

## Figure of Speech Stylistic Analysis on Selected Song Lyric in GUTS Album by Olivia Rodrigo

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### Abstract

This study conducts a figure of speech stylistic analysis on selected song lyrics from Olivia Rodrigo's "GUTS" album, "The Grudge," "Lacy," and "Making the Bed." Grounded in the theoretical framework of K.L Knickerbocker and H Willard Reninger (1963), the analysis explores various figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, synecdoche, personification, metonymy, irony, paradox, and allusion. The research aims to unravel Olivia Rodrigo's stylistic choices and determine the most dominant figure of speech used in the selected songs. Data collection techniques in this study are: listen to the songs, read the songs lyric intensively, marking words, clauses, or sentences containing figure of speech proposed by K.L Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger (1963) and put it on a table. This study also determines the most dominant figures of speech are found in selected song's lyrics in "GUTS" album by Olivia Rodrigo. Through a systematic analysis, the findings of this study found 142 figures of speech contained in the selected song lyrics, with hyperbole emerging as the most dominant. The findings highlight Rodrigo's adeptness in using linguistic devices to convey powerful messages and evoke emotions, contributing to a deeper understanding of the artistic and expressive qualities embedded in contemporary music lyrics.

**Keywords:** Figure of Speech, Olivia Rodrigo, Song Lyrics, Stylistic

### Introduction

Humans utilize language as a means of communication; it plays a vital function in social life. Language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols utilized by members of social organizations to identify themselves, collaborate, and communicate (Chaer, 2014:32). Hall (1968) made a similar assertion, proposing that language functions as an establishment through which individuals interact and communicate by means of arbitrary spoken-hearing symbols that are widely employed. Conversely, language can also be regarded as a vehicle for individual expression, as evidenced by a multitude of literary compositions. The majority of literary works depict the author's or person's social existence. Through the dissemination of ideas and information, language serves as the medium. There are two distinct modes of language: written and spoken. The characteristics of each language are determined by the way in which its speakers speak that language. It concerns language usage within a particular setting, by a particular individual, and for a particular objective. The application of language style extends to both spoken and written communication.

The field of stylistics is an application of the discipline of linguistics. Its primary function was to assess the manner in which textual context was presented. The purpose of stylistic in this context is to interpret textual. By employing stylistics, one can evaluate the influence of linguistic elements on literary effects (Naciscione, 2010). Stylistic figures of speech, also known simply as figures of speech, are linguistic devices and techniques used to enhance the meaning, beauty, and effectiveness of language. According to Perrine (1969: 65), figures of speech are any way of saying something other than the ordinary way. These figures

often involve deviations from the ordinary or literal meaning of words to create a more imaginative and expressive effect. They are commonly used in literature, poetry, rhetoric, and everyday language to add emphasis, evoke emotions, and create vivid imagery. In the realm of contemporary music, lyrics serve as a powerful medium for artistic expression, enabling musicians to convey intricate emotions and narratives. A song is a lyrical poem which is sung with the playing of some musical instrument. It is a very old form of literature which is passed from one generation to the other generation. Like poetry, song lyrics use language and often incorporate poetic devices such as metaphors, similes, and symbolism to convey meaning and evoke emotions.

