

# Figurative Language and Its Emotional Impact in YOASOBI's *The Book 1* Lyrics: A Semantic Approach

Muhammad Hisam Yusri<sup>1</sup>, Taqdir Taqdir<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.  
taqdir@unhas.ac.id

Received: 23-2-2025

Revised: 11-3-2025

Accepted: 13-3-2025

## ABSTRACT

This study analyses the use of figurative language in *The Book 1* album lyrics by YOASOBI through a semantic approach. Figurative language, including metaphor, personification, simile, and hyperbole, is crucial in enhancing song lyrics' emotional depth and artistic expression. This research explores how these figurative elements contribute to meaning-making and emotional engagement in the songs. A qualitative descriptive-analytical method focused on semantic analysis of selected lyrics. The data consist of seven songs from the album *The Book 1*, which were analysed through document analysis to identify patterns of figurative language. Each instance of metaphor, personification, simile, and hyperbole was categorized based on its linguistic structure and contextual function within the lyrics. The findings reveal that metaphors in YOASOBI's lyrics establish strong symbolic imagery by connecting abstract concepts with concrete objects. Personification is used to attribute human qualities to non-human entities, intensifying emotional resonance. Simile explicitly compares two distinct elements to clarify feelings, while hyperbole amplifies emotions to create dramatic effects. These devices collectively enrich the meaning of the lyrics, allowing listeners to experience a deeper emotional connection to the songs. The study concludes that YOASOBI's use of figurative language enhances their music's aesthetic and emotive aspects, making their lyrics more impactful and immersive.

**Keywords:** *figurative language; semantics; metaphor; song lyrics; YOASOBI*

<https://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/nawa>

## INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is a branch of science that studies language in terms of structure, meaning, and its use in society. One of the branches of linguistics that focuses on meaning is semantics. Semantics examines the relationship between linguistic signs and the meanings they convey, including lexical, contextual, and figurative meanings (Baa et al., 2023). In this study, it is essential to understand how linguistic elements, such as figurative language, can reveal deeper meanings in texts, particularly in song lyrics.

Figurative language is a form of language use that deviates from literal meaning to create a particular aesthetic or emotional effect (Shotillo Safarovich Shorakhmetov, 2024). In song lyrics, figurative language is often employed to enrich meaning and provide listeners with a profound emotional experience (Juliana et al., 2023). Some common types of figurative language found in song lyrics include metaphor, personification, simile, and hyperbole.

This study analyses figurative language in seven songs from YOASOBI's *The Book 1* album. The findings indicate that metaphor is frequently used to establish strong symbolic imagery, linking abstract concepts with concrete objects. Personification is present in several lyrics, attributing human characteristics to non-human entities to enhance emotional depth. Similes are employed to create direct comparisons that clarify emotions, while hyperbole is used extensively to amplify emotional intensity and dramatic expression. These figurative elements contribute to the rich storytelling and immersive experience of YOASOBI's lyrics.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69908/nawa.v2i1.43302>

Apart from metaphors, song lyrics frequently utilize other figurative language, such as personification, which attributes human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract concepts, making them more relatable and emotionally engaging for the listener (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Simile, which explicitly compares two different things using linking words such as “like,” “as,” or “resembling,” is also commonly found in song lyrics (Keraf, 2009). Additionally, hyperbole, which exaggerates something for dramatic or emotional effect, is frequently used in song lyrics (Keraf, 2009).

Song lyrics often share similarities with poetry using aesthetic language elements, including figurative language that enhances meaning (Hermintoyo, 2018). By utilizing various types of figurative language, songwriters can convey emotions and messages more effectively, creating a more profound experience for listeners (Sirait et al., 2024). Therefore, analyzing figurative language in song lyrics is crucial for understanding how language creatively communicates ideas and emotions. Among the most compelling forms of figurative language to analyze is metaphor, which can reveal meanings that extend beyond words' lexical or literal interpretation (Thibodeau et al., 2019).

