

AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN *BLURRYFACE* AND *TRENCH* ALBUMS BY TWENTY ONE PILOTS BAND

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this research are to find out and analyse the types and meaning of figurative language used in *Blurryface* and *Trench* albums by Twenty One Pilots Band, further this research try to compare between the two albums in the use of figurative language. The method of this study is qualitative research. The main data of this research are the lyrics of 5 songs from *Blurryface* album and 5 songs from *Trench* album by Twenty One Pilots Band with determined criteria. As a result of the research, the writer found there are fifteen types of figurative language used in both albums, namely metaphor, simile, oxymoron, hyperbole, pun, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, rhetorical question, anaphora, epistrophe, apostrophe, asyndeton, polysyndeton, and polyptoton which is predominated by metaphor (39,71%). Comparatively, there are similarities and differences in the use of figurative language. The both albums similarly describe a feeling of weakness, animate feeling insecure, and express a sense of difficulty. It seems that the two albums are different in the effects expected from the use of figurative language. In *Blurryface* album, the figurative language is generally used to express feeling of insecure, reflections, and even motivations. Meanwhile, in the *Trench* album, it is used to illustrate the narrative of the story about the world of *Trench*, the city of *Dema*, and the fight of *Bandito* against the bishops.

Keywords: Figurative language, song lyric, figurative meaning, comparative study.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, the writer analyzed the use of figurative language in song lyrics from the *Blurryface* and *Trench* albums by Twenty One Pilots band. Twenty One Pilots, an American duo from Ohio currently consisting of Tyler Joseph as vocalist/pianist and Josh Dun as drummer has formed since 2009 (Greene, 2016). Song lyrics from Twenty One Pilots have unique characteristics such as the dominance of the use of figurative languages and implicit words. Tyler as a songwriter shares his

experiences and thoughts in dealing with doubts, mental health, and life challenges in their song lyrics. Through the music that he likes, he tries to reach and inspire his listeners/fans that they have the same problems and they are real but they have to rise and fight these negative feelings.

Until now, Twenty One Pilots has released 5 albums namely Twenty One Pilots di 2009, Regional at Best in 2011, Vessel in 2013, Blurryface in 2015, Trench in 2018, and the latest album Scaled and Icy in 2021. In an interview with Twenty One Pilots by Music Feeds, Tyler states that the album Blurryface has a connection with the album Trench (Bellamy, 2018). Blurryface is a character described in the album Blurryface itself. Blurryface's identity as an image of insecurity will be further explained in the album Trench. The idea of the content relationship between these two albums is bizarre and atypical of other bands' albums in general. From this explanation, the author suspects that there will be changes of pattern in using figurative language, so it is interesting to study. In addition, the release of the album Trench as a continuation of the album Blurryface implies that the message of the album Blurryface is not complete until Trench is released. The author believes that the Trench album contains puzzle pieces to complete the substance contained in the Blurryface album.

Blurryface is a phenomenon in the music world. This album becomes the first album in history to be certified gold, platinum, and even multi-platinum by The RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America). This album also earns Twenty One Pilots the prestigious music award, namely the Grammy Award for the Best Pop Duo / Group Performance category in 2017. Several tracks on the album have remained on the popular charts, the Billboard 100 for quite a long time. The album with the theme of anxiety and mental health they carry turns out to be very successful and accepted by many listeners, thus bringing Twenty One Pilots to the peak of their career.

Three years later, Trench was released and in just two months, it get certified platinum which means it has sold one million copies. Similar to Blurryface, this album is still the theme of the inner conflict that Tyler faces, narrated like a story, and also this album still has a relationship with the previous album. In addition, the production process for this album is done more intimately than Blurryface, which involves many people.

The writer and maybe other people who are familiar with Twenty One Pilots songs sometimes find it difficult to understand the meaning of song lyrics implied through the use of figurative language. In this study, the writer tries to interpret the meaning of the figurative language used in song lyrics, especially in the album *Blurryface* and *Trench* by Twenty One Pilots band. In addition, because it is more interesting to use figurative language than to say something directly when someone has the meaning to broadly express thoughts in daily conversation, this research will help to avoid any kind of misinterpretation in the form of figurative language used. Hopefully, this research can find the type of figurative language used and the meaning behind the song lyrics of the two albums to help the reader more understand the meaning and use of figurative language in daily life.

METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Moleong states that the descriptive qualitative method is analyzing the data in the form of words descriptively (Moleong, 2006). In descriptive terms, the writer will explain the meaning of song lyrics from both albums and differences in the use of figurative language found. Whereas in terms of qualitative, the writer provides a description of type figurative languages based on words or phrases in song lyrics from the album *Blurryface* and *Trench* by Twenty One Pilots.

The main data used by the writer in this analysis are song lyrics from the album *Blurryface* and *Trench* by Twenty One Pilots. The song lyrics could be easily obtained from a website called [genius.com](https://www.genius.com) for free. The website provides many song lyrics with credits and information about the songs.

To choose songs, the writer uses the purposive sample technique. The purposive sampling technique is a technique of taking samples not based on random, regional, or strata, but based on considerations that focus on certain objectives (Arikunto, 2006). This technique is usually used because of the writer's limitations on time, energy, funding, and several other considerations, but in choosing a sample there must be several criteria that are met. The criteria that the writer determines in song selection are as follows:

1. The lyrics of the song are easily understood by the writer.

2. The lyrics of the song have a meaning related to the theme of each album.
3. The lyrics of the song contain figurative language.

In the explanation above about the use of the technique, there is no mention of the number of samples that must be available for research. As long as the selected sample is deemed to meet the specified criteria, the sample is allowed to be used. For this reason, the writer uses five of fourteen songs from each album. The amount is considered quite representative.

DISCUSSION

Types of figurative language in Blurryface and Trench Album

Table 1
 Types of figurative language in Blurryface and Trench Albums

No.	Types of figurative language	The number of figurative language use			Percentage		
		Blurryface	Trench	Total	Blurryface	Trench	Total
1	Metaphor	13	14	27	35,14%	45,16%	39,71%
2	Simile	1	2	3	2,70%	6,45%	4,41%
3	Oxymoron	0	1	1	0,00%	3,23%	1,47%
4	Hyperbole	1	1	2	2,70%	3,23%	2,94%
5	Pun	1	1	2	2,70%	3,23%	2,94%
6	Metonymy	6	2	8	16,22%	6,45%	11,76%
7	Synecdoche	1	1	2	2,70%	3,23%	2,94%
8	Personification	2	4	6	5,41%	12,90%	8,82%
9	Rhetorical Question	1	1	2	2,70%	3,23%	2,94%
10	Anaphora	4	1	5	10,81%	3,23%	7,35%
11	Epistrophe	2	1	3	5,41%	3,23%	4,41%
12	Apostrophe	1	0	1	2,70%	0,00%	1,47%
13	Ayndeton	3	0	3	8,11%	0,00%	4,41%
14	Polysyndeton	0	1	1	0,00%	3,23%	1,47%
15	Polyptoton	1	1	2	2,70%	3,23%	2,94%
Total of figurative languages use		37	31	68	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

Table 3 shows there are fifteen types of figurative language used in both albums, namely metaphor, simile, oxymoron, hyperbole, pun, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, rhetorical question, anaphora, epistrophe, apostrophe, asyndeton, polysyndeton, and polyptoton which is predominated by metaphor with a ratio of 27 times (39,71%). However, some types of figurative language do not occur in each album. In the Blurryface album, oxymoron and polysyndeton do not occur. Meanwhile, in the Trench album, neither apostrophe nor asyndeton does.

Meaning of figurative language in Blurryface and Trench Album

Most of the use of figurative language on the Blurryface album helps to express Tyler's insecurities, reflections, and even motivations for him. For example, "But I don't seem to see many bullets coming through" in a song entitled Ride, we sometimes do not see the pain, pressure, or problems of those closest to us because of our insensitivity. In the Trench album, most of the use of figurative language helps to illustrate the narrative of the story about the world of Trench, the city of Dema, and Tyler's fight with Bandito against the bishops. For example, "I'll morph to someone else" in a song entitled Morph, he fights his insecurities by trying to be a better person.

