



# An Analysis of Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" and Its Pedagogical Implications for English Language Learning

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## Abstract

An English song is not only a form of entertainment but also an effective tool for learning languages, especially for students learning English as a foreign language. However, figurative language is often not taught in a practical way in many Indonesian classrooms, making it difficult for students to grasp non-literal expressions. This study applied a qualitative descriptive method by analyzing Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" using Knickerbocker and Reninger's (1963) theory. The analysis identified 31 instances of figurative language across nine types, namely hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, simile, synecdoche, allusion, metonymy, and paradox, with hyperbole and metaphor appearing most frequently. In addition, perspectives from five students at Universitas Negeri Semarang were gathered through open-ended questionnaires to explore the pedagogical implications of using songs in English learning. The findings showed that students perceived song-based learning as engaging and motivating, reporting improved comprehension of figurative expressions and increased classroom participation. These results indicate that integrating popular songs into English lessons can meaningfully enhance student engagement and foster deeper understanding of figurative language in authentic contexts.

**Keywords:** Figurative Language, English Song, Language Learning

## Introduction

Music has always been more than just entertainment. It plays a powerful role in culture, emotion, and even education. In the field of English language learning, music can be used as an effective and enjoyable tool, especially for students who

are learning English as a foreign language. Through song lyrics, students encounter natural pronunciation, colloquial expressions, and emotional nuances that are often missing from textbooks. For learners in non-English-speaking countries like Indonesia, integrating music into English classes can create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience.

Although English songs have great potential as learning tools, many EFL classrooms in Indonesia still emphasize traditional approaches such as grammar drills and reading comprehension tasks, while giving little attention to authentic materials like songs or films. Based on the EF English Proficiency Index (2024), Indonesia is ranked 79th out of 113 countries and categorized as having a low level of English proficiency. This situation reflects broader challenges in maintaining student motivation and developing communicative competence. One major reason is the lack of focus on figurative language, an important element of natural communication, which is often neglected or discussed only at a surface level in English lessons. Consequently, many students find it difficult to understand non-literal meanings frequently encountered in music, media, and everyday interactions.

The limited use of figurative language in English classes has created a big gap in language learning. Even though Indonesian students often listen to popular English songs, they rarely learn how to find or understand the figurative meanings in the lyrics. Most lessons still focus on literal translation and vocabulary memorization, which makes it hard for students to think critically or interpret deeper meanings. This situation shows that English teaching in Indonesia needs more creative and relevant methods that connect language learning with emotion and culture.

To address this gap, this study examines how English songs, especially Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)", can be used to help students learn figurative language in a meaningful way. The song was chosen because of its strong storytelling and emotional expression, which make it suitable for studying how figurative language reflects human feelings and experiences. By analyzing the types of figurative language in the song and collecting student opinions, this study aims to connect language analysis with classroom practice and offer useful ideas for using songs in English learning for university students in Indonesia.

Several earlier studies have looked at figurative language in songs and how it can support English learning. One related study by Teja et al. (2022) called "Uncover the Meaning of Figurative Language in the Selected Songs" analyzed eight songs by Alec Benjamin. The researchers used the theories of Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) to identify types of figurative language and Leech's (1981) theory to explain their meanings. The study found four types of figurative language: hyperbole, personification, synecdoche, and paradox, with hyperbole and simile appearing the most. The meanings were mostly connotative, showing how the songwriter used creative expressions to share emotions and experiences. However,

the study mainly focused on identifying types of figurative language and did not discuss how this analysis could help students learn English in the classroom.

Other researchers have studied how songs can be used in English learning. Kumar et al. (2022) found that songs help reduce anxiety, increase motivation, and improve listening skills. Putri et al. (2022) also showed that using songs in English lessons makes students more creative and active in understanding meaning. Still, only a few studies in Indonesia have combined the study of figurative language in a specific song with how it can actually be used for teaching. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing figurative language in Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" and exploring how its expressive lyrics can help students understand figurative meanings better in English classes.