Figures of speech contribute to the semantic richness of language by providing creative and expressive ways to convey meaning, making the study of semantics crucial for understanding how these linguistic devices function within the broader context of language use. According to K.L Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger (1963), figure of speech divided into several types: metaphor, simile, hyperbole, synecdoche, personification, metonymy, irony, paradox, and allusion. Metaphor is a comparative allusion implicitly but without the use of "like", or "as", example "*He is the sun in my life*". Simile is an expression comparing two different things by using the word or phrase, such as like, as, than, similar to, resembles, or seems. An example of this figure of speech is "*She runs faster than a cheetah*". Hyperbole is an exaggerated word used for special effects, example "*I've told you a million times to clean your room!*". Synecdoche is figure of speech which uses part of something to represent the whole or uses the whole of something to represent part of it, the example is "*The pen is mightier than the sword*". Personification gives the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object, or a concept. Kennedy (1979: 495) adds some description that personification delivers a dramatic effect when non-human entities are given the human qualities, the example is "*The stars winked at us from the night sky*". Metonymy is a figure of speech that refers to one thing by using the term for another thing that is closely related to it, an example from this figure of speech is "*The pen is the voice of the poet*". Irony is the statement in which the meaning that the speaker expresses has sharply different meaning from the speaker implies (Abrams, 2009:165). An example is, "*A fire station burns down*". A Paradox is a statement that at first glance looks unreasonable, even absurd, but which, upon closer examination, makes perfect sense, the example is "*I can resist anything but temptation*" - Oscar Wilde. In this example, the paradox lies in the contradiction between the ability to resist anything and the inability to resist temptation. Allusion is a reference to a well-known place, event, or person. Not literally, but in the sense that the figure carries more information than its exact meaning. Example of this figure of speech is "*Man, he's like the Einstein of our generation!*". That's an allusion because it's referencing the famous scientist Albert Einstein to describe how intelligent this person is. It's like giving a nod to someone well-known to convey a deeper meaning. By examining the selected song lyrics, this study seeks to understand how Olivia Rodrigo employs these figures of speech to convey deeper meanings, evoke emotions, and captivate her audience. The theoretical framework utilized in this analysis draws upon the works of K.L Knickerbocker and H Willard Reninger (1963), esteemed scholars in the field of stylistics and figure of speech. Their theories provide valuable insights into the application and significance of figures of speech in literary and artistic compositions, enabling a comprehensive examination of the lyrics within the context of contemporary music.

Through a systematic analysis of the selected song lyrics, this research aims to unravel the figure of speech stylistic choices made by Olivia Rodrigo and determining the most dominant figure of speech are used in selected songs lyric in "GUTS" album. By identifying and interpreting the figures of speech employed, the study will provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which language is utilized to convey powerful messages and evoke emotions.

The analysis seeks to unravel the artistic and expressive qualities of the lyrics by examining the implementation of various figures of speech.

### Theory and Method

The research employed a descriptive methodology with a qualitative approach, utilizing natural features (natural setting) as the primary source of data. Descriptive qualitative research, according to Moleong (2016: 6), is a study that describes how to comprehend the phenomenon of the research subject, behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically, as well as the manner of expressing the outcome in words and sentences. The primary data source utilized in this research are the selected songs lyric on "GUTS" Album by Olivia Rodrigo. The researchers choose 3 songs as the data to analyze in this study, namely The Grudge, Lacy, and Making the bed. According to K.L Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger (1963), figure of speech divided into several types, namely, Metaphor, Simile, Hyperbole, Synecdoche, Personification, Metonymy, Irony, Paradox and Allusion. The researchers interesting in analyzing the selected songs lyric on "GUTS" Album by Olivia Rodrigo, because it containing a lot of figure of speech. Olivia Rodrigo as the singer and the song writer in this album said that this album is about pain and trying to find her identity in life. Data collection technique in this study are: listen to the songs, read the songs lyric intensively, marking words, clauses, or sentences containing figure of speech proposed by K.L Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger (1963) and put it on a table. This Study also determining the most dominant figure of speech are found in selected songs lyric in "GUTS" album by Olivia Rodrigo.

### Findings

The data taken for this analysis was 3 song lyrics, namely, The Grudge, Lacy and Making the bed from "GUTS" Album by Olivia Rodrigo that release in 2023. The researchers analyzed figure of speech proposed by K.L Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger (1963) in the song lyrics. The following table is the findings from this research:

**Table 1.** Research Findings

Figure of speech	Amounts
Metaphor	10
Simile	13
Hyperbole	29
Synecdoche	20
Personification	21
Metonymy	14
Irony	11
Paradox	11
Allusion	13
<b>Total:</b>	<b>142</b>

Table 1. presents the number of types of figures of speech in the lyrics of selected songs on the "GUTS" album, namely, The grudge, Lacy, and Making the bed. Based on this table, the number of metaphors is 10, Simile is 13, Hyperbole is 29, Synecdoche is 20, personification is 21, metonymy is 14, irony is 11, paradox is 11, and allusion is 13 with a total of 142 figures of speech found in the song's lyrics.

## Discussion

### 1. Metaphor

*"Aren't you the sweetest thing on this side of hell?" (Line 2-Lacy)*

The line above containing metaphor because the singer is likening someone (possibly Lacy) to the "*sweetest thing*." The use of "*on this side of hell*" adds a contrasting element, emphasizing the extreme sweetness of the person in a context that typically conveys negativity. The metaphor implies that despite being in a challenging or difficult situation "*hell*", the person stands out as exceptionally sweet or likable.

*"Another day pretendin' I'm older than I am," (Line 6-Making the bed)*

Another example of metaphor contained in this line. Here, the singer is making a comparison between their actual age and the persona they are presenting or trying to embody. The act of pretending to be older serves as a metaphorical comparison, highlighting the disparity between the singer's real age and the image they are projecting. This metaphorical expression emphasizes the discrepancy or contrast between the external appearance and internal reality of the singer's age and maturity.

*"Trust that you betrayed, confusion that still lingers," (Line 3-The grudge)*

In this line, there isn't a direct comparison metaphor. Instead, the lyric uses a metaphor to convey a sense of betrayal and its lingering impact. The metaphorical expression is "*confusion that still lingers*," where confusion is compared to something that remains or persists over time, emphasizing the lasting emotional impact of the betrayal.

### 2. Simile

*"They tell me that they love me like I'm some tourist attraction" (Line 25-Making the bed)*

The lyric above comparing two different things by using the word "*like*". This simile compares the way someone expresses love to the speaker to the attention given to a tourist attraction, possibly highlighting a superficial or temporary nature.

*"But I hold onto every detail like my life depends on it" (Line 6-The grudge)*

The metaphor from this line is "*like my life depends on it*." This simile compares the act of holding onto every detail to the intensity and importance of holding onto something as crucial as one's life. It emphasizes the strong and desperate nature of the singer's attachment to the details.

*"Lacy, oh, Lacy, skin like puff pastry." (Line 1-Lacy)*

This simile compares Lacy's skin to puff pastry, suggesting a delicate and perhaps soft texture, emphasizing a specific quality or characteristic of Lacy's skin.

### 3. Hyperbole

*"One phone call from you and my entire world was changed" (Line 2-The grudge)*

The lyric above contain hyperbole because there is an exaggerated statement in this lyric. The hyperbolic element is in the claim that a single phone call had the power to change the "*entire world*" of her life. This is an exaggeration meant to emphasize the profound impact of the phone call on the singer's life.

*"Another perfect moment that doesn't feel like mine" (Line 7-Making the bed)*

The hyperbole in this line lies in the use of the word "*perfect*." By describing the moment as "*perfect*," the lyricist is likely exaggerating for emphasis. It suggests that, despite the outward appearance of perfection, there's an underlying feeling of disconnection or alienation, as indicated by the phrase "*doesn't feel like mine*." This hyperbolic expression adds depth to the emotional tone of the lyric and conveys a sense of irony or contrast between the apparent perfection and the speaker's subjective experience.

*"I see you everywhere, the sweetest torture one could bear" (Line 11&12-Lacy)*

The metaphor lies in the statement of seeing someone everywhere as "*the sweetest torture one could bear*." The use of "*everywhere*" suggests an exaggerated omnipresence, and describing it as "*the sweetest torture*" adds a layer of hyperbolic emotion. While seeing someone frequently can be emotionally challenging, referring to it as "*the sweetest torture*" intensifies the emotional impact, conveying a mix of pleasure and pain. This hyperbolic language enhances the lyrical expression and emphasizes the depth of the singer's feelings.

#### 4. Synecdoche

*"Countin' all of the beautiful things I regret" (Line 40-Making the bed)*

In the lyric above contain Synecdoche, because there is part of something to represent the whole. Here, "*beautiful things*" is used to represent various aspects or events in the singer's life that are significant or emotionally charged. The word "*beautiful*" serves as a symbolic way of referring to a broader range of experiences, memories, or aspects that are both positive and regrettable.

*"Like ribbons in your hair" (Line 18-Lacy)*

In this line, "*ribbons in your hair*" is a specific detail that is used to represent the singer's admiration or desire for the person addressed as Lacy. The mention of "*ribbons in your hair*" serves as a symbolic representation of the overall attraction or qualities that the speaker finds appealing in Lacy.

*"The arguments that I have won against you in my head." (Line 15-The grudge)*

This line contained synecdoche because the "*arguments*" here represent the broader conflicts or issues between the speaker and the person addressed.

#### 5. Personification

*"I read somewhere it's 'cause my life feels so out of control" (Line 23-Making the bed)*

In this line, the personification attributes feelings to the abstract concept of "*life*." It suggests that life has emotions, specifically the feeling of being out of control. This personification is a figurative way to express the singer's sense of chaos or lack of order in their life.

*"Dear angel Lacy, eyes white as daisies" (Line 2-Lacy)*

In this lyric, Lacy is personified as an angel with eyes as white as a daisy. She calls Lacy "*Dear angel Lacy*", which means Lacy is her beloved angel. Olivia describes Lacy's eyes

as "*eyes white as daisies*". The lyrics describe Lacy's eyes as white as the petals of a daisy. So, with this personification, the singer gives the impression that Lacy is very beautiful and has the grace of an angel.

*"Took everything I loved and crushed it in between your fingers" (Line 4-The grudge)*

In this lyric, the singer uses personification by describing that the person mentioned in this song took everything she loved and crushed it between their fingers. By using this personification, the singer wants to show how destructive the person's actions are and how deeply they impact her life. Everything the singer loved was taken and destroyed by that person, leaving deep wounds and pain that is hard to forget.

## 6. Metonymy

*"Dazzling starlet, Bardot reincarnate" (Line 15-Lacy)*

In this line, the term "*Bardot reincarnate*" serves as a metonymy. Brigitte Bardot was a famous French actress and sex symbol. Referring to someone as a "*Bardot reincarnate*" is a metonymic expression where the name of a famous person is used to evoke certain qualities or characteristics associated with that person. In this case, it suggests that the person being described shares qualities or characteristics reminiscent of Brigitte Bardot, emphasizing their attractiveness and star-like qualities.

*"You built me up to watch me fall," (Line 31-The Grudge)*

This lyric which means "*You built me up until I finally fell.*" Here, "*built me up*" is used as a metonymy to "show the support and love" given by the person. So, in the context of this song, this metonymy describes how the person made the singer feel lifted up and then betrayed her.

*"Pull the sheets over my head, Making the bed" (Line 18-19-Making the bed)*

Here, "*pull the sheets over my head*" and "*making the bed*" can be interpreted as a metonymy to "describe the feeling of wanting to hide oneself and change an undesirable situation." This metonymy describes how literal actions such as pulling the blanket over the head and making the bed are used to represent feelings of wanting to escape and change an uncomfortable situation.

## 7. Irony

*"My undying love, now I hold it like a grudge" (Line 7-The grudge)*

Irony lies in the use of the words "*undying love*" and "*hold it like a grudge*". In general, "*undying love*" describes love that is strong and unwavering, while "*hold it like a grudge*" refers to feelings of resentment and pain from someone who hurt them. In the context of these lyrics, the singer expresses that her love that was supposed to be eternal is now held like a grudge. Ironically, the love that should bring happiness and peace actually turns into bad feelings and full of pain because of what her lover did to her.

*"Lacy, oh, Lacy, skin like puff pastry." (Line 1-Lacy)*

"*Lacy, oh, Lacy*" The repetition of Lacy's name with expressions of pleasure and admiration ("oh") reflects the singer's respect or admiration for Lacy. "*Skin like puff pastry*" The irony lies in the comparison between Lacy's skin which is likened to puff pastry. Puff pastry is a thin and crumbly dough. Meanwhile, human skin is usually not that fragile. So, this

comparison shows that the sister depicts Lacy's skin as very soft and beautiful, even when compared to something that is supposed to be more fragile.

*"But it's me who's been making the bed" (Line 12- Making the bed)*

In these lyrics, the singer admits that she alone is responsible for the situations and problems she faces. Even though she felt like a victim, she realized that she herself had created the bad situation. In the context of "*making the bed*", it is not only about creating chaos in her own life, but also about taking responsibility for the consequences of the actions and choices she makes. This singer feels that she creates unpleasant situations in her life, such as avoiding people who know her well and forcing herself to be a victim in her own mind.

## 8. Paradox

*"And I know in my heart hurt people hurt people"*

*"And we both drew blood, but, man, those cuts were never equal". (Line 21&22-The grudge)*

The line "hurt people hurt people" describes that people who feel hurt or emotionally ill tend to take out their pain on other people. This also creates a paradox, because people who feel hurt should be more sensitive to other people's feelings and try not to hurt other people. Then, in the line "we both drew blood, but, man, those cuts were never equal" shows that even though both were involved in hurting each other, the impact and injuries experienced by each party were not always comparable. This line contains the paradox of how hurt people tend to hurt others, the impact and wounds experienced by each person were not always comparable. Although they both hurt each other, the singer felt that the wounds she received were deeper and difficult to overcome.