Comparative Analysis of Figurative Language in Blurryface and Trench Albums

Table 2

Comparative Analysis of Figurative Language in Blurryface and Trench Albums

Figurative language	Blurryface	Trench
Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most often type of figurative language occurs with a ratio of 13 times (35,14%). • It occurs in most selected songs. • The use is varied in describing ideas and feelings, mostly related stuff to him directly. • It is used several times in succession between lines. • It describes guilt and appears tough. • It uses the figure of a criminal, namely a gangster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most often type of figurative language occurs with a ratio of 14 times (45,16%). • It occurs in all selected songs. • The use is varied in describing ideas and feelings, mostly related stuff to him directly. • It is used several times in succession between lines. • It uses the figure of a criminal, namely a bandit. • It describes isolation.
Simile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It describes a motivational feeling. • The use is combined with another type of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs twice in a song. • It describes a gloomy feeling. • The use is combined with

	figurative language.	another type of figurative language.
Oxymoron	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It describes a feeling of insufficiency or inadequacy.
Hyperbole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It describes a feeling of weakness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It describes a feeling of weakness.
Pun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It creates multiple-meanings because of sounding similar with another word. Pronouncing "latter" sounds similar to "ladder." But both still lead to a similar goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It creates different multiple-meanings. The first meaning refers to Tyler's appearance on stage and music videos. The second refers to the recording of the album.
Metonymy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs six times. • It occurs in all selected songs. • One of them refers to music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs twice which is once in two songs. • One of them refers to music.
Synecdoche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It is as the part to the whole. Rap and hip-hop are genres in music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It is as the whole to the part. Dema is a city. It refers to the rulers of the city, Blurryface and the other bishops
Personification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs twice which is once in two songs. • One of them animates feeling insecure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs four times which is once in most selected songs. • Mostly it animates feeling insecure.
Rhetorical Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It suggests begging for help as Tyler is stuttering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It suggest to overcome fears or insecurities.
Anaphora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs four times which is once in most selected songs. • Mostly it expresses an anxiety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It expresses the exclamation of encouragement.
Epistrophe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs twice in a song. • It expresses a sense of difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It expresses a sense of difficulty.

Apostrophe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It suggests a dialogue between Tyler and the fictional character of the album itself. 	-
Asyndeton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs thrice. • It expresses enthusiastic feeling and distress. 	-
Polysyndeton	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It suggests to point on each items.
Polyptoton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It suggests to point on the words being repeated and emphasizes an attempt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It occurs only once. • It creates a significant difference in meaning between the phrases.

Based on the type of figurative language used, the two albums have a lot in common. Eleven of the fifteen types of figurative language found are used in both albums, namely metaphor, simile, hyperbole, pun, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, rhetorical question, anaphora, epistrophe, and polyptoton. The difference is that oxymoron and polysyndeton do not occur in the Blurryface album. Meanwhile, in the Trench album, neither apostrophe nor asyndeton does. Metaphor is the most frequently used figurative language in both albums with a ratio of 13 times (35,14%) in Blurryface and 14 times (45,16%) in Trench. In both albums, the use of simile is combined with another type of figurative language.

Based on the meaning, there are some similarities in the pattern. For example, the use of metaphors with criminal figures, gangsters, and bandits, suggests that they are sinners or often do wrong. But seen from another perspective, it also shows good value. There are other similar patterns in both albums, hyperbole describes a feeling of weakness, metonymy describes music, personification animates feeling insecure, and epistrophe expresses a sense of difficulty.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the five selected songs from the album Blurryface and Trench, the writer concludes; first, there are fifteen types of figurative language used in both

albums, namely 27 metaphor, 3 simile, 1 oxymoron, 2 hyperbole, 2 pun, 8 metonymy, 2 synecdoche, 6 personification, 2 rhetorical question, 5 anaphora, 3 epistrophe, 1 apostrophe, 3 asyndeton, 1 polysyndeton, and 2 polyptoton. However, some types of figurative language do not occur in each album. In the Blurryface album, oxymoron and polysyndeton do not occur. Meanwhile, in the Trench album, neither apostrophe nor asyndeton does. Metaphor is the most frequently used figurative language in both albums with a ratio of 13 times (35,14%) in Blurryface and 14 times (45,16%) in Trench.

Second, most of the use of figurative language in the Blurryface and Trench albums is used to express Tyler's insecurities, reflections, motivations and illustrate the narrative of the story about the world of Trench.

Third, there are similarities and differences in the use of figurative language. The both albums similarly describe a feeling of weakness, animate feeling insecure, and express a sense of difficulty. It seems that the two albums are different in the effects expected from the use of figurative language. In Blurryface album, the figurative language is generally used to express feeling of insecure, reflections, and even motivations. Meanwhile, in the Trench album, it is used to illustrate the narrative of the story about the world of Trench, the city of Dema, and the fight of Bandito against the bishops.

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