

THE ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE “DOO-WOPS & HOOLIGANS” ALBUM BY BRUNO MARS

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ABSTRACT:

This paper analyzes the figurative language used in five popular songs by Bruno Mars from his first album: “Grenade,” “Just the Way You Are,” “The Lazy Song,” “Talking to the Moon,” and “Marry You.” Figurative language is important in songs because it helps express deep emotions and ideas. In “Grenade,” the singer uses hyperbole, metaphor, and symbolism to show the pain of one-sided love. He says things like “I’d catch a grenade for you” to show strong sacrifice. In “Just The Way You Are,” he uses simile, metaphor, and repetition to show love and admiration, comparing the girl’s beauty to stars and affirming she is perfect as she is. “The Lazy Song” employs casual, humorous imagery and repetition to convey feelings of relaxation and rebellion against responsibilities. “Talking to the Moon” uses metaphor and imagery to express loneliness and longing for connection. “Marry You” uses playful metaphor and repetition to express spontaneous love and commitment. All five songs use figurative language to enhance emotional impact and poetic beauty. This analysis shows how Bruno Mars’s use of figurative expressions creates strong feelings in listeners and helps deepen their understanding of the songs’ meanings.

Keywords: analysis, figurative language, album Bruno Mars

INTRODUCTION

Music is one of the most popular forms of art in the world. People listen to music to feel happy, sad, or even inspired. One important element in song lyrics is figurative language. Figurative language makes the lyrics more interesting and meaningful. It helps the songwriter express deep feelings and thoughts. Figurative language includes simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and other expressions. These are not literal but give a deeper meaning to the words.

Bruno Mars is a famous singer and songwriter. His songs are popular around the world. His first album, *Doo-Wops &*

Hooligans, features several hit songs that explore themes such as love, heartbreak, admiration, and loneliness. Some of the most well-known tracks from this album include “Grenade,” “Just The Way You Are,” “The Lazy Song,” “Talking to the Moon,” and “Marry You.” Each of these songs uses language in creative ways to express deep emotions and connect with listeners.

In these five songs, Bruno Mars uses a variety of figurative language to make his lyrics more expressive and powerful. We can find examples of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification,

symbolism, and repetition throughout the lyrics. These expressions help show the emotions of the singer and make the songs more poetic. For instance, in “Grenade,” the line “I’d catch a grenade for you” is a hyperbole that shows extreme sacrifice. In “Just The Way You Are,” the metaphor comparing a woman’s beauty to the stars emphasizes admiration and love.

By studying these five songs, we can better understand how figurative language works in music. This analysis also helps us appreciate the beauty and depth of song lyrics. Many people enjoy music without paying attention to the meaning of the words, but looking closely at figurative language reveals deeper messages. Songwriters often use these tools to connect emotionally with their audience.

In this paper, the writer will analyze the figurative language in five selected songs from Bruno Mars’ first album. The goal is to identify the types of figurative language used and explain their meanings. This analysis will show how Bruno Mars uses language creatively and effectively. It will also highlight the important role that figurative language plays in making music emotionally powerful and artistically rich. Through this study, we can gain a deeper appreciation for both music and the art of expression. Figurative language is also usually used in our conversation. It can be

found in literary works such as novels, poems, articles, advertisements, etc. (Wirastuti, 2024)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research closely examined the lyrics of five selected songs from Bruno Mars' first album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*, to uncover the powerful language techniques that make his music so emotionally impactful. Using a descriptive qualitative method, we focused on analyzing the actual words and expressions rather than collecting numerical data. This approach allowed us to dive deeply into the artistic choices that help Bruno Mars connect with millions of listeners worldwide.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify and explain the types of figurative language used in five selected songs from Bruno Mars’s first album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*. The songs analyzed are “Grenade,” “Just the Way You Are,” “The Lazy Song,” “Talking to the Moon,” and “Marry You.” The analysis focuses on the lyrics and how figurative language is employed to enhance meaning, emotion, and artistic expression in each song.

