# Figurative Language In Song Lyrics Of Mini Album *Butter* BTS

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*Abstract: The title of this study is Figurative Language in Song Lyrics of Mini Album Butter BTS. It aims to analyze the types of figurative language expressed in the song lyrics of the BTS's mini-album "Butter", the first English single album by BTS. Two songs have been chosen as the data source, "Butter" and "Permission to Dance". The data were collected using the documentation method and note-taking technique. A descriptive qualitative method was applied in analyzing them using the theory of figurative language proposed by Perrine (1977). The results show that six types of figurative language were found in the mini-album "Butter". They are simile, metaphor, symbol, hyperbole, personification, and irony.*

## INTRODUCTION

Abrams and Harpham (2015) stated that figurative language is a noticeable departure from what users of a language interpret as the usual meaning of words, or the regular arrangement of words, to create some particular meaning or effect. It conveys a broad meaning when someone speaks or writes anything. When someone explains something using figurative language, they compare it to something else. (Perrine, 1977) defines figurative language as stating what the speaker intends frequently more effective than saying it explicitly. It is a language that departs from the literal meaning of words to convey a message or meaning. Individuals can elicit their emotions and imagination via figurative language in their works. Figurative language is used in various works, including novels, poetry, short stories, films, and songs.

A song is a literary work as well. A song is defined as a piece of music with words sung to express emotions and thoughts. The song is a visible, audible, and tactile manner of expressing one's emotions. A songwriter writes a song to describe feelings and to have various meanings. Songwriters and poets use connotations and figures of speech to enhance the attractiveness and distinctiveness of a song or lyric. Depending on the listener's background or understanding. A songwriter will not compose a lyric using ordinary language since it will not entice listeners to visualize and convey the idea behind the music.

Based on these considerations, this study performed on figurative language in song lyrics. This study used an English album by a Korean boy group as the source data. As stated by (Yung, 2020), starting in the 1980s, the Korean cultural wave, Hallyu, dominated global drama shows, cuisines, cosmetics, and music. This study focused on analyzing the types of figurative language

in song lyrics of the mini-album "Butter" by BTS.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Figurative Language

Literary works such as novels, poetry, and music frequently use figurative language. Figurative language refers to when words are employed in unusual ways. Figurative language, according to Abrams and Harpham (2011), is a conspicuous deviation from what users of a language understand as the typical meaning of words, or else the regular arrangement of words, to generate some particular meaning or effect. To communicate underlying meaning, the authors used figurative language in their works to "deceive" the language. It concludes that figurative language is a language that uses words to communicate meaning. It generally portrays a person's personality as well as their life experiences. Someone used figurative language to conjure up images in the minds of readers or listeners, allowing them to express themselves in new and innovative ways. Figurative language is intended to make someone's speech more beautiful and sound gorgeous by including powerful words with complete meanings.

### Song Lyric

According to Abrams (2009), in the most common sense of the word, a lyric is a short poem that is written by a single person who talks about a state of mind, a thought process, or how they feel. In one piece of writing, song lyrics will be used as a flash story. Lyrics are any short piece of literature written in the form of an audio conversation between one person and another who talks about their thoughts, feelings, and state of mind.

### Simile

The definitions of simile and metaphor are nearly identical. Both of them make a comparison between two very different things. A simile is a word or phrase that explicitly compares two things, such as like, as, than, comparable, resemble, or looks (Perrine, 1977, p. 61). A simile is the most basic form of figurative language, and it is frequently used in poetry. A simile compares two objects that use the terms "like" or "as" to describe them.

### Metaphor

It is a type of analogy in which two distinct elements are briefly contrasted without using a connective phrase like, as, or comparable (Perrine, 1977, p. 61). Perrine believes that metaphor and simile are linked. They are distinguished from one another through the use of connective words. This metaphorical phrase compares two opposite items by identifying or substituting one for the other.

### Personification

It is a figurative language that gives human characteristics to an animal, an object, or an idea. As defined, it is a subtype of metaphor, an implied comparison in which the metaphorical term of the comparison is always a human individual (Perrine, 1977). It's a contrast between

inanimate objects and people. Personification brings words to life. It clarifies a certain thing in the reader's imagination.

### Apostrophe

Perrine (1977) explained that an apostrophe is used to address someone absent, deceased, or nonhuman as if they were there and could repeat what is being said. It has a lot in common with personification. Furthermore, Abrams (2009, p. 313) believes that the apostrophe consists of directly addressing an absent person or an abstract or non-human object.

### Synecdoche

The use of a component to represent the whole is known as synecdoche (Perrine, 1977, p. 67). Synecdoche is divided into two components Pars pro-toto and Totem pro-parte. Totem pro-parte is when the whole item stands for its part, while pars pro-toto is when a portion stands for the whole. Furthermore, according to (DiYanni, 2004, p. 63), synecdoche is a type of metaphorical language in which a part of something is used to refer to the whole.

### Metonymy

Perrine (1977, p. 67) defines metonymy as a figure of speech in which something nearly related is used to represent what is genuinely meant. Metonymy is the usage of a term or phrase that is closely linked with the object that is truly meant. According to (Abrams, 2009, p. 120) metonymy is a literal phrase that is used to refer to other terms that have a general experiential association. Furthermore, DiYanni (2004) defined metonymy as the substitution of a thing's characteristic for the object itself.

### Symbol

A symbol is defined as something that has a deeper meaning than its literal meaning (Perrine, 1977, p. 81). The easiest way to understand a symbol is to think of it as an implied metaphor. Anything that indicates anything is referred to as a symbol. All words are symbols, in other words. The term symbol is only used in literary contexts to refer to a word or phrase that denotes an item or event that, in turn, represents something or has a spectrum of meaning beyond itself (Abrams, 2009, p. 311).

### Allegory

Allegory is a narrative or description that has meaning beneath the surface (Perrine, 1977, p. 88). Allegory is a description that has another meaning. The meaning beneath is different from its description.

### Paradox

A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement that is still true. It might be a scenario or a statement (Perrine, 1977, p. 101). A paradox is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or contradictory to what is usually thought to be true yet includes a truth.

### Hyperbole / Overstatement

Hyperbole is an exaggeration employed to emphasize the truth, (Perrine, 1977, p. 120). According to Abrams (2009, p. 149), hyperbole is an exaggerated exaggeration of reality that can be utilized for serious or satirical purposes. A blatant exaggeration is referred to as hyperbole. Hyperboles are frequently employed to emphasize a point. Hyperboles must be interpreted in context.

### Understatement

It is the opposite of the author's hyperbole to make the situation less important. It says less than it means and may exist in what one says and how one says it (Perrine, 1977, p. 102). Abrams (2009, p. 149) stated that understatement is a term to represent something as much less in magnitude or importance than what it is.

### Irony

Irony is the opposite of what is said and what it is meant (Perrine, 1977, p. 103). In addition, Abrams (2009) stated that irony is the statement in which the speaker's meaning has sharply different meanings than the speaker implies.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative research method in which the data were taken directly from the data source and focused on the descriptive explanation.

### Data Source

The source of the data is the song lyrics of a mini-album called "Butter". It is the first English single album by BTS. It was released on July 9, 2021. The "Butter" album contains two original tracks and two instrumental versions. From the album, two songs contain the chosen figurative language. The two songs are "Butter" and "Permission to Dance" which were used as data sources in this study.

### Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The documentation approach was used to collect data for this research. The data collection process runs in two steps. In the collecting process, the lyrics of the songs collected are two songs from BTS. Then the lyrics are read slowly and repeatedly. Second, note-taking the song lyrics that are considered figurative language. Then, the data are classified based on the theory of figurative language (Perrine, 1977)

### Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The method of analyzing data in this study is the descriptive qualitative method. The data is analyzed qualitatively, which implies that it is accompanied by detailed explanations rather than measurements or statistics. The data that had been marked were categorized based on the figurative language theory presented by (Perrine, 1977).

### Method and Technique of Presenting Data Analysis

The analysis of this study was presented informally. Figurative language data is presented

narratively in a paragraph to explain the types of figurative language found in song lyrics.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data found in the study were analysed as the primary concerns in the study. In order to support the analysis, the theory of figurative language proposed by (Perrine, 1977) was used.

**Simile**

A simile compares two objects, generally denoted by a connective word. Here are similes in the mini-album "Butter" song lyrics by BTS:

**Data 1**
**Smooth** like **butter** (Song 1, Line 1)

In data (1), the songwriter compares smooth (adjective) and butter (noun) using the connective word like. According to one of their personnel at BTS global press conference, Jimin BTS said that the song Butter was a confession of someone to their partner but in a witty or funny way and hoped that their lover would melt like butter. The songwriter, Jenna Andrews, also said that BTS's "Butter" lyrics are literally about the boys being so charming that they make people fall in love with their appearance. In this context, the songwriter compares the singers' charms with butter. She compares the soft texture of butter with the adjective smooth.

**Data 2**
Like a **criminal undercover** (Song 1, Line 2)

In data (2), the songwriters compare the singer and a criminal undercover. In an interview with Bowenbank (2021), Jenna Andrews, the songwriter, said that data (2) is a nod to Michael's 1988 hit, "Smooth Criminal." The song gave the listeners an iconic moment, the gravity-defying move in music video history. In this context, the songwriters compare BTS's dancing skills with Michael Jackson's iconic moves on the single "Smooth Criminal." It means the songwriter shows that the singer's dancing ability is very smooth, as in Michael Jackson's iconic The Gravity-Defying Move.

**Data 3**
**Hot** like **summer** (Song 1, Line 7)

Data (3) is included in the simile because it compares two objects and uses the connective word like. The songwriters compare hot (adjective) with summer (noun). Data (3) refers to the charms of the singers where their appearance is so hot that it even equals the burning sensation in summer. Through data (3), the songwriters show that the charm of seductive singers is like summer that makes people sweat.

**Metaphor**

A metaphor is a sort of analogy in which two different items are explicitly compared concisely without the use of a connective term. There is a metaphor in BTS song lyrics, which is as follows:

**Data 4**
'Cause when we **fall**, we know how to **land** (Song 2, Line 19)

In data (4), the songwriters use a metaphor to compare fall (verb) with land (verb). "Permission to Dance" is an energetic song released to invite the public to remain optimistic during a pandemic that has hit the world. The data (4) means to convince the public that everything will be fine even though the road is not always smooth. The word land is used to describe if we choose to land when we fall, decide not to give up, and land, we are ready to fly again, prepared to get back up.

**Personification**

Personification is a figurative language giving the attribute of human beings to an animal, an object or a concept. One data included the use of personification in the mini-album "Butter."

**Data 5**
And the **rhythms got you falling behind** (Song 2, Line 8).

In data (5), the songwriters give a human being the ability to the rhythms (noun). According to (McIntosh and Cambridge University Press, 2013), rhythm (noun) is a systematic arrangement of musical sounds, principally according to duration and periodic stress. That means it's not a subject that has abilities like living things. In data (5), the songwriters personify the rhythms as human beings by giving living beings the ability to get the listener falling behind. It means that the rhythm makes us lag, which in the context of this song, we can fall behind if we don't follow the rhythm of the music.

**Symbol**

Symbol is something that means more than it is. Here are symbols found in the mini-album "Butter" song lyrics by BTS, they are:

**Data 6**
Cool **shade stunner** (Song 1, Line 5)

The songwriter uses symbols in data (6) Stunner shades is a large aviator glasses. This term is often associated with the Hyphy Movement in the Bay Area in the 1990s. The songwriter added this lyric to relate to the singer's incredible charm when using stunner shades. Not only that, but BTS also wore this cool stunner shade in their music video. According to (Genius, 2021), they wore it in the music videos for August 2020's "Dynamite" and May 2021's "Butter". The members also dance a similar move with Hyphy in shooting individual elevators.

**Data 7**
**Ice** on my wrist, I'm the nice guy (Song 1, Line 41)

In data (7) the word ice is not taken literally as frozen liquid. But the word ice here symbolizes an expensive luxury watch. In slang, it means costly accessories such as jewellery or watches. Here, used as a symbol of BTS' success and accented by nice, which also contains -ice. In their song "Cypher 4" from their second studio album, Wings, they utilised similar ideas.

**Hyperbole / Overstatement**

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that involves exaggeration or overstatement of ideas for the goal of emphasis. This study discovered hyperboles in BTS song lyrics, which are as follows:

**Data 8**
I'll **melt your heart into two** (Song 1, Line 11)

In data (8), the songwriters use hyperbole to exaggerate the singers' charm. They say that their charm can melt people hearts into two. A human heart cannot dissolve in two just because of the appearance of someone's charm. BTS revealed that they could melt their listeners' hearts into two when they look in the mirror. The lyrics certainly seem that the songwriters are giving a touch of hyperbole or exaggerating BTS's charms.

**Data 9**
**Hot like summer** Yeah, I'm **makin' you sweat** like that (Song 1, Line 7-8)

In data (9), the songwriters exaggerate the singers' charms. It reveals that their charm is commensurate with the heat that it can make people sweat. In real life, humans would not sweat just because of the appearance displayed by someone. Therefore, the data (9) is included in hyperbole because the songwriters exaggerate BTS's abilities.

**Irony**

Irony has a deeper meaning than its use as a figure of speech. There is one data that included the use of irony in the mini-album "Butter."

**Data 10**
Let me show you **'cause talk is cheap** (Song 1, Line 17)

With their rise to fame in the West, BTS has often been criticized for not speaking a foreign language in an industry dominated by English. Through their official Twitter account @BTS-twt, in their posts supporting the #StopAsianHate movement, they recall times when they suffered from prejudice as Asians. They had been cursed for no reason and ridiculed for their appearance. When they released their first English single, "Dynamite" BTS was also criticized for why Asians sing in English. Language is a barrier that has been brought up repeatedly throughout their careers. However, in "Butter", BTS replied that talk is cheap, ironically in English.

## CONCLUSIONS

Figurative languages use a figure of speech to say something other than the word's literal meaning. It deviates significantly from what language users interpret as the conventional meaning of words or the standard sequence of words to produce some specific meaning or effect. According to (Perrine, 1977), there are 12 types of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, symbol, hyperbole/overstatement, personification, paradox, synecdoche, metonymy, allegory, apostrophe, understatement, and irony.

Based on the analysis of figurative language in BTS' mini-album "Butter" song lyrics, it

can be concluded that there are six types of figurative language used in BTS's songs. There are only six types of figurative languages in the "Butter" mini-album; simile, metaphor, symbol, hyperbole, personification, and irony.

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