For example, in Yoasobi's song “*Ano Yume Wo Nazotte*,” there is a lyric that reads 夜の空を飾る綺麗な花 *Yoru no sora wo kazaru kirei na hana*, “Beautiful flowers decorate the night sky”. In this phrase, the word “flowers” is not used literally, as the night sky is not adorned with flowers but with stars or other celestial bodies. The use of “flowers” here is a metaphor depicting the beauty of the night sky. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:13), this metaphor falls under the category of structural metaphor, where one concept (the night sky) is described using another concept (flowers) from a different domain yet within a similar scope of meaning. This demonstrates how Yoasobi frequently employs figurative language to enhance the poetic quality of their lyrics. Through such creative expressions, the group is able to evoke deep emotions and imagery, making their music more immersive and meaningful for listeners.

Music, as an integral part of human life, can convey profound meaning through lyrics. Similarly, Japanese music is known for its strong emotional appeal to listeners. One of the Japanese music groups that has garnered international attention is Yoasobi. Formed in 2019 by Ayase and Ikuta Lilas, Yoasobi is renowned for its songs that combine fictional narratives with captivating music. The group does not rely solely on engaging melodies but also on significant lyrics, which frequently incorporate figurative language, especially metaphors, to express emotions and powerful messages.

Yoasobi released *The Book 1*, an album of several songs with deep and figurative lyrics. This album was chosen as the object of study because its lyrics are popular among young listeners and rich in metaphors, making them intriguing for further analysis. The songs in this album portray a range of emotions, from love to loss, conveyed through metaphors and symbolism. Thus, a semantic analysis of the lyrics in *The Book 1* can provide deeper insights into the use of metaphors in Japanese music and their contribution to listeners' emotional experiences.

In 2022, Yoasobi performed at the *Head in the Clouds* international music festival organized by 88rising in Jakarta, Indonesia (Riandi & Aditia, 2022). Their success in attracting global attention demonstrates that Japanese music, particularly Yoasobi's works, has a universal appeal. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the meaning of song lyrics in *The Book 1* by Yoasobi through a semantic approach, specifically in studying metaphors, to uncover how language is creatively utilized in song lyrics to convey deep emotions and messages.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to examine the meaning of song lyrics in *The Book 1* album by Yoasobi. This approach was chosen to conduct an in-depth analysis of the use of figurative language, particularly metaphors, in the song lyrics. Semantic analysis serves as the primary method for uncovering the layers of meaning embedded in the lyrics, whether contextual or figurative (Simarmata et al., 2021), as well as for understanding how Yoasobi conveys emotional messages through language in music.

The object of this study is the lyrics of the songs in *The Book 1*, which consist of several tracks with deep emotional themes. These lyrics were selected due to their rich use of figurative language, particularly metaphors, which provide an opportunity for semantic analysis. Data were collected through document analysis by accessing song lyrics from official digital music platforms and recording the thematic context of each song to enhance the understanding of the meanings contained in the lyrics.

The analysis process involves identifying various types of figurative language, with a primary focus on metaphors, within each song lyric. The identified metaphors will be categorized into conceptual and structural metaphors and analysed based on their roles in shaping meaning. The validity and reliability of the research findings will be ensured through source and methodological triangulation and the *member-checking* technique to verify the accuracy of interpretations. The results will be presented descriptively, including direct lyric quotations to support the findings and provide a deeper interpretation of meaning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Metaphor

Metaphor is a linguistic concept that is not only used as a rhetorical device but also as a way of thinking and understanding the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 5). In song lyrics, metaphors function to connect abstract concepts with more concrete objects, thereby creating more affluent and more emotionally resonant meanings for listeners. In *The Book 1* album by YOASOBI, numerous metaphors are employed to reinforce the message and atmosphere of the songs. This study identifies various examples of metaphor usage in the album's lyrics, which deepen the meaning and enhance the listener's experience.