The types of figurative language analyzed are based on Knickerbocker and

Reninger's (1963) classification, which includes metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, and repetition. These language techniques are used to express complex emotions, convey powerful imagery, and make the lyrics more engaging and memorable.

The types of figurative language identified in five selected songs from Bruno Mars' first album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*. The types analyzed are based on Knickerbocker and Reninger's (1963) classification: metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, and repetition. These devices are used to enhance emotion, meaning, and artistic expression in the lyrics.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a way to compare two things that are not the same. It says that one thing *is* the other thing, even though they are different. This helps us understand an idea or feeling in a more interesting or powerful way. According to Frost (2006) Metaphor is use of word, phrase or figure of speech that is applied to represent another idea or object in order to highlight a similarity between them.

Data 1

"I'm a satellite out of control."

(Talking to the Moon)

The sentence "I'm a satellite out of control" is a metaphor because it compares the

speaker to a satellite to show feelings of loneliness and confusion, but it is not meant literally. He is not really a satellite. He just feels lost and out of control, like a satellite that is floating alone in space.

Simile

Simile is a figure of speech in which one thing is explicitly compared to another, using words such as *like* or *as*." (Leech, 1981)

Data 2

"Her eyes make the stars look like they're not shining"

(Just the Way You Are)

This sentence compares her eyes to stars. It says her eyes are so bright and beautiful that the stars look less shiny. The word "like" is used to show the comparison.

Data 3

"I'm feeling like I'm famous"

(Talking To The Moon)

In this sentence, he is comparing himself to a famous person. He doesn't say he *is* famous, but that he *feels like* he is. The word "like" shows this is a comparison, not a fact. Because it uses "like" to compare two things (himself and a famous person), it is called a simile.

Hyperbole

Keraf and Sumadiria (in Retorika Modern, 2004) state that hyperbole is a figure of speech that uses exaggerated statements, sometimes to the point of being

unrealistic, to describe extreme emotions or situations.

Data 4

“To give me all your love is all I ever asked”

(Grenade)

He says that love is the only thing he wants, but this is an exaggeration. In real life, people need more than just love — like care, time, or understanding. This line makes his feelings sound stronger by saying love is the *only* thing that matters.

Data 5

“I’d catch a grenade for ya”

(Grenade)

Catching a grenade is something no one would really do. It’s very dangerous and would hurt or kill someone. He says this to show how much he loves the person — that he would even risk his life. This is not meant to be taken literally, so it is an exaggeration.

Data 6

“Jump in front of a train for ya”

(Grenade)

Jumping in front of a train is not something people do. It is a very extreme and dangerous action. He says this to show that he would do *anything*, even something crazy, just to prove his love. That’s why it is a hyperbole — it makes his feelings sound bigger than real life.

Data 7

“Yes, I would die for you, baby”

(Grenade)

Dying for someone is a very strong thing to say. People don’t usually do this, so it is an exaggeration. He says it to show deep love — that he cares so much he would give up everything, even his life.

Data 8

“You’d watch me burn down in flames”

(Grenade)

He is not really on fire. “Burn down in flames” means he feels like he is in pain inside — like his heart is hurting. It is an emotional way to say he is very hurt and the other person is not helping. This is not a real fire, so it is an exaggeration of how he feels.

Data 9

“She’s so beautiful and I tell her every day”

(Just The Way You Are)

He says that he tells her she’s beautiful *every single day*. In real life, people may not say the same thing every day, so this is a bit of an exaggeration. He uses these words to show how much he loves her and how strongly he feels about her beauty. By saying he *never stops* telling her, it makes his love sound very big and deep — that’s why it is a hyperbole.

Data 10

“Today, I swear, I’m not doing anything”

(The Lazy Song)

He says he will do nothing at all, but in real life, everyone does *something* — like eating, drinking, or moving. He doesn't really mean *nothing at all*. He is using exaggerated words to show that he wants to rest and be lazy the whole day. This strong way of saying it makes it a hyperbole.

Data 11

“No, I ain’t gonna comb my hair.”

(The Lazy Song)

Combing your hair is a small, simple thing. But he says he won't even do that, to show how lazy he feels. It's not a big action, but he uses it to say, “I'm so lazy, I don't care about anything today.” This is an exaggeration to express his mood, so it's a hyperbole.

Data 12

“Or am I a fool who sits alone talking to the moon?”

(Talking To The Moon)

He is not really talking to the moon. People don't talk to the moon in real life. This is an exaggeration to show how lonely and sad he feels. He misses someone so much that it *feels* like he's talking to the moon, hoping they can hear him. That's why it is a hyperbole — it shows strong feelings in an unreal way.

Data 13

“You’re all I had”

(Talking To The Moon)

He says the person was all he had, meaning he had no one else. But in real life, he might still have friends or family. He says this to show how important that one person was to him. It's an exaggeration to express deep love and loss, so it is a hyperbole.

Data 14

“It’s a beautiful night, we’re looking for something dumb to do.”

(Marry You)

He calls the night “beautiful” and says they want to do something “dumb,” like get married suddenly. This makes the moment sound very big and exciting. He is using strong words to show that the night feels special and fun, even if the idea is silly. This is a hyperbole because it makes the situation sound more extreme than it really is.

Personification

Tarigan (1995) Personification is used when a thing that is not human is described as if it can act, feel, or talk like a human. It helps readers feel closer to what is being described.

Data 15

“The whole world stops and stares for a while.”

(Just The Way You Are)

He is using exaggeration to say that she is so beautiful that everyone notices her. It also uses personification, because it

makes the world act like a person (stopping and staring). This is not true, but it shows how amazed people feel when they see her.

Data 16

“Let the choir bells sing like”

(Marry You)

Bells cannot sing because they are not people — they can only make sounds. But in this sentence, the bells are given a human action (singing). This is called personification, which means giving human actions or feelings to things that are not alive. The writer uses this to make the sound of the bells seem more beautiful and emotional, like music from a person’s voice.

Repetition

Keraf (1991) Repetition is a style that repeats the same word or sentence to give strength to the meaning. It gives rhythm and helps stress the main point.

Data 17

“No, no, no, no”

(Grenade)

The word “no” is repeated many times to show that he is feeling very upset, hurt, or rejected. Saying it once is not enough — repeating it makes the emotion feel stronger. It shows how serious or emotional the moment is.

Data 18

“Black, black, black and blue”

(Grenade)

The word “black” is repeated to show pain, sadness, and hurt. It makes the listener feel how deep and strong the damage is — both physical and emotional. Repeating the word helps create a powerful image in our minds.

Data 19

“Take, take, take it all”

(Grenade)

The word “take” is repeated to show that the person keeps taking without giving anything back. It makes the action sound selfish and ongoing. This repetition helps us understand how one-sided the relationship feels.

Data 20

“Yeah, yeah, yeah”

(Grenade)

The word “yeah” is repeated to make the song sound more catchy, fun, or emotional. Repetition like this is often used in music to make it easier to remember or sing along. It also adds feeling to the lyrics.

Data 21

“Her hair, her hair”

(Just The Way You Are)

The words “her hair” are repeated to show that he really notices and loves her hair. By saying it more than once, he makes it sound more special and shows how much he is focused on her beauty. The repetition helps to emphasize his love and admiration.

Data 22

“You know, you know, you know”

(Just The Way You Are)

The phrase “you know” is repeated to convince her and make her truly believe what he is saying. It shows that he is serious and really wants her to understand. Repeating it makes the words feel stronger and more emotional.

Data 23

“No, no, no, no, no, no”

(The Lazy Song)

The word “no” is repeated many times to show that he really does not want to do anything at all. It makes his feelings of laziness or refusal stronger. Instead of just saying “no” once, repeating it shows that he is very sure and serious about not wanting to move or do anything.

Data 24

“Whoa-ooh, whoa-ooh”

(The Lazy Song)

This sound is repeated to make the song more fun, musical, and catchy. It doesn’t have a deep meaning, but it adds emotion and helps listeners enjoy the rhythm. Repeating sounds like this is common in songs to make them easier to sing along to and more memorable.