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Building on the previous studies, this research has two main aims. The first aim is to identify the types of figurative language used in Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)". The second aim is to explore how this song can be used to help university students learn English, especially in understanding figurative expressions. In line with these goals, this study focuses on two key questions: what kinds of figurative language appear in the song, and how the song can support students in improving their understanding of figurative language during the learning process.

In summary, this study addresses the gap in Indonesian EFL classrooms where figurative language is often overlooked or taught only superficially. By analyzing Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" and exploring students' perceptions, this research aims to connect language analysis with real classroom practice. The song's expressive use of figurative language provides a meaningful way for learners to experience how emotions, culture, and communication intersect in English. Therefore, this study not only identifies the types of figurative language in the lyrics but also examines how such authentic materials can enhance engagement and comprehension among university students.

## Method

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method to examine the types of figurative language found in Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" and to explore its potential application in English language learning. A qualitative

approach is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to interpret language in its natural context and explore students' experiences in a more meaningful way (Sugiyono, 2013). According to Moleong (2010), qualitative research is especially useful for collecting and analyzing descriptive data in the form of words, both spoken and written, as well as observable behavior in real-life settings. This method was suitable because the study aimed to connect language analysis with students' real perceptions of learning English through songs.

The main data source of this research is the official lyrics of Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)", retrieved from verified platforms. The song was chosen due to its strong emotional narrative and rich use of figurative expressions, including metaphor, simile, personification, imagery, and hyperbole. Supporting data were collected from five university students at Universitas Negeri Semarang. The participants were selected purposively because they were familiar with English songs and had an upper-intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency. All of them had studied English for more than twelve years, and most were majoring in English Literature, English Education, Economics and Accounting. The selection was based on their ability to understand English lyrics and express opinions clearly. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they filled out the questionnaire.

Data were collected in July 2025 through open-ended questionnaires distributed online. The questionnaire included six main questions about students' experiences and opinions on learning English through songs. Examples of questions included: "What do you think about learning English through songs?" and "Which parts of the lyrics were difficult to understand and why?" The answers were written in Bahasa Indonesia to make it easier for participants to express their thoughts naturally. The researcher acted only as an observer and data analyst, not as a participant in the learning process, to maintain objectivity and avoid influencing students' opinions.

Data collection was carried out in two stages. First, the song lyrics were analyzed using Knickerbocker and Reninger's (1963) theory to identify and classify types of figurative language. Each line was carefully examined, and instances of figurative language were coded into nine categories: hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, simile, synecdoche, allusion, metonymy, and paradox. Second, the students' responses were analyzed thematically to identify common ideas and insights. The results from both analyses were then compared and discussed to draw pedagogical implications. To ensure credibility, the data were reviewed several times for consistency, and the interpretations were cross-checked both through discussion with academic peers and by referring to the theoretical framework of Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963). This process helped maintain accuracy and strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings.

To conclude, this study employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore both the linguistic features of figurative language and students' perspectives on

learning through songs. The combination of lyric analysis and open-ended questionnaires allows for an in-depth understanding of how language functions emotionally and pedagogically. Although the research focuses on one song and a small participant group, the chosen design effectively connects textual interpretation with real learner experiences, ensuring that the findings remain both meaningful and contextually relevant to English education in Indonesia.

**Result and Discussion**

**Result**

This study identified nine types of figurative language found in Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” based on Knickerbocker and Reninger’s (1963) theory. These include hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, simile, synecdoche, allusion, metonymy, and paradox. Each type contributes to the emotional tone and poetic expression of the lyrics, allowing listeners to experience the story beyond its literal meaning.

A total of 31 figurative expressions were identified throughout the song, distributed across the following categories:

<b>Types of Figurative Language</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Metaphor	19.4%
Hyperbole	16.1%
Simile	12.9%
Personification	9.7%
Irony	9.7%
Allusion	9.7%
Paradox	9.7%
Synecdoche	6.5%
Metonymy	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1 Percentage of Figurative Language Types

As shown in the table, metaphor (19.4%) and hyperbole (16.1%) appear most frequently, showing Taylor Swift’s strong use of expressive and imaginative language to convey emotion. Meanwhile, other types such as simile, personification, irony, allusion, and paradox occur with moderate frequency (around 9–13%), while synecdoche and metonymy are the least common.

1. Metaphor

Metaphor is the most dominant type found in the song. It is used to convey emotional depth and abstract ideas through indirect comparison, allowing the lyrics to feel more vivid and heartfelt. For instance:

"That magic's not here no more"

The word "magic" is used metaphorically. There is no actual magic being referred to; instead, "magic" stands for the special feeling, joy, or spark that once existed in the relationship. This is a metaphor, where one thing (magic) represents another (emotional connection) without using "like" or "as". This makes the emotional loss feel more powerful and poetic.

"Maybe this thing was a masterpiece 'til you tore it all up"

This is a metaphor. The relationship is described as a "masterpiece," suggesting that it was once beautiful, valuable, or full of effort. The word "thing" refers to the relationship, and "tore it all up" symbolizes emotional damage or betrayal. Nothing is literally torn, but the metaphor paints a vivid image of something precious being destroyed.

"Maybe we got lost in translation"

This is a metaphor, because the phrase "lost in translation" is not meant literally. Nothing was actually translated between languages. Instead, the speaker uses this expression to describe how their feelings, intentions, or communication may have become misunderstood or disconnected over time. It suggests that something essential was missed or distorted in the emotional "language" of the relationship. The metaphor creates a strong image of emotional confusion and miscommunication, helping listeners relate to the universal experience of feeling misunderstood in a close connection.

"A never-needy, ever-lovely jewel whose shine reflects on you"

In this line, the speaker metaphorically describes herself as a "jewel," which is not literal. This metaphor represents how she was once seen as precious, beautiful, and polished, not as a real person with flaws and emotions. The shine that "reflects on you" implies that her image existed to make the other person look good, a metaphor for emotional one-sidedness or performative affection.

"From when your Brooklyn broke my skin and bones"

Here, "Brooklyn" is used metaphorically to represent a painful experience or phase of the relationship. Brooklyn, a place, does not literally injure someone. Instead, it stands in for events, memories, or emotional wounds that left a lasting impact. This is a metaphor, where something abstract (emotional pain) is described as physical damage.

"I'm a soldier who's returning half her weight"

This is another metaphor, comparing the speaker to a soldier. She is not literally in a war, but emotionally, she has been through something exhausting and traumatic. Saying she returns with “half her weight” intensifies the image of loss, fatigue, and deep emotional damage, without needing to say it directly.

Overall, metaphors in the song illustrate emotional struggle, memory, and loss in symbolic terms. They help listeners feel the intensity of the narrator’s pain without direct description. In language learning, analyzing metaphors like these can train students to recognize symbolic meanings and appreciate emotional nuance in English expressions.

## 2. Simile

Simile is a type of figurative language that compares two different things using the words like or as. In Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)”, similes are used to create vivid imagery and emphasize emotional contrasts between the narrator and her partner. Examples include:

“Autumn leaves fallin' down like pieces into place”

This is a simile because it uses the word “like” to compare two things: falling autumn leaves and pieces falling into place. A simile always makes a comparison using “like” or “as”, and here, the songwriter is comparing the natural motion of leaves to puzzle pieces, possibly suggesting that even in sadness, something felt strangely right or inevitable. This expression adds a visual element and emotional depth to the scene.

“You call me up again just to break me like a promise”

This line is a simile because it compares the speaker’s emotional pain to breaking a promise, using the word “like.” The phrase suggests that the speaker was fragile and meaningful, just like a promise should be, but was broken casually and carelessly. This simile heightens the impact of the emotional betrayal.

“You kept me like a secret, but I kept you like an oath”

This line is a simile because it uses the word “like” to make a direct comparison between two unlike things. The speaker compares how she treated the relationship (like an oath) with how the other person treated it (like a secret). An oath suggests loyalty, seriousness, and sacred promise, while a secret suggests shame, hiding, or avoidance. The contrast between these two similes highlights the emotional imbalance and different levels of commitment between the two people. This makes the line powerful and emotionally charged, and it’s an excellent example of how similes can reveal

deeper relationship dynamics in few words.

“Sippin’ coffee like you’re on a late-night show”

This is a simile because it uses the word “like” to compare sipping coffee casually to appearing on a talk show. The comparison suggests a sense of artificial charm or performance, a moment that felt staged or superficial, rather than sincere. It emphasizes how the other person presented themselves in a smooth, charming, yet detached manner.

Similes in the song make emotional experiences more relatable by connecting abstract feelings to familiar images. For learners, identifying similes helps improve their understanding of comparison structures and descriptive expression in English.

### 3. Personification

Personification appears when abstract ideas or inanimate objects are given human qualities. This device helps transform emotions into tangible experiences. Several examples from the song include:

“So casually cruel in the name of bein’ honest”

This line uses personification. While “cruelty” and “honesty” are abstract ideas, here they are described as if they can act with intention and behavior. The phrase suggests that honesty was used as an excuse for emotional harm, giving human traits (being casual and cruel) to the abstract concept of truth-telling.

“Time won’t fly, it’s like I’m paralyzed by it”

This line attributes human qualities to time, which is an abstract concept. Saying “time won’t fly” gives time the human ability to move or stay still. This makes it a personification, as time is treated as if it can disobey or control someone emotionally. It shows how emotionally stuck the speaker feels unable to move forward because time itself has stopped cooperating.

“Did the twin flame bruise paint you blue?”

The phrase “paint you blue” gives human action to a metaphorical wound, the bruise. This is personification, where an inanimate thing (a bruise or emotional hurt) is given the ability to paint someone a color. “Blue” here symbolizes sadness, and the line suggests that the emotional connection (the twin flame) may have hurt the other person as well.

Through personification, Taylor Swift gives life to abstract emotions, turning pain, time, and honesty into almost physical entities. This helps listeners visualize emotional conflict more vividly. In learning contexts, such



examples can train students to recognize how English writers humanize emotions to express inner states effectively.

#### 4. Synecdoche

Synecdoche occurs when a part of something represents the whole, or vice versa. This type of figurative expression allows one image or object to symbolize something larger. Examples include:

“You held my lifeless frame”

This line uses synecdoche, where “frame” (a part or representation of the body) stands in for the whole person. Describing herself as a “lifeless frame” suggests she felt emotionally empty, hollow, or numb. This use of body-as-object emphasizes emotional detachment or trauma.

“You keep my old scarf from that very first week”

This can be read as synecdoche, where an object (the scarf) represents the speaker herself, or more specifically, her presence, innocence, or memory. The scarf is a part of her or a symbol of their early connection. Keeping the scarf symbolizes holding onto the past, even though the relationship is over. Synecdoche in the song reveals how physical objects or body parts can stand for emotional experiences. For students, learning synecdoche enhances their ability to interpret symbolic meaning behind simple expressions.

#### 5. Paradox

A paradox is a statement that appears self-contradictory but reveals a deeper truth. Taylor Swift uses paradoxes to express emotional confusion and the complexity of healing after heartbreak. Examples include:

“I forget about you long enough to forget why I needed to”

This is a paradox, because it appears to contradict itself. The speaker claims to forget someone just long enough to forget the reason why she needed to forget them in the first place. The sentence loops in on itself, capturing the confusion and emotional complexity of moving on from someone you’re still attached to.

“They say all's well that ends well, but I'm in a new hell”

This is a paradox because it presents two ideas that seem contradictory. The common phrase “all’s well that ends well” suggests closure and peace, yet the speaker is in a “new hell,” implying that the ending brought even more pain. The contrast between expected emotional relief and actual suffering creates a paradoxical tension that reflects the lasting trauma from the breakup.

"Just between us, did the love affair maim you too?"

This question presents a love, which is supposed to bring joy, is instead described as something that maimed the speaker and possibly the other person. The contrast between what love should do and what it actually did creates a thought-provoking tension.

The use of paradox deepens the song's emotional realism by reflecting the contradictions often present in heartbreak. For English learners, studying paradox helps develop interpretive skills, encouraging them to see meaning beyond surface-level contradiction.

## 6. Allusion

Allusion is a reference to a well-known person, event, or concept. Taylor Swift often uses allusion to give her lyrics cultural or emotional depth. In "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)", allusions connect personal experience with broader ideas such as feminism, spirituality, and emotional memory. Examples include:

"'Fuck the patriarchy' keychain on the ground"

This is an example of allusion. The phrase "fuck the patriarchy" refers to a larger cultural movement or ideology, opposing systemic gender-based power structures. Although it's mentioned as a literal phrase on a keychain, its presence alludes to broader feminist conversations, beliefs, or even the performative nature of rebellion. Allusions draw upon widely understood references without needing full explanation.

"Sacred prayer and we'd swear to remember it all too well"

This may count as an allusion, referencing religious or spiritual rituals. "Sacred prayer" evokes the language of vows, commitment, and sacredness, drawing on a broader cultural understanding of spiritual devotion. It adds depth to the seriousness of the emotional bond being described.

"Sacred prayer, I was there"

This line contains an allusion to religious or spiritual rituals. The use of the phrase "sacred prayer" suggests solemnity, commitment, or a sacred emotional experience, referencing broader cultural or religious understanding of sacred vows. It's not explained directly, but its presence brings spiritual weight to the memory.

Allusion in the song enriches its narrative by embedding cultural and emotional layers that listeners may recognize intuitively. For language learners, identifying allusions can enhance cultural awareness and

interpretive skills, helping them understand English beyond literal translation.

## 7. Metonymy

Metonymy occurs when an object or concept represents something closely related to it. In this song, Swift uses metonymy to symbolize emotional intimacy and connection:

“Tossing me the car keys”

This may be interpreted as metonymy, where an object (the car keys) stands for something else (freedom, trust, or shared control). In literature, when a thing represents something associated with it, it's considered metonymy. Here, being handed the keys could suggest a moment of inclusion, connection, or even responsibility in the relationship.

“Check the pulse and come back swearin' it's the same”

This can be interpreted as metonymy, where “pulse” represents life or emotional presence. The speaker is not asking someone to literally check a heartbeat, but it symbolizes checking whether the feeling or emotional “life” of the relationship is still there. Using “pulse” to stand for emotional connection is typical of metonymic substitution.

These examples show how simple physical actions can stand in for deeper emotional states. For learners, studying metonymy encourages them to read figurative expressions more sensitively and understand implied meanings in natural English contexts.

## 8. Hyperbole

Hyperbole involves deliberate exaggeration to express strong emotion or intensity. Swift frequently uses hyperbole to dramatize heartbreak and emotional pain. Examples include:

“I might be okay, but I'm not fine at all”

This can be read as a hyperbole because it dramatizes the speaker's emotional conflict. Saying “I’m not fine at all” is an exaggerated way of expressing inner pain or sadness. Hyperbole is a figure of speech that uses intentional exaggeration to create a strong emotional effect, and this line reflects the denial and struggle that often come after a breakup.

“I remember it all too well”

This line reflects hyperbole because of an intentional exaggeration of memory. While no one can truly remember everything “all too well,” the

phrase is used to emphasize how vivid and emotionally intense the memory still feels for the speaker. The exaggeration strengthens the emotional weight of the song, highlighting how unforgettable the relationship was, even in small details.

"I'm a crumpled-up piece of paper lyin' here"

This is a hyperbole, an exaggeration to express the depth of the speaker's emotional devastation. She's not literally a piece of paper, but this imagery conveys how used, discarded, and worthless she feels. The overstatement is emotionally powerful and designed to reflect inner brokenness.

"And that made me want to die"

This is a clear hyperbole, an exaggeration used to express overwhelming emotional pain. The speaker did not literally want to die, but the phrase highlights how deeply hurt she felt when the person suggested age difference was the reason things did not work out. This kind of intense exaggeration reflects the rawness of heartbreak.

"Did the love affair maim you too?"

This is a clear hyperbole, as it exaggerates the emotional damage from the relationship by using the word "maim," which means to physically injure or disable. No literal injury occurred, but the emotional wound is described in an extreme way to emphasize how deeply the speaker was hurt and to question whether the other person felt anything similar.

Hyperboles in the song intensify emotional delivery and make the narrative more dramatic and relatable. In classroom contexts, they help students recognize how exaggeration conveys emotional truth in English expression.

## 9. Irony

Irony appears when the literal meaning contrasts with the intended message. In "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)", Swift uses irony to reveal emotional contradictions and hidden hurt:

"So casually cruel in the name of bein' honest"

This line can also be seen as irony. Honesty is usually considered a good thing, but here it is twisted into something cruel. The irony lies in the contradiction, the supposed virtue (honesty) becomes a weapon for emotional harm. This contrast is what gives the line its sharpness and emotional impact.

"It's supposed to be fun turning twenty-one"

This is a clear example of irony, where the expectation (turning twenty-one is supposed to be joyful) clashes with the reality (it is painful and disappointing). The speaker uses this line to express the emotional dissonance of what should have been a celebratory moment, now marked by abandonment and sadness. The irony deepens the emotional impact of the scene.

“I’ll get older, but your lovers stay my age”

This line is an example of irony, as it highlights an unfair and disturbing truth through a clever, almost sarcastic contrast. The speaker acknowledges that while she ages naturally, her ex-partner continues dating people her age, suggesting immaturity or predatory behavior. The line is sharp and cutting. It exposes hypocrisy while maintaining a deceptively calm tone, which is a hallmark of ironic expression.

Irony allows the songwriter to express pain and criticism subtly. For learners, understanding irony builds awareness of tone and emotional nuance, crucial for mastering advanced English comprehension.

To complement the lyric analysis, this study gathered responses from five university students at Universitas Negeri Semarang, representing majors in English Literature, English Education, Economics, and Accounting. The questionnaire explored their opinions about learning English through songs, focusing on engagement, comprehension, and figurative meaning.

1. Perception of song-based learning

All five respondents described learning English through songs as enjoyable and engaging. They agreed that music makes learning feel natural and less rigid, enhancing vocabulary, listening skills, and pronunciation. One student noted that “you can learn without feeling like you’re studying,” while another emphasized that songs provide “real emotional expressions” often missing from textbooks.

2. Strengths and challenges

Students highlighted several advantages: increased motivation, exposure to authentic expressions, and easier vocabulary retention due to repetition. However, they also mentioned challenges, such as informal grammar, idiomatic phrases, and difficult figurative language. For example, lines like “You kept me like a secret, but I kept you like an oath” were found emotionally powerful but conceptually difficult to interpret literally.

3. Understanding figurative language

Most respondents admitted that figurative language made

comprehension more challenging yet rewarding. They saw it as an opportunity to think critically about meanings. As one student said, figurative expressions "help us learn to see beyond literal words."

4. Suitability for university learning

All respondents agreed that "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" is suitable for university-level English learning, especially in courses focused on literature or semantics. They appreciated its rich vocabulary and emotional depth, though they noted that beginners might require teacher guidance.

5. Impact on engagement

Every respondent stated that using songs like this would make English classes more enjoyable and memorable. They emphasized how emotional storytelling fosters deeper connection and helps retain language naturally.

Overall, the questionnaire results show that song-based learning can significantly enhance engagement, critical thinking, and interpretive skills. While some challenges exist in decoding figurative language, students view these as opportunities to grow. These insights reinforce the pedagogical potential of using songs like "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" as authentic learning materials in EFL classrooms.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal that Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" contains a wide range of figurative language, with metaphor and hyperbole appearing most frequently. This dominance reflects Swift's expressive storytelling style, where emotions are often conveyed through symbolic and exaggerated language. According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), figurative expressions function not only as artistic devices but also as tools to reveal emotional and psychological depth. In this context, Swift's use of metaphor, such as "Maybe we got lost in translation" and "I'm a soldier who's returning half her weight," illustrates the complexity of memory and heartbreak in a more vivid, poetic way than literal language could achieve.

This result aligns with previous studies such as Teja et al. (2022), who found that hyperbole and simile were the most dominant in Alec Benjamin's songs, and Dewi et al. (2020), who emphasized that figurative language in music helps express emotions more naturally. However, while those studies focused mainly on classification, this research extends the discussion to how figurative language can support English learning. Swift's use of imagery and symbolic comparisons provides authentic examples of how emotional meaning operates in real-world English usage, something often missing from textbook-based instruction.

The student responses further reinforce this point. All participants viewed songs as engaging and effective media for learning English, particularly because

music creates a relaxed learning atmosphere and presents real-life language use. This supports the findings of Kumar et al. (2022), who concluded that music enhances motivation and lowers anxiety in EFL classrooms. In this study, students mentioned that the repetition and rhythm of songs helped them remember new vocabulary more easily, while figurative expressions encouraged them to think more critically about meaning.

Interestingly, while students acknowledged that figurative language was sometimes difficult to interpret, they also described this challenge as valuable. Complex lines such as “You kept me like a secret, but I kept you like an oath” or “Well, maybe we got lost in translation” prompted them to reflect deeply on emotional nuance and cultural context. This echoes Yusnitasari et al. (2022), who observed that authentic materials with layered meanings stimulate higher-order thinking and language awareness among learners.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings suggest that integrating songs rich in figurative language can bridge the gap between linguistic competence and emotional literacy. By analyzing metaphors, similes, or hyperboles, students not only improve their vocabulary but also learn to interpret tone, symbolism, and intent. Moreover, songs like “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” connect linguistic learning with personal experience, making language study more meaningful and memorable.

The results and student feedback collectively highlight that figurative language in songs can serve as both a linguistic and emotional bridge in EFL classrooms. It allows learners to engage with English as a living, expressive medium rather than a set of rigid rules. With proper guidance, teachers can use this approach to foster critical interpretation, creative expression, and deeper cultural understanding among students.

Although the findings of this study provide valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged.

1. First, the sample size was relatively small, involving only five university students from a single institution. As a result, the participants’ perspectives may not fully represent the broader population of EFL learners in Indonesia.
2. Second, the study focused on a single song, Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)”, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Different songs, genres, or artists may contain distinct styles of figurative expression that could lead to varied interpretations or learning outcomes.
3. Third, as with most qualitative research, there is the potential for researcher bias in interpreting figurative language and analyzing student responses. Although efforts were made to maintain objectivity, such as peer review and data cross-checking, complete neutrality cannot be guaranteed.

Recognizing these limitations helps clarify the scope of this research and opens opportunities for more comprehensive studies in the future. Future studies are encouraged to expand upon the current findings by including larger and more diverse participant groups across different universities and proficiency levels. A broader sample would provide richer data and more representative insights into how students from various backgrounds perceive song-based language learning.

In addition, researchers could analyze multiple songs or different musical genres to compare how figurative language appears in various styles, such as pop, rock, or R&B, and how these differences influence students' engagement and comprehension. Exploring cross-genre comparisons may reveal whether certain types of figurative language are more accessible or effective in supporting EFL learning.

Finally, future research could adopt experimental or mixed-method designs to measure the actual impact of song-based learning on language performance. For instance, pre- and post-tests could be used to assess improvements in students' understanding of figurative language or vocabulary retention. Such empirical approaches would strengthen the pedagogical relevance of using music as an instructional tool in EFL classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)," this study identified nine types of figurative language: hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, simile, synecdoche, allusion, metonymy, and paradox, using the framework of Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963). The findings demonstrate that figurative expressions in song lyrics not only enhance poetic quality but also offer meaningful opportunities for English language learning. Supported by responses from university students, the study highlights that songs can help learners connect emotionally with the language, build vocabulary, and improve interpretive skills. While some expressions may pose challenges, they also motivate students to engage more deeply with the material. Therefore, integrating rich, real-life materials like English songs into language instruction can make learning more enjoyable, contextual, and impactful.

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