Data 1

夜の空を飾る綺麗な花

*Yoru/no/sora/wo/kazaru/kirei/na/hana*

“Night/sky/decorate/beautiful/flowers”

(Song: YOASOBI - *Ano Yume Wo Nazotte*)

In this lyric excerpt, the phrase “花” *hana*, which means “flower” according to the (Tokugawa et al., 2007) *Kokugojiten* dictionary (p. 1225), is metaphorically used. In Japanese culture, flowers often symbolize transient beauty, aligning with *mono no aware*—an awareness of the impermanence of beautiful things. Meanwhile, “夜の空” *yoru no sora* means “night sky,” and “綺麗な花” *kireina hana* translates to “beautiful flowers.” The night sky is not adorned with flowers but celestial bodies such as stars or the moon. Therefore, this metaphor emerges

when the song’s protagonist describes celestial objects—such as stars and the moon—as flowers decorating the night sky. This metaphor falls under the category of structural metaphor, which is based on the source and target domains. Here, “flower” (source domain) is used to describe the “night sky” (target domain). According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 13), this type of metaphor connects two different concepts within a similar scope of meaning, creating a more poetic and emotionally evocative interpretation.

Data 2

沈むように溶けてゆくように  
二人だけの空が広がる夜に

*Shizumu/youni/toketeyuku/youni/  
Futari/dake/no/sora/ga/hirogaru/yoru/ni*

“Sinking/like/melting/like/  
only the two of us/sky/expands/night”

(Song: YOASOBI - Yoru ni Kakeru)

This lyric excerpt contains a metaphor that connects the concepts of “night” and “sky” with feelings of sadness and memories. The phrase “夜” *yoru*, meaning “night,” is often associated with darkness or sorrow in Japanese culture, while “空が広がる” *sora ga hirogaru* means “the sky expands.” Lexically, “night” and “sky” do not directly connect—night relates to darkness, whereas the sky represents a vast space above the earth. However, in this lyric, the protagonist describes painful memories as “an expanding sky” between them. This metaphor conveys the idea that sadness and longing “stretch” between them, much like the vastness of the sky. This is another example of a structural metaphor, where “night” (source domain) is linked to “sky” (target domain), producing a powerful and meaningful image of sorrow that extends infinitely.

Overall, the use of metaphors in the lyrics of *The Book 1* enriches both the linguistic aesthetics and the emotional depth of the songs. By blending abstract concepts with concrete imagery, these lyrics’ metaphors enhance linguistic expression and deepen the listener’s emotional experience. Through metaphors, themes such as nostalgia, love, sorrow, and hope are conveyed more poetically and expressively, allowing listeners to feel and comprehend the message of the songs on a deeper level.

## B. Personification

Personification is a figurative language device that attributes human characteristics or actions to inanimate objects or abstract concepts (Kerac, 2007, p. 140). In song lyrics, personification enriches emotional meaning, allowing listeners to connect with the personal experiences conveyed in the song more easily. In *The Book 1* album by YOASOBI, several instances of personification reinforce the emotional atmosphere and themes explored in the lyrics.

Data 3

あの日のあなたの言葉と美しい時間と二人で過ごしたあの景色が  
忘れてた想いと失くしたはずの未来を繋いでいく

*Ano/hi/no/anata/no/kotoba/to/utsukushii/teki/to/Futari/de/sugoshita/ano/keshiki/ga  
Wasureteta/omoi/to/nakushita/hazu/no/mirai/wo/tsunaideiku*

“That/day/your/words/and/beautiful/time/and/two of us/spent/that/scenery/

forgotten/emotions/and/lost/supposedly/future/connects.”

(Song: YOASOBI - *Harujion*)

In this lyric excerpt, personification is evident in how 時間 *toki*, meaning “time,” an abstract concept, is given the human-like quality of “beauty” (美しい, *utsukushii*). Lexically, *toki* refers to “time,” while *utsukushii* describes something as “beautiful.” In this context, time is not merely perceived as a passing period but as something emotionally valuable and beautiful for the song’s protagonist. This personification adds emotional depth and links the feelings of nostalgia and memories with the continuous passage of time. As a result, personification strengthens the song's theme, which revolves around cherished memories and unforgettable emotions. Keraf (2007: 140) states that personification attributes human qualities to inanimate objects or abstract concepts, which is demonstrated in this lyric.