Data 25

“No, no, no, no” / “Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah” / “Go, go, go, go”

(Marry You)

These words are repeated to make the song sound more fun, exciting, or emotional. Saying the same word many times helps to show strong feelings — like saying “no” again and again to show you really don’t agree, or “go” to show energy and action. Repetition also makes the song catchy and easy for people to remember or sing along. It adds rhythm and emotion to the music.

Based on the analysis of five songs from Bruno Mars’s first album *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*—“Grenade,” “Just the Way You Are,” “The Lazy Song,” “Talking to the Moon,” and “Marry You”—several types of figurative language were identified. These literary devices play an essential role in conveying emotional depth, enhancing the artistic quality of the lyrics, and helping listeners connect with the themes of love, heartbreak, joy, and longing.

Across all five songs, hyperbole and metaphor emerged as the most commonly used figurative language devices. Their frequent use underscores Bruno Mars’s stylistic approach to expressing powerful emotions, often through dramatic or poetic exaggeration and comparison.

“Grenade” uses hyperbole and metaphor to emphasize themes of unreciprocated love and emotional sacrifice.

“Just the Way You Are” employs repetition and hyperbole to communicate unconditional admiration and emotional reassurance.

“The Lazy Song” incorporates personification and casual metaphors to express a carefree, relaxed attitude.

“Talking to the Moon” uses personification and metaphor to reflect feelings of loneliness, distance, and hope.

“Marry You” features hyperbole and repetition to highlight spontaneity and joyful commitment in love.

From this data, it is clear that hyperbole is the most frequently used type of figurative language across the five songs. This suggests that exaggeration is a central stylistic feature in Bruno Mars’s songwriting, especially when expressing deep emotions such as sacrifice, admiration, and spontaneous love.

The analysis reveals that figurative language in Bruno Mars’s lyrics is not only a tool for poetic effect but also a way to emotionally engage the listener. These expressions help translate complex feelings into vivid and relatable imagery, allowing audiences to experience the emotional core of each song on a deeper level. It enriches the lyrics and deepens the listener’s understanding of the emotions and experiences being portrayed. Through the use of metaphor, simile, hyperbole,

personification, and repetition, Bruno Mars turns simple words into powerful expressions of human feeling.

Ultimately, this study shows how Bruno Mars creatively uses language to connect with listeners’ emotions. Through metaphor, hyperbole, personification, repetition, and simile, his songs become more than entertainment—they serve as emotional narratives that speak to share human experiences.

CONCLUSION

The use of figurative language in song lyrics significantly enhances both the emotional depth and poetic beauty of the music. This study analyzed figurative language in five selected songs from Bruno Mars’s debut album *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*: “Grenade,” “Just the Way You Are,” “The Lazy Song,” “Talking to the Moon,” and “Marry You.” Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the analysis identified and interpreted the use of metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, and repetition in these songs.

A total of 25 figurative expressions were found across the five songs. The most frequently used type was hyperbole, appearing in multiple songs, especially in “Grenade,” “Just the Way You Are,” and “Marry You.” This suggests that

exaggeration is a key stylistic tool in Bruno Mars's songwriting, particularly when portraying themes of intense emotion and romantic devotion. Other types of figurative language—metaphor, personification, repetition, and simile—also played important roles in expressing complex feelings such as love, admiration, loneliness, sacrifice, and joy.

This study demonstrates that figurative language is not merely a poetic device but a powerful tool for emotional storytelling. Through his creative use of language, Bruno Mars connects with listeners on a deeper level, allowing them to

experience the feelings and stories conveyed in each song. By understanding and appreciating these figures of speech, listeners can uncover richer meanings behind the lyrics and strengthen their emotional engagement with the music.

In conclusion, figurative language in Bruno Mars's *Doo-Wops & Hooligans* not only enriches the lyrical content but also bridges the gap between personal experience and universal emotion—transforming each song into a resonant and relatable expression of human feeling.

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