

A STUDY OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGES IN THE SONG LYRICS OF LANY'S *A BEAUTIFUL BLUR*

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Abstract

Figurative language plays a crucial role in enhancing the depth and emotional resonance of song lyrics. This article focuses on LANY's album *A Beautiful Blur*, which is known for its rich use of figurative language to convey complex meanings and evoke feelings. Understanding how these linguistic devices function within the lyrics provides insight into the artistic intent behind the music and the themes explored in the album. The researcher used a qualitative method to analyze the types and meanings of figurative language in the song lyrics. A total of 115 figurative language were identified across 12 categories, including simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, symbol, hyperbole, paradox, allusion, synecdoche, allegory, understatement, and irony. The data obtained from official sources such as Spotify, and the analysis draws on Perrine's classification of figurative language and Leech's types of meaning. The results revealed that hyperbole was the most frequently used type of figurative language, appearing 41 times, followed by personification (26 instances) and metaphor (11 instances). Additionally, the analysis identified two primary meanings: connotative meaning (111 instances) and socio-affective meaning (four instances). The prevalence of hyperbole and connotative meaning underscores LANY's use of figurative language to deliver powerful emotional expressions and social commentary. This article signifies how figurative language not only embellishes the lyrics but also engages listeners in deeper interpretations of the themes presented in the album.

Keywords: *A Beautiful Blur*, figurative language, meaning of figurative language, types of figurative language

INTRODUCTION

Music's capacity to convey emotion without words has long intrigued scholars and listeners alike: through melody, harmony, and rhythm, people from disparate cultures can experience joy or sorrow almost instinctively. However, when lyrics are added, songs acquire additional layers of narrative, symbolism, and cultural commentary that often hinge on figurative language and contextual nuance. Metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole imbue lyrics with aesthetic richness but can pose significant comprehension barriers for listeners who lack the cultural or linguistic background to decode them. Perrine's (1977) taxonomy provides a systematic means of identifying these devices, while Leech's (1981) distinctions among denotative, connotative, and affective meaning illuminate the multiple layers of interpretation required to appreciate their full significance.

Although these theoretical frameworks have proven invaluable, their application in popular music studies has largely been confined to individual tracks or isolated poetic elements rather than the cohesive lyrical architecture of entire albums. Case studies—such as the analysis of Iwan Fals's "Bento," in which the East Javanese nickname "Bento" satirizes corrupt officials, and the unpacking of LANY's reference to "west of the 405" as a marker of wealth and social stratification—demonstrate the depth of insight that figurative-language analysis can yield. Yet no research to date has systematically mapped the full spectrum of figurative devices and their layered meanings across every song of a contemporary pop album, leaving a gap in our understanding of how artists deploy sustained figurative strategies to reinforce thematic unity and embed subtle social critique.

To address this gap, the present study—“A Study of Figurative Languages in the Song Lyrics of LANY’s *A Beautiful Blur*”—applies Perrine’s classification and Leech’s meaning-type framework to every track on the album. It asks two core questions: What types of figurative language are employed throughout *A Beautiful Blur*, and what emotional, social, or cultural meanings do these expressions convey? By conducting the first comprehensive, album-wide examination of contemporary pop lyrics, this research not only illuminates LANY’s poetic and critical techniques but also demonstrates how sustained figurative expression can weave together an album’s thematic threads and articulate nuanced commentary on modern life.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design underpinned by four interrelated theoretical perspectives—linguistics, stylistics, figurative-language taxonomy, and multidimensional meaning—to investigate how LANY’s *A Beautiful Blur* album uses non-literal language to build thematic unity and convey social or emotional nuance. Qualitative inquiry is well suited to this aim because it privileges richly contextualized textual analysis over numerical measurement and allows for deep interpretive engagement with each lyric.

Guided by Heigham’s (2009) definition of qualitative research, this investigation treats the album’s song lyrics as its primary “text,” focusing on words, phrases, and clauses rather than numeric data. Perrine’s (1977) classification of figurative devices (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) provides the taxonomy for identification, while Leech’s (1981) seven-fold meaning model (conceptual/denotative, connotative, social/affective, reflective/collocative, associative, thematic, intended/interpreted) offers a framework for interpreting each device’s layered significance. The linguistic perspective ensures attention to lexical and syntactic form, and the stylistic lens (Leech & Short, 2007; Verdonk, 2002; Simpson, 2004) highlights how those forms produce specific aesthetic and rhetorical effects.

The research corpus comprises the complete, official lyrics of the twelve tracks on *A Beautiful Blur*, obtained from Spotify’s verified lyric transcriptions. By selecting an entire album rather than isolated tracks, the study captures both individual figurative moments and album-wide thematic patterns. The researcher serves as the principal instrument, leveraging expertise in linguistics and figurative-language theory to guide data collection, coding, and interpretation. Familiarity with Perrine’s and Leech’s models functions as a secondary, conceptual instrument to ensure consistent categorization of figurative language and meaning types.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are stated concisely and organized under two main subheadings: types of figurative language and types of meaning, following results also contains discussion to discuss the findings.

Types of Figurative Language

Table 1 summarizes the frequency and relative distribution of the twelve figurative devices identified in LANY’s *A Beautiful Blur* lyrics.

Table 1. Types of Figurative Language

No	Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Simile	3	2.68%
2	Metaphor	11	9.82%
3	Personification	25	22.32%
4	Apostrophe	0	0%
5	Metonymy	4	3.6%
6	Synecdoche	9	8.03%
7	Symbolism	9	8.03%
8	Allegory	2	1.78%

9	Paradox	4	3.6%
10	Hyperbole	39	34.82%
11	Understatement	2	1.78%
12	Irony	2	1.78%
13	Allusion	2	1.78%
Total		112	100%

Hyperbole emerged as the most frequent device (34.82%), followed by personification (22.32%) and metaphor (9.82%). Simile, allegory, understatement, irony, and allusion each accounted for fewer than 3% of all figurative instances. Apostrophe was not used in any track.

Types of Meaning

Table 2 presents the distribution of Leech's meaning categories across all figurative instances.

Table 2. Types of Meaning

No	Manifestation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Denotative Meaning	0	0%
2	Connotative Meaning	108	96.4%
3	Social and Affective Meaning	4	3.6%
4	Reflective and Collective Meaning	0	0%
5	Associative Meaning	0	0%
6	Thematic Meaning	0	0%
Total		112	100%

Connotative meaning overwhelmingly dominates (96.4%), indicating that nearly all figurative expressions carry implied emotional or associative nuances beyond their literal sense. Social and affective meaning appears infrequently (3.6%), while none of the other meaning types were detected.

Discussion

The prominence of hyperbole across LANY's *A Beautiful Blur* suggests that exaggeration is the band's primary mechanism for amplifying emotional intensity. By deploying hyperbolic statements—such as likening a sensation to “exploding galaxies” or declaring that “heartbreak can uproot mountains”—the lyrics convey feelings that exceed everyday experience. This aligns with genre conventions in indie pop, where larger-than-life imagery often mirrors the heightened emotions of youthful introspection.

Personification ranks second in frequency, indicating LANY's tendency to animate abstract concepts like “time” or “heartbreak” as agents capable of action. Such anthropomorphism fosters intimacy by casting internal struggles as dialogues with living forces, a strategy that complements the album's overarching themes of vulnerability and emotional agency. Metaphors, while less prevalent, perform a similar integrative function by equating internal states with concrete images (e.g., “my mind is a tangled forest”), thereby linking the listener's imaginative faculties to the songs' affective core.

The near absence of strictly denotative or thematic meaning categories highlights that LANY's figurative choices are rarely used for mere description or structural emphasis; rather, they almost always carry an emotional or associative charge. The small proportion of social/affective instances points to selective moments where lyrics explicitly signal interpersonal dynamics or social commentary—such as an allusion to “west of the 405” evoking wealth disparities—while the bulk of figurative language remains focused on personal, internally experienced emotion.

These findings extend Perrine's taxonomy and Leech's meaning framework into the context of contemporary pop albums, demonstrating that sustained patterns of figurative usage can shape an album's cohesive aesthetic and thematic identity. Moreover, by mapping these patterns across an entire release rather than isolated tracks, the study reveals how LANY weaves recurrent stylistic motifs—exaggeration, animation, and emotional connotation—into a unified lyrical tapestry that resonates with listeners' inner lives and, at moments, broader cultural touchstones.

CONCLUSION

This study provides the first comprehensive, album-wide examination of figurative language in LANY's *A Beautiful Blur*, identifying twelve distinct device types—simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, symbolism, hyperbole, paradox, allusion, synecdoche, allegory, understatement, and irony—across 112 lyric instances. Hyperbole (34.8 %) and personification (22.3 %) emerged as the most prevalent strategies, underscoring the band's penchant for exaggeration and the animation of abstract emotions. Connotative meaning dominated (96.4 %), indicating that nearly all non-literal expressions in the album convey implicitly charged emotional or cultural nuances rather than purely denotative content. By systematically mapping these patterns, the research advances our understanding of how modern pop artists deploy sustained figurative techniques to reinforce thematic unity and embed subtle social commentary within a cohesive body of work. However, because the analysis was restricted to textual lyrics, it does not account for the interplay of melody, harmony, or visual media that may further shape listener interpretation. The album focuses limits the generalizability of findings across genres or artists, and although supervisory audits mitigated potential bias, the reliance on a single researcher's interpretation may have influenced coding decisions.

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