*"The sweetest torture one could bear." (Line 12-Lacy)*

In this line "*the sweetest torture one could bear*" means sweet or delicious suffering. This paradox implies that although the singer feels pain or difficulty in the relationship with Lacy, there is also an element of sweetness or pleasure associated with it. This contradiction reflects the mixed feelings experienced by the singer. This line wants to illustrate that even though there is pain or suffering in loving someone, there is still beauty and uniqueness that makes it difficult to let go. This paradox creates feelings of conflict between sweet feelings and suffering, which can be a complicated experience in relationships.

*"Every good thing has turned into something I dread" (Line 14-Making the bed)*

This line describes a contradictory feeling where the singer feels that things that should bring happiness or good in his life have actually turned into something scary or undesirable. The paradox of this line describes the emotional imbalance experienced by the user, where the hope and happiness that should be realized from good things in his life actually turns into anxiety and fear.

## 9. Allusion

*"Trust that you betrayed, confusion that still lingers" (Line 3-The grudge)*

In this line, "trust that you betrayed" describes how the singer had believed and trusted others, but ultimately experienced betrayal. The word "trust" refers to the strong trust that she places in that person. However, she feels betrayed because the person betrayed that trust. The words "confusion that still lingers" describe the confusion that still haunts her. She may still feel confused and not understand why the person committed the betrayal. This situation made her feel adrift in continuous confusion. By using this allusion, the singer wants to describe how

big an impact this betrayal had on her life. she felt the confusion still persisting and the impact of the betrayal was still being felt.

*“And I despise my jealous eyes and how hard they fell for you” (Line 28-Lacy)*

*“Despise my jealous eyes”* This allusion refers to the singer's feelings of jealousy towards Lacy. The singer feels that he doesn't like or hates the feeling of jealousy that exists within her. *“Jealous eyes”* is used to describe the deep feelings of jealousy felt by the singer. *“How hard they fell for you”* This allusion refers to how strongly the singer feels for Lacy. *“Fell for you”* is used to describe the author falling deeply in love with Lacy. The word *“fell”* is used to describe the intensity of feelings of love that are so deep and uncontrollable.

*“Gettin' drunk at a club with my fair-weather friends” (Line 10, Making the bed)*

*“Fair-weather friends”* refer to friends who are only around when the mood is good and the situation is pleasant, but disappear when the situation is difficult or bad. In the context of these lyrics, *“Gettin' drunk at a club with my fair-weather friends”* describes the singer's experience at a club with friends who are only around when having fun and are not around when the singer needs support or is present in a difficult situation.

### Conclusion

This study delved into the figure of speech employed in the lyrics of three songs, namely, "The Grudge," "Lacy," and "Making the Bed" from Olivia Rodrigo's "GUTS" album. The analysis was grounded in the theoretical framework of K.L Knickerbocker and H Willard Reninger (1963), exploring various figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, synecdoche, personification, metonymy, irony, paradox, and allusion. These findings reveal a rich and varied use of figurative language across the selected songs with a total of 142 figures of speech. Among the figures of speech analyzed, hyperbole emerged as the most dominant, with 29 instances, highlighting Olivia Rodrigo's inclination towards exaggeration for expressive and artistic purposes. Following hyperbole, synecdoche and personification were prominently used, contributing significantly to the aesthetic appeal and emotional resonance of the lyrics.

The prevalence of these figures of speech underscores Rodrigo's adeptness in crafting lyrics that go beyond literal expressions, infusing her songs with layers of meaning and emotional depth. Whether through the vivid imagery of metaphors and similes or the heightened exaggeration of hyperbole, Rodrigo employs these linguistic devices to convey powerful messages and evoke a range of emotions. This research provides valuable insights into the stylistic choices made by Olivia Rodrigo in her song lyrics, shedding light on the ways in which she utilizes figures of speech to enhance the aesthetic appeal and emotional impact of her music. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the artistic and expressive qualities embedded in contemporary music lyrics, showcasing the significance of linguistic creativity in conveying intricate emotions and narratives.

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