of categorizing this sentence "*Take a bullet straight through my brain*" into hyperbola is because it could seen from the criteria of terms of hyperbola in the section of methodology. The indication of exaggerating the meaning as one precondition of being a hyperbole standout in "*Take a bullet straight through my brain*". Self-sacrifice and self-denial of someone in proving his love for the one he loves, wanted to be addressed by Bruno Mars in this song lyric with hyperbole.

Data 7. *Yes, I would die for you, baby*. The last hyperbole sentence found in the data gathered from the lyric of "*Grenade*" song was "*Yes, I would die for you, baby*". This last hyperbole is printed in line 15<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Grenade*" song by Bruno Mars. Based on the explanation provided in the section of methodology about the characteristic of being a hyperbole sentence, this sentence "*Yes, I would die for you, baby*" could be categorized as one of them. It is because in the sentence "*Yes, I would die for you, baby*" contains an exaggerated meaning. In the sentence "*Yes, I would die for you, baby*", it could be sensed a sacrifice or proof that someone wanted to show to the loves one by committing his life.

#### *Simile*

The second type and the second used of figurative language by Bruno Mars in the data was simile. Amongst the three of Bruno Mars' songs that become the data source of this research, simile has been found only in "*Long distance*" song. This means Bruno Mars did not use any simile in "*Grenade*" and "*Talking to the moon*". From the analysis of the "*Long distance*" lyric song by Bruno Mars, it could be detected that two sentences have been categorized as simile based on the criteria explained in the section of methodology. Those two similes in the data are as followed:

(Data 8)            Now the minutes feel like hours

(Data 9)            And the hours feel like days

The analysis of each simile found in the lyric of "*Long distance*" song by Bruno Mars presents following:

Data 8. *Now the minutes feel like hours*. In the data taken from the lyric of "*Long distance*" song by Bruno Mars, the first sentence that contains simile was "*Now the minutes feel like hours*". This sentence "*Now the minutes feel like hours*" found in line 19<sup>th</sup> of the lyric of "*Long distance*" song and

has been considered as simile in the data, since the sentence met the criteria to be called as simile based on the explanation provided in the section of methodology. One of the criteria to be classified as simile is when the sentence involved parables by integrating words such as *like* and *as*. Moreover, in the sentence "*Now the minutes feel like hours*" contains parable by using *feels like*. Two different notions of time – *minutes* and *hours* – have been compared and contrasted. In this lyric of "*Long distance*" song, Bruno Mars wanted to explicate how hard to be someone who are in love when experiencing a long-distance relationship with the loved one by using a simile in the sentence "*Now the minutes feel like hours*". Someone needs to put forth a significant amount of effort to see the love one when going through a long-distance relationship.

Data 9. *And the hours like days*. The last sentence in the lyric of "*Long distance*" song that is considered as simile in the data was "*And the hours like days*". This sentence "*And the hours like days*" found in line 20<sup>th</sup> of lyric of "*Long distance*" song. The explanation of why this sentence fallen into the category of simile in the data is because the sentence matched the description of being a simile based on the criteria provided in methodology section. This sentence "*And the hours like days*" contains parable by using *like*. Similar to the justification of the previous simile, simile was used by Bruno Mars to express how difficult it is to be in a long-distance relationship with a loved one by saying, "*Now the minutes seem like hours*". Long-distance relationships need a significant amount of work on the part of the couple in order to maintain their romance, and Bruno Mars expresses it with simile in this lyric.

### Personification

The last type and the second most used figurative language by Bruno Mars along with simile in the data was personification. The number of sentences that included as personification in the data was two sentences, which was similar to the number of simile found in the data. The first personification found in the data was in the lyric of "*Long distance*" song. It was:

(Data 10) This long distance is killing me

The second personification found in the data was gathered from the lyric of "*Talking to the moon*" song. The sentence was:

(Data 11) Talking to the moon

Bruno Mars, on the other hand, has not included any kind of personification in his song "*Grenade*". The following is the analysis for each of the personifications found in the data:

Data 10. *This long distance is killing me*. As per explanation previously, the first sentence that categorized as personification in the data was found in the lyric of "*Long distance*" song. This sentence was "*This long distance is killing me*". This sentence was printed in 15<sup>th</sup> line of the lyric of "*Long distance*" song. The sentence "*This long distance is killing me*" has been decided to be considered as personification in the data because it suits the explanation of the criteria of personification terms in methodology section. The criterion to be designated as personification is when a sentence delivers a statement in which an object treats as if it is alive. This condition could be found in "*This long distance is killing me*" sentence. In other words, the sentence "*This long distance is killing me*" refers to a person who is far away from the love one and the feeling of being in a state of "*Long distance*" may kill him. It is because the love one is not beside him. This might imply that Bruno Mars considers "*long distance*" to be something with a soul that is susceptible to death.

Data 11. *Talking to the moon*. The second personification found in the data was coming from the lyric of "*Talking to the moon*" song. It was found in the sentence "*Talking to the moon*" itself. This sentence could be seen in line 11<sup>th</sup> of "*Talking to the moon*" song lyric. This "*Talking to the moon*" is considered as personification in the data analysis, because of the similar explanation of the previous personification provided in data.10 above. The first reason is that this sentence "*Talking to the moon*" is matched the description of being called a personification based on the justification delivered in methodology section. Bruno Mars expresses the sentence "*Talking to the Moon*" in which he addresses the moon as if it were a sentient entity with a soul with whom he is able to converse.

### CONCLUSION

From the analysis presented in the previous section, it can be inferred that Bruno Mars has been utilized figurative language in different way in his three selected songs – "*Grenade*", "*Long distance*", and "*Talking to the moon*" for the purpose of this study. Amongst seven types of figurative languages –

irony, hyperbola, metaphor, metonymy, litotes, simile, and personification, only three types that have been found – hyperbole, simile and personification. This could be stated that Bruno Mars preferred these three types of figurative language. Moreover, amongst these three preferences of types of figurative language, hyperbole turned to be the most favorable one for Bruno Mars when writing the lyrics of his songs. It is because hyperbole was the most commonly found in these three selected songs that had been analyzed. Despite this, these hyperboles were only detected in the song "Grenade," and not in the other two. In contrast, Bruno Mars has only employed simile and personification twice in the whole data set, which may be considered the least suitable figurative language for him given his stage presence.

Regarding the explanation above, it can be concluded that songwriters often use and blend figurative language in the lyrics of their songs. The use of figurative language in this song is intended to accentuate the songwriter's objective in communicating something that is the primary subject of the composition. In order to sell more of the songs that they have written, it is anticipated that they would be able to impress listeners with the beauty of their figurative language through the lyrics of the songs they write, such as for the case of Bruno Mars as the main purposes of this study.

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