

# Figurative Language Found in the Album: Lyrics Entitled Closer by Josh Groban

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## ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out: (1) the types of figurative languages in the album lyrics entitled “Closer” by Josh Groban and which type of figurative language was the most dominant; 2) the meanings of those figurative languages; and 3) the implication for English Language Teaching. We collected the data from the album entitled “Closer” by Josh Groban released in November 2003. We analyzed by using the descriptive method. The result showed: 1) the types of figurative language found in the “Closer” album by Josh Groban’s Song Lyrics were Hyperbole, Metaphor, Rhetoric, Simile, Personification, Parallelism, Antithesis, Paradox, and Symbolism. The most dominant type of figurative language was Hyperbole with a percentage of 23%; 2) the meanings of those figurative languages in each song mostly to represent a man's feeling to a woman he loved. The author used hyperbole to represent his feeling and to convey the message. The lyrics have connotative meaning by using exaggerated words; 3) the implication for English Language teaching. This study result can be applied in teaching reading by using song lyric to teach types of figurative languages to Senior High School students with a teacher guide. The students can analyze lyric of the song. Then, the students translate and comprehend the meaning of the lyric, which contains figurative languages.

**Keywords:** Closer Album, Figurative Language, Josh Groban

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A song, usually with lyrics, is a brief piece of music. Although some composers have instrumental pieces composed or musical works that imitate the standard of a singing voice, though not words, it incorporates melody and vocals. A song's words are referred to as lyrics. The lyrics of songs love poetics, riming nature, even though they would be free prose or non-secular verses [1]. In every lovely literature, song is one. The song can be pleased to create someone's mood and make the beholder relax. We can be frenzied throughout the song by sensing the melodic, rhythm, and lyrics. In addition, folks can also dig deeper, which means inspiration for life from the album. There's so much of that to clarify the album. Paraphrasing is one in each of them. We are able to understand so many facets of culture from the poet or performer by knowing the context of the album. It can note the significance of the present message within the lyrics of the song by using the conceptual theory technique, which can incidentally be an area of science that studies the sign system. It began from the meaning of the symbol, informed by perceptions

and culture, and the way in which the sign of serving humans interprets the circumstances involved.

Listening to music is an enjoyable experience, but if they do not grasp the meaning of the song through understanding the figurative words commonly used in the song, the listeners would not be able to appreciate it [2][3]. There are some comparisons to a poem in the music. There has to be rhythmic music, and a poem does the same thing. One of the key elements is rhythm in both songs and poetry. Actually, there is also a form of poetry that is made into music called a lyric poem. They can be used in songs to express the thoughts and emotions of the poet.

Some writers have used figurative language to construct images in the minds of readers and to communicate ideas in fresh, vibrant, and creative ways [4]. Figurative language is described as something other than an ordinary way of expressing something. As a way of saying one thing and meaning another, figurative language is even more established. A part of Semantics is figurative language. It can be easy to understand figurative language by learning semantics. Metaphor, simile, personification, metaphors, hyperbola, irony,

understatement, etc. There are several forms of figurative language.

It will allow learners to understand figurative language through the introduction of song lyrics. Since it is nearest to human life, the songs are selected as the main object. In addition, it allows learners to grow, inspire and have a positive effect on learning the skills necessary for English language learners in a creative and imaginative way. Besides that, even in their spare time, songs are also heard in formal and informal circumstances.

Sometimes people don't focus on the lyrics used in a song when listening to a song. Because of the singer, people generally like the song or maybe the music is enjoyable. Sometimes, as people begin to concentrate on the lyrics, they find it difficult to grasp the meaning of the lyrics of the songs. Particularly when using figurative language in the lyrics. Understanding the meaning of the song lyrics is necessary to understand the message to be communicated by the songwriter.

Based on the above explanation, since almost all people want to listen to an album, the writer is interested in examining figurative language in the song. Sometimes, however, people listen to a song without knowing the song's meaning. Whereas, every song has messages for listeners to relay. Therefore, the data will be taken from songs in this study, particularly Josh Groban's songs. As the songs are meaningful and fun to be heard, the writer prefers Josh Groban's songs. The lyrics of the songs are often usually poetic so that the composer can find several figurative languages embedded in the song lyrics. Therefore, the writer is interested in improving the figurative language in the songs of Josh Groban by using the methodology of semantic analysis.

One example of songs with many listeners has more than 70 million viewers on Youtube, and in a lot of videos around the world is the songs from Josh Groban. The songs from Josh Groban became the back album and always affected everyone who listens to it. In "Closer" album, Josh Groban succeeded in singing the songs to modify the arrangement that could make these songs more touchful and make every person listen to this song touch and shade their tears. The songs in the album "Closer" were songs that have a beautiful and profound sense of wording. Besides that, the songs still have a lot of meaning within the lyrics that this song may have other purposes not only entertaining but also inspiring when the audience could take the value.

We utilize Reake's Figurative language theory since the theory supports the study issue of the researcher. Figurative language is a kind of language that departs from the usual literal forms of representing people of the language's object [5]. If a writer uses figurative language or literal language is typically instantly apparent. Furthermore, figurative language is a symbolic or metaphorical language and not intended to

be taken literally [6]. Figurative language is the language that avoids speaking about the topic under analysis explicitly or clearly. This theory enables the researcher to address the question of the researcher of this study. This theory incorporates several kinds of figurative language. It makes it easier for the investigator to analyze the figurative language in each song.

## **2. METHODS**

We used the descriptive qualitative method and analyzed the data from Josh Groban's The Closer Album lyrics to examine the document, interview, and book review [7]. We interviewed some validators considered to have adequate expertise in identifying and analyzing figurative language to ensure the validity or reliability of the writer's analysis of data. The lyrics of Josh Groban's song containing figurative language were the data from this analysis. The lyrics of songs contain words, phrases, or sentences based on the entire lyrics. Therefore, qualitative data was part of the knowledge in this report.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 The types of figurative languages found in the "Closer" album by Josh Groban's Song Lyric and which were the most dominant**

After doing analysis, the writer found several types of figurative languages in the "Closer" album by Josh Groban's Song Lyrics are Hyperbole, Metaphor, Rhetoric, Simile, Personification, Parallelism, Antithesis, Paradox, and Symbolism.

The top three most dominant figurative language used in the "Closer" album by Josh Groban were Hyperbole (23%), Metaphor (19%), and Rhetoric (18%).

We found hyperbole as the most dominant figurative language used in the song lyrics of Josh Groban. Hyperbole is simply exaggeration, but exaggeration in the service of reality [8]. There's a lot of hyperbole data from the lyrics of Song Lyrics by Josh Groban. To highlight the sentence containing an exaggeration, the author of the song used hyperbole. It is used to communicate a strong feeling or create a strong impression, and is not meant to be literally understood. The use of it to exaggerate an incident rather than fact, and in order to ensure the listeners, the author used hyperbole to explain the strong feeling. Then, by the representation of the word itself, the listeners will be reassured.

### **3.2. The meanings of Figurative Languages Found in the "Closer" Album By Josh Groban's Song Lyric**

In this study, we discussed about the figurative language based on Perrine's theory. There are twelve types of figurative language, such as simile, metaphor,

personification, apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, hyperbole/overstatement, understatement, and irony [8]. In the album Closer by Josh Groban, the writer didn't find Apostrophe, synecdoche, metonymy, allegory, understatement, and irony. The writer found simile, metaphor, personification, symbol, paradox, hyperbole/overstatement.

### 3.2.1. Simile

Simile is a way to contrast items which are inherently distinct. Some terms, such as 'like', 'as', 'so', which draw attention to the resemblance, typically add a simile, but not all that is required for the simile is that both sides of comparison are indicated [8]. Similes are comparisons of 'like' or 'as' between two subjects. Simile is a figure of speech in which, using like or as, more or less fanciful or unrealistic analogy is made.

#### A. Song entitled "When you say you loved me"

- 1) S.1. L1: *Like* the sound of silence calling  
The meaning of this lyric is the girl's sound is like the sound of silence calling. It is his inability of to communicate with each other emotionally.
- 2) S.1. L4: *Like* the echoes of our souls are meeting  
The meaning of this lyric is both of them don't speak each other, but just the voice inside them do.
- 3) S.3. L5: There are times I swear I feel *like* I can fly  
The meaning of this lyric is the author feels there are moments where he can fly.

#### B. Song entitled "She's out of my life"

- S.1. L.1 and S.4. L.5: And it cuts *like* a knife  
The meaning of this lyric is the author felt hurt at the moment when he was left by his girlfriend, and it feels like a knife hurts him.

#### C. Song entitled "You are the only place"

- 1) S.1. L.1: Seems *like* our love is on a road to nowhere fast  
The meaning of this lyric is the author felt that their love was on a swift path to nowhere.
- 2) S.1. L.2: All my life I thought a love *like* this would last  
The meaning of this lyric is the author thought that his love would last all of his life, in fact it didn't.

#### D. Song entitled "My December"

- 1) S.2. L.2: *Like* there was something I missed  
The meaning of this lyric is the author didn't want to feel like he lost something there.
- 2) S.2. L.4: To make you feel *like* that

The meaning of this lyric is the author regretted something and wanted to took back all the things he said to make his love one didn't feel something like that.

### 3.2.2. Metaphor

The metaphor is figurative expression, which explicitly contrasts one thing with another. Metaphors equate two subjects directly. Metaphor is a speech figure that contrasts two items in succinct terms by stating that one is the other [8].

#### A. Song entitled "My December"

- 1) S.1.L6: This is my snow covered dreams

The meaning of this lyric is he defined his life during this December is like snow covered dreams.

- 2) S.2.L6: These are mysnow covered dreams  
The meaning of this lyric is he defined his life during these December are like snow covered dreams.

#### B. Song entitled "You are the only place"

- 1) S.3.L6: And you're the only place my heart has ever been  
The meaning of this lyric is that his love one was the only place that has ever been in his heart.

- 2) S.4.L6: But loving you I thought was greater than them all

The meaning of this lyric is that loving his love one is greater than anything in the world.

#### C. Song entitled "When you say you love me"

- 1) S.3.L3: You're where I belong  
The meaning of this lyric is that he figured out that his love one was the place where he belonged.

#### D. Song entitled "Broken Vow"

- 1) S.3.L4: More than a broken vow  
The meaning of this lyric is that he had found a way to keep something more than a broken vow.
- 2) S.6.L3: There's more to love than only bitterness and lies  
The meaning of this lyric is that there is more to love rather than resentment and deceit.

#### E. Song entitled "You raise me up"

- 1) S.2.L4: You raise me up, to more than I can be  
The meaning of this lyric is that someone lifted he up, to more than someone he could be at the moment.
- 2) S.1.L1: When I am down and oh my soul, so weary"  
The lyric above included metaphor to help explain how tired and heavy he feels ...oh my soul, so weary shows that he is feeling tired.

- 3) S.1.L2: ...my heart burdened be

The meaning of this lyric represents the heaviness his body is feeling for the struggle that he is having.

#### F. Song entitled "Never Let Go"

- S.1.L2: The search for an answer is met with a darker day  
The meaning of this lyric is he met a darker day than he used to when he searched for answer about his love.

#### G. Song entitled "She's out of my life"

- S.3.L1: So, I've learned that love's not possession  
The meaning of this lyric is that he discovered that love is not ownership.

### 3.2.3. Personification

Personification is a statement attributing human attributes, such as objects or animals, to non-human beings. People say, for example, the wind howls or chance knocks. Neither the wind nor chance may do these things, but a clear concept is vividly communicated by these personifications [8]. The assignment of human traits to non-humans is personification.

#### a. Song entitled "When You Say You Love Me"

- 1) S.1.L1: Like the sound of *silence calling*  
The meaning of the lyric above, the silence has the characteristic like a man. Whereas, as we know in the fact, it is clear that the silence is an abstract thing and

cannot call anything. But because it used the type of figurative language personification, so the silence like a man which has the same characteristic. The true meaning of the lyric above is an inability of to communicate with each other emotionally.

2) S.1.L.4: Like *the echoes of our souls are meeting*

The meaning of the lyric above, the *echoes of our souls* has the characteristic like a man. Whereas, as we know in the fact, it is clear that the *echoes of our souls* is an abstract thing and cannot meet anything. But because it used the type of figurative language personification, so the *echoes of our souls* like a man which has the same characteristic. The true meaning of the lyric above is both of them don't speak each other, but just the voice inside them do.

3) S.2.L.2: The *world goes still*, so still inside and

The meaning of the lyric above, the *world* has the characteristic like a man. Whereas, as we know in the fact, it is clear that the *world* cannot go anywhere. But because it used the type of figurative language personification, so the *world* like a man which has the same characteristic. The true meaning of the lyric above is when his love one told him that she loved him, he felt like the world is stop, there was not any movement, the time stopped, and so on.

#### **B. Song entitled "You are the only place"**

S.1.L.1: Seems like our love is on a road to nowhere fast  
The meaning of the lyric above, our love has the characteristic like a man. Whereas, as we know in the fact, it is clear that *our love* cannot go anywhere. But because it used the type of figurative language personification, so *our love* like a man which has the same characteristic. The true meaning of the lyric above is his love had gone forever.

#### **3.2.4. Symbolism**

Symbolism is the practice or art of expressing an abstract concept by using an object or a phrase. An event, person, location, word, or object may all have a meaning that is symbolic [8].

#### **A. Song entitled "You raise me up"**

1) S.2.L.1: "You raise me up..."

The lyric above included Symbolism because it does not mean that the person is actually being lifted up but that they are feeling higher and strong.

2) S.2.L.2: ".....So I can stand on mountains"

The lyric above included Symbolism because it symbolizes the person feeling they can stand tall.

3) S.2.L.3: ".....To walk on stormy seas..."

The lyric above included Symbolism because it symbolizes the person being able to get through difficult times

4) S.2.L.4: "I am strong when I am on your shoulders"

The lyric above included Symbolism because it symbolizes the person feeling better know that they have the support of the important person in their life.

#### **3.2.5. Paradox**

A paradox is an obvious inconsistency that is nevertheless real nonetheless. Paradox is a statement that may seem contradictory, incredible or absurd, but that may actually be valid.

#### **A. Song entitled "You are the only place"**

S.2.L.2: We had the space to *fly* and still a place to *land*  
It was the contradiction between space to fly and place to land. The meaning of the lyric above is that the the author thought that he still had hope for his love.

#### **B. Song entitled "Broken Vow"**

S.4.L.1: *Tell me* the words I *never said*

It was the contradiction between space to *tell the words* and *never said*. The meaning of the lyric above is that the author wanted that his love one to prove something.

S.4.L.2: *Show* me the tears you *never shed*

It was the contradiction between space to *show the tears* and *never shed*. The meaning of the lyric above is that the author wanted that his love one to prove her words.

#### **3.2.6 Hyperbole**

Overstatement or hyperbole is merely exaggeration in the service of reality, yet exaggeration [8]. To add color and dimension to a character, hyperbole may be applied to fiction. Hyperbole is an overstatement or exaggeration. The distortion is so great that the argument should not be taken literally by anyone. Hyperbole, typically intentional and not intended to be taken literally, is an exaggeration or over-statement.

#### **A. Song entitled "When You Say You Love Me"**

1) S.1.L.5: "....., my heart stops beating"

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was shocked, surprised or experienced something that was unpredictable or unexpected.

2) S.3.L.9: I'm frozen in time

The meaning of the lyric above is that the author felt confused, desperate and he didn't know what to do whether to laugh or cry.

3) S.1.L.9: At times I can hardly breathe

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was shocked, surprised or experienced something that was unpredictable or unexpected.

4) S.2.L.4: For a moment, there's no one else alive

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was shocked, surprised or experienced something that was unpredictable or unexpected.

5) S.3.L.5: ".....I feel like I can fly"

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was shocked, surprised or experienced something that was unpredictable or unexpected and he felt overwhelming until he felt that he could fly.

#### **B. Song entitled "You raise me up"**

1) S.2.L.1: ".....so I can *stand on mountains*

2) S.2.L.2: ".....*to walk on stormy seas*

The true meaning of these two lyrics is about the way someone meaning in life helps us learn. That person helps struggles in life and provides solutions or is always by our side when difficult. So, we become stronger individuals than before. There are actually a lot of opinions about this song about who it is. Some people believe this song is religious and the person who helps us through all problems is God. Many others relate this song to someone in their lives, a parent, a grandparent, a spouse, a child or a friend.

Besides the type of figurative based on Perrine's theory, the writer found some another types of figurative language, such as:

### 1. Antithesis

Antithesis occurs when pairs or more are viewed together with strongly contrasting words [4]. There is a certain amount of resulting tension that makes the line highly offensive if phrase, thoughts, or clause are widely divergent but present together. There is usually grammatical equilibrium in antithesis, as well as contrast in context. Antithesis is the opposite words or collection of words of a figurative language employee, which contain opposing concepts. Antithesis is a speech of figures that contrasts two items that are opposite.

#### A. Song entitled "When You Say You Love Me"

S.3.L.8: The *Heavens* and *Earth*

The lyric compares two things which are opposite; heavens and earth. The meaning of the lyric above is that the author felt that he was standing between heavens and earth.

#### B. Song entitled "She's out of my life"

1) S.1.L.2: And I don't know whether to *laugh* or *cry*

The meaning of the lyric above is that the author felt confused, desperate and he didn't know what to do whether to laugh or cry.

2) S.1.L.3: I don't know whether to live or die

The meaning of the lyric above is that the author felt confused, desperate and he didn't know what to do whether to live or die.

### 2. Rhetoric

H-by-question statistic, which does not really need to be answered since the question's response is already included in the question [4].

#### A. Song entitled "When You Say You Love Me"

1) S.1.L.7: I wonder what it means

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out the meaning of love.

2) S.1.L.8: What could it be that comes over me?

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out what happened to him, that he was in love.

#### B. Song entitled "You are the only place"

1) S.1.L.6: But who controls love's destiny? Not me

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out who controls love's destiny? And we know the answer is the Almighty does.

2) S.3.L.2: Who can save us from what we've done

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out Who can save us from what we've done; And we know the answer is the Almighty.

#### C. Song entitled "Broken Vow"

1) S.1.L.4: Why you and me came to an end

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out why they were broke.

2) S.2.L.2: Who broke my faith in all these years

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out why they were broke.

3) S.2.L.3: Who lays with you at night while I'm here all alone

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out why their love were broke.

4) S.3.L.2: Why do I keep on asking why?

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out the answer to all the questions in his head.

5) S.4.L.4: or has it vanished for all time?

The true meaning of this lyric is the author was trying find out why their love was disappeared.

### 3. Parallelism

Parallelism is a figurative language used in the same grammatical form to achieve continuity in the use of words or phrases that have the same function [4]. Parallelism is the state of being or corresponding in some way in parallel and the use in poetry or prose of successive verbal construction that corresponds to grammatical form, tone, meter, meaning, etc.

#### A. Song entitled "Never Let Go"

S.2. L.5: *Take* a step and *take* my hand

The meaning of the song lyric above is to move forward together with the author.

#### B. Song entitled "Broken Vow"

1) S.1.L.3: I need to see his face, I need to understand

The meaning of the song lyric above is he needs explanation from someone he loved.

2) S.3.L.1 & S.5.L.1: I *let* you go, I *let* you fly

The meaning of the song lyric above is he released his love one to go away.

### 3.3. The theoretical implication for English Language Teaching

Considering that figurative language teaching is not easy, English lecturers should therefore apply more interesting teaching strategies, such as the use of songs as media. It is hoped that authentic materials such as songs can be used more often as additional materials, so that students can learn English and have fun at the same time.

Previous studies have shown positive effects of songs in increasing the acquisition of vocabulary by students, particularly in understanding literary works. The uses of songs reduced the stress of students in learning the meanings or figurative language transferred; thus, songs will increase the self-confidence of students in learning English [9].

The teacher must be able to expose students to and teach literature and be able to become interested in literature. Literature is a very flexible topic and is commonly considered to be one of the most difficult subjects to teach. In addition, comprehension of intrinsic and extrinsic elements is an important point in literature learning. The teachers' main role, however, is not to teach students to be intelligent, but to direct, empower and enable students to be autonomous in promoting knowledge [10]. In addition, one of the subconscious acquisitions is considered to be learning figurative language through music [11]. In this phase, students unconsciously increase their mastery of vocabulary while they enjoy doing everyday activities. Therefore, learners will not only concentrate on the grammatical elements as they do as they study actively. This idea is supported by the study by [11], which also showed that songs have

positive influences on the enrichment of student vocabulary as students can learn a foreign language in a more natural way.

Based on the explanation above, it is suggested that teachers use songs that could help learners learn figurative language. Figurative language can also not be overlooked or viewed as if it were a very complicated subject because it has unique meanings and unusual symbols, and includes a mixture of words that often have a new perspective and meanings on the word.

This study outcome can be extended to teaching reading using song lyrics to teach Senior High School students figurative language forms as written with a teacher guide in the syllabus. Students should evaluate the song's lyrics. The students then interpret and appreciate the meaning of songs containing figurative languages.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results in the previous chapter, some conclusions could be presented as follows.

- a. The types of figurative languages found in the "Closer" album by Josh Groban's Song Lyrics were Hyperbole, Metaphor, Rhetoric, Simile, Personification, Parallelism, Antithesis, Paradox, and Symbolism. The most dominant types of figurative language was Hyperbole with the percentage of 23%.
- b. The meanings of those figurative languages in each song mostly to represent the feeling of a man to a woman he loved. With hyperbole was dominated in this research, the author used hyperbole to represent his feeling and to convey the message so the lyrics had connotative meaning by using exaggerate words.
- c. The implication for English Language teaching, this research result can be applied in teaching reading by using song lyrics to teach types of figurative languages to Senior High School students with a teacher guide. The students can analyze lyrics of the song. Then, the students translate and comprehend the meaning of the lyric which contains figurative languages.

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