#### Data 4

どこか儂い空気を纏う君は  
寂しい目をしてたんだ

*Doko/ka/hakanai/kuuki/wo/matou/kimi/wa*  
*Sabishii/me/wo/shitetanda/*

“Somewhere/fleeting/air/wraps/you/  
lonely/eyes/had.”

(Song: YOASOBI - *Yoru ni Kakeru*)

In this lyric excerpt, personification occurs when 目 (*me*, “eyes”), a part of the body, is given the human emotion of “loneliness” (寂しい, *sabishi*). Biologically, eyes do not have feelings, yet in literature and song lyrics, eyes are often used as a metaphor for a person's inner emotions. This personification creates the impression that “eyes” can “feel,” in this case, a deep sense of loneliness. Using personification, *Yoru ni Kakeru* establishes a melancholic atmosphere that vividly portrays the protagonist's loneliness, which is symbolized through their gaze. Keraf (2007: 140) explains that personification associates human qualities with inanimate objects, and in this case, eyes, which are not sentient, are given the capacity to express human emotion.

From the analysis above, personification in the lyrics of *The Book 1* strengthens the emotional elements and meaning conveyed in the songs. By attributing human qualities to objects or abstract concepts such as time and eyes, YOASOBI's songs create a melancholic, nostalgic, and emotionally profound atmosphere, allowing listeners to relate to the themes presented, such as memories, loneliness, and unspoken feelings.

### C. Simile

A simile is a figurative language device that explicitly compares two different things using linking words such as “like,” “as,” or “resembling” (Keraf, 2007 p. 138). Unlike a metaphor, which implies a comparison indirectly, a simile explicitly highlights the similarity between two objects to clarify meaning or create a specific effect. In song lyrics, similes are often used to amplify emotions and construct more concrete visual imagery for listeners. YOASOBI, with its poetic lyricism, frequently employs similes to emphasize melancholic atmospheres, uncertainty, or hope in its songs. This study identifies several examples of similes in *The Book 1* album lyrics by YOASOBI that help reinforce lyrical meaning and enhance the listener's imaginative experience.

## Data 5

ただ、優しさの日々を  
辛い日々と感じてしまったのなら  
戻れないから

*Tada/yasashisa/no/hibi/no*  
*Tsurai/hibi/to/kanjūteshimatta/no/nara*  
*Modorenai kara*

"Only/kindness/days/  
painful/days/feel/  
cannot return."

(Song: YOASOBI - *Tabun*)

In this lyric excerpt, a simile is used to compare two contrasting concepts: 優しさの日々 (*yasashisa no Hibi*, days full of kindness) and 辛い日々 (*tsurai hibi*, painful days). This comparison illustrates how experiences once perceived as joyful and pleasant can transform into something painful over time. According to the *Kokugojiten* dictionary (p. 1522), *yasashii* means "gentle" or "kind," whereas *tsurai* (p. 1011) means "harsh" or "painful." These two words have significantly different lexical meanings: *yasashii* represents comfort and softness, while *tsurai* conveys suffering and discomfort. However, these opposing concepts are juxtaposed in this lyric, reflecting the emotional transition experienced by the song's protagonist. This aligns with Keraf's (2007: 138) assertion that a simile compares two different things while intentionally treating them as similar. The comparison between *yasashisa no hibi* and *tsurai hibi* highlights the protagonist's emotional shift, reinforcing themes of sadness and deep regret.

## Data 6

日が沈み出した空と君の姿  
フェンス越しに重なっていた

*Hi/ga/Shizumi/dashita/sora/to/kimi/no/sugata*  
*Fensu/goshi/ni/kasanatteita*

"Sun/set/beginning/sky/and/your/figure  
fence/across/overlapping."

(Song: YOASOBI - *Yoru ni Kakeru*)

In this lyric excerpt, a simile is used to compare 空 (*sora*, sky) with 君の姿 (*Kimi no sugata*, your figure). This comparison conