

# An Analysis of Figurative Language in Richard Carpenter's Song Lyrics Entitled "Something in Your Eyes"

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the figurative language and its meaning used in the lyrics of the song "Something in Your Eyes". It is a descriptive qualitative research where the data is taken from a song lyrics website. The data used in this study are the lyrics of a song released in 1987 which was written by Richard Carpenter on the album Time. The result of this study indicates the data of the song lyrics contain totally 17 figurative languages. They consist of five personifications, three hyperboles, two alliterations, two allegories, two metaphors, one idiom, one oxymoron, and one anaphora. Based on the result, this study shows that there are 8 types of figurative languages which consist of 29.5 percent are personification, 17.7 percent are hyperboles, 11.7 percent are alliterations, 11.7 percent are allegories, 11.7 percent are metaphors, 5.9 percent is idiom, 5.9 percent is oxymoron, and 5.9 percent is anaphora. Based on this, it can be concluded that the personification types are the most dominant. Meanwhile, hyperboles are the second most frequently found.

**Keywords:** figurative language, song lyrics, your eyes, figure of speech.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Singing and also listening to songs is something fun and very enjoyable for most people around the world. By understanding the meaning contained in a song lyric, including those containing elements of figure of speech, it can make it more enjoyable. Song as a composition of music contains lyrics that performed by singer has also a function as a means of communication. According to Reaske, "Lirical: referred originally to lyric poetry, that is, to poetry written to be sung to a lyre. However, the term 'lyric' now designates a short poem which emphasizes the expression of the individual's feeling and emotion rather than external events or attitudes" (1966:35).

Sometimes the language used in song lyrics are written in rather different from other things. This indirect way of conveying is often referred to as figurative language. So as a means of communication, language has also a different way of delivering it. According to Kennedy "figure of speech may be said to occur whenever a speaker or writer, for the sake of freshness or emphasis, departs from the usual denotation of words" (1983: 479).

According to Wales, "In Semantics figurative meaning describes a very common type of extension of meaning for a word (resulting in polysemy or multiple meaning), i.e., by metaphoric transfer of senses" (2014:20). So it's clear that in figurative language, the idea is conveyed by means of metaphors.

The use of figurative language is very interesting especially when it is used in poetry or song lyrics. By the use of figurative language, a song or a poetry can be more artistic. Sometimes people don't realize that in a song that they listen to actually also contains many types of figurative language

Learning the meaning of language is sometimes not easy although it seems simple. The study of meaning is usually learned in Semantics. Kreidler stated that "Semantics is the systematic study of meaning, and linguistic semantic is the study of how languages organize and express meanings" (1998: 3). And according to Leech (1984: 9) "On this basis, I shall break down 'meaning' in its worst sense into seven different ingredients, giving primary importance to logical meaning or (as I shall prefer to call it) CONCEPTUAL MEANING, the type of meaning I was discussed earlier in connecting with 'semantic competence'. The six other types I shall consider are connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meaning".

In this study, the writer tried to analyze figurative languages used in a song that entitled "Something in Your Eyes". Based on the information from website lyrics.com, "Something in Your Eyes" is a song by Richard Carpenter that released as the first single from his debut solo album, Time in 1987.

## II. THEORY AND METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative method. “Qualitative Research analyzes data interpretively by organizing the data into categories, identifying patterns, and producing a descriptive narrative synthesis, whereas quantitative analysis involves statistical procedures” (Gay and Airasian, 2000: 9). From that statement it can be concluded that qualitative research doesn't use statistical method but tends to use words and meaning description in analyzing data.

The writer focused on finding the types of figurative language that used in “Something in Your Eyes” song lyrics. He used the combination of several theories especially theories of figurative language by Reaske (1966) and by Kennedy (1983).

Figurative language is “language which employs various figures of speech. Some examples are metaphor, simile, antithesis, hyperbole, and paradox” (Reaske, 1966:33).

“Figure of speech are not devices to state what is demonstrably untrue. Indeed they, often state truths that more literal language cannot communicate; they call attention to such truths; they lend them emphasis” (Kennedy, 1983,p.479-480).

According to Wales, “In Semantics figurative meaning describes a very common type of extension of meaning for a word (resulting in polysemy or multiple meaning), i.e. by metaphoric transfer of senses” (2014:20).

The data used for this research are the lyrics of a song entitled Something in Your Eyes performed by Richard Carpenter that was released in 1987. The data was obtained from website: genius.com.

The writer analyzed the data through some steps such as: (1) Reading the data; (2) Finding the meaning of the data, (3) Finding the types of figurative language used in the data based on the theory by using tabulation, (4) Describing the meaning of the figurative words or sentences from the data, (5) Making Conclusion.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Findings

The lyrics of the song “Something in your eyes”:

- (1) There was a certain face
- (2) That filled a thousand nights
- (3) With all the sweetest dreams
- (4) And promises of paradise
- (5) But that face was gone
- (6) When the dawn would come and steal you
- (7) Yet I still could feel you
- (8) Waiting just a kiss away
- (9) I'd surely know your face
- (10) When love would cast its spell
- (11) I'd recognise each curve and line of you
- (12) I knew it well
- (13) Now at last you're here and I can tell
  
- (14) Something in your eyes I see
- (15) Is all I've ever wanted
- (16) And something in your smile for me
- (17) Is calling out my name
- (18) Your eyes it seems
- (19) Are mirrors of my dreams
- (20) In ways I can't explain
- (21) And my heart will never be the same
  
- (22) We never said a word
- (23) As if we'd always known
- (24) That through the bittersweet
- (25) Of waiting we were not alone
- (26) Now we're close enough
- (27) For the touch of love to find us
- (28) Fantasies designed us
- (29) But they never really could
- (30) Begin to measure you

- (31) No, pictures ever do  
 (32) And as I watch you framed in sunlight  
 (33) And a sky of blue  
 (34) I know what my life's been leading to  
 (35) Something in your eyes I see  
 (36) Is all I've ever wanted  
 (37) And something in your smile for me  
 (38) Is calling out my name  
 (39) Your eyes it seems  
 (40) Are mirrors of my dreams  
 (41) In ways I can't explain  
 (42) And my heart will never be the same
- (43) Something in your eyes I see  
 (44) Is all I've ever wanted  
 (45) And something in your smile for me  
 (46) Is calling out my name  
 (47) Your eyes it seems  
 (48) Are mirrors of my dreams  
 (49) In ways I can't explain  
 (50) And my heart will never be the same  
 (51) And my heart will never be the same  
 (52) Something in your eyes

TABLE I: THE RESULT OF STUDY

No.	Type of Figurative Language	Percentage (%)
1	Personification	29.5
2	Hyperbole	17.7
3	Alliteration	11.7
4	Allegory	11.7
5	Metaphor	11.7
6	Idiom	5.9
7	Oxymoron	5.9
8	Anaphora	5.9

TABLE II: THE RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS

No	Data / Lyrics	Type	Item
1	That filled a thousand nights (Line 2)	Hyperbole	1
2	With all the sweetest dreams (Line 3)	Hyperbole	1
3	And promises of paradise (Line 4)	Allegory	1
4	When the dawn would come and steal you (Line 6)	Personification,	
	Yet I still could feel you (Line 7)	Alliteration	2
5	Waiting just a kiss away (Line 8)	Idiom	1
6	When love would cast its spell (Line10)	Personification	1
7	I'd recognise each curve and line of you (Line 11)	Allegory	1
8	Something in your eyes I see (line 14)	Anaphora	1
	And something in your smile for me (Line 16)		
9	Is calling out my name (Line 17)	Personification	1
	Your eyes it seems (Line 18)		
10	Are mirrors of my dreams (Line 19)	Metaphor	1
11	And my heart will never be the same (Line 21)	Metaphor	1
12	That through the bittersweet (Line 24)	Oxymoron	1
13	For the touch of love to find us (Line27)		
	Fantasies designed us (Line 28)	Alliteration	1
14	No, pictures ever do (Line 31)	Personification	1
15	And as I watch you framed in sunlight (Line 32)	Hyperbole	1
16	I know what my life's been leading to (Line 34)	Personification	1
		Total	17

### B. Discussion

After analyzing all data, the writer concludes that there are 16 data in the form of sentences and words that contain totally 17 figurative languages. They consist of five personifications, three hyperboles, two alliterations, two allegories, two metaphors, one idiom, one oxymoron, and one anaphora.

Based on the result of the study there are 8 kinds of figurative language found in the song lyrics, namely: hyperboles, personifications, alliterations, metaphor, allegory, idiom, oxymoron, and anaphora.

Before explaining the analysis result, the writer would like to retrieve 8 theories which are used in this study.

1) *Hyperbole*

Reaske stated that hyperbole is “a figure of speech which employs exaggeration. Hyperbole differs from exaggeration in that it is extreme or excessive” (1966:34).

2) *Personification*

Kennedy stated, “personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an animal, or an abstract term (truth or nature) is made human” (1983:487).

3) *Alliteration*

According to Reaske, the definition of alliteration is “the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of several words which are near one another” (1966:26).

According to Wales, “Sometimes rather loosely paraphrased as ‘initial rhyme’, alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant in two or more words” (2014:14). She also said that “in poetry, alliteration is characteristically used also for onomatopoeic effects, to suggest by the association of sounds what is being described”. (2014:15).

4) *Metaphor*

Kennedy stated, “..metaphor is a statement that one thing is something else, which, in literal sense, it is not” (1983:482).

5) *Allegory*

According to Reaske, allegory is “a prolonged metaphor. An allegory is a literary statement presenting its meaning in a veiled way; the literal meaning is a metaphor for the 'real' meaning” (1966:25).

6) *Idiom*

According to Wales, “...idioms most usually denote phrases or strings of words which are idiosyncratic (idiomatic) in that they are language-specific, not easily translated into another language and in that their meaning is not easily determined from the meanings of their constitutive parts” (2014:212).

According to Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, “Essential Meaning of idiom is an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own”.

7) *Oxymoron*

According to Wales, oxymoron is “... a figure of rhetoric which juxtaposes apparently contradictory expressions for witty or striking effects”. (2014:298)

According to Merriam-Webster.com dictionary, oxymoron is “a combination of words that have opposite or very different meanings”.

8) *Anaphora*

Wales stated that anaphora “is a popular figure of speech involving repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences or verses (also known as epanaphora).” (2014:20)

*Data Analysis based on the Table II:*

**Data 1:**

Song lyric : That filled a thousand nights (Line 2)

Analysis : The sentences in line 2 contains hyperbole because it shows something very exaggerated. The words “filled a thousand nights” is heard over-statement.

**Data 2:**

Song lyric : With all the sweetest dreams (Line 3)

Analysis : Like in data 1, the sentences in line 3 contains hyperbole because it shows something very exaggerated. The words “sweetest dreams ” is also heard over-statement. Sweet usually can be tasted by our tongue by tasting something like food or drinks.

**Data 3:**

Song lyric : And promises of paradise (Line 4)

Analysis : The sentences in line 4 contains allegory because its literal meaning is a metaphor for the ‘real’ meaning. The word paradise can be described as the place that is full of happiness. So the word paradise in this context means the feeling of happiness.

**Data 4:**

Song lyric : When the dawn would come and steal you (Line 6)

Yet I still could feel you (Line 7)

Analysis : The sentences in line 6 contains personification because the word dawn is not a living thing,

but it can do something like human such as come and steal.

The sentences in line 6 and line 7 contain alliterations because both the word 'steal' and the word 'feel' end with the same speech sound, namely /-i:l/. It consists of a vowel / i / and a consonant / t /

Beside that both sentences end with the same speech sound / ju: /. It consists of consonant / j / and vowel / u: /

**Data 5:**

Song lyric : Waiting just a kiss away (Line 8)

Analysis : The sentences in line 8 contains idiom because the word kiss away has different meaning. In this context he/she need to releave the pain by kissing his/her beloved. According to online Farlex Dictionary of Idioms, kiss away means "To remove or relieve something by kissing (someone). In this usage, a noun or pronoun can be used between "kiss" and "away."

**Data 6:**

Song lyric : When love would cast its spell (Line 10)

Analysis : The sentence in line 10 contains personification because love is not human, but it can do something like human that in this case, it can cast the spell.

**Data 7:**

Song lyric : I'd recognise each curve and line of you (Line 11)

Analysis : The sentence in line 11 contains allegory because its literal meaning is a metaphor for the 'real' meaning". The words each curve and line of you represents someone in great detail or everything about someone (it can be appereance, habit, behaviour, feeling, etc).

**Data 8:**

Song lyric : Something in your eyes I see (line 14)

And something in your smile for me (Line 16)

Analysis : The sentences in line 14 and line 16 contain anaphora because they they involve repetition of the same word at the beginning. The words "Something in your" are mentioned twice in the begining of each sentences.

**Data 9:**

Song lyric : Is calling out my name (Line 17)

Analysis : The sentences in line 17 contain personification because it can act like human that can call someone's name. It refers to the previous sentences "something when you smile for me" and it can call out someone's name.

**Data 10:**

Song lyric : Your eyes it seems (Line 18)

Are mirrors of my dreams (Line 19)

Analysis : The sentences in line 18 and 19 contain metaphor because it stated that one thing is something else that actually is not.

However, if the verb "seems" is changed into the past form become "seemed", so the type of figurative language can be the simile. Kennedy stated, "a simile: a comparison of two things, indicated by some connective, usually like, as, than, or a verb such as resembles" (1983:482).

**Data 11:**

Song lyric : And my heart will never be the same (Line 21)

Analysis : Like in data 1, the sentences in line 21 also contains metaphor because heart means feeling. Actually heart is an internal organ in human body. So the literal meaning of this sentence is the feeling that will never be the same.

**Data 12:**

Song lyric : That through the bittersweet (Line 24)

Analysis : The sentences in line 24 contains oxymoron because it uses a combination of words which have opposite meaning. In this case, the word "bitter" is the opposite of "sweet".

**Data 13:**

Song lyric : For the touch of love to find us (Line 27)

Fantasies designed us (Line 28)

Analysis : The sentences in line 27 and line 28 also contain alliterations because both the words (phrases) "find us" and the words (designed us) end with the same speech sound, namely /-aɪnd əs /. It consists of

diphthong / ai /, a consonant / n /, consonant / d /, vowel / ʌ / and a consonant / s /.

#### Data 14:

Song lyric : No, pictures ever do (Line 31)

Analysis : The sentence in line 31 also contains personification because it involves a thing, or an animal which is made human. In this sentence “no pictures ever do” shows that pictures can do like human. In fact, pictures are not humans, so it’s impossible for pictures to do something.

#### Data 15:

Song lyric : And as I watch you framed in sunlight (Line 32)

Analysis : The sentences in line 32 also contains hyperbole because it shows something very exaggerated. The words “framed in sunlight” is also heard over-statement because it is impossible that someone is framed in sunlight.

#### Data 16:

Song lyric : I know what my life's been leading to (Line 34)

Analysis : The sentences in line 34 also contains personification because it involves an abstract term which is made human. In this sentence “my life's been leading to” shows that my life is an abstract noun that can lead someone.

## IV. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the writer found that the data of the song lyrics contain 17 figurative languages. They consist of five personifications, three hyperboles, two alliterations, two allegories, two metaphors, one idiom, one oxymoron, and one anaphora. Thus, the results of this study shows that there are 8 types of figurative languages which consist of 29.5 percent are personification, 17.7 percent are hyperboles, 11.7 percent are alliterations, 11.7 percents allegories, 11.7 percent are metaphors, 5.9 percent is idiom, 5.9 percent is oxymoron, 5.9 percent is anaphora. Based on the result, it can be concluded that the type of personification is the most dominant. Meanwhile, hyperboles are the second most frequently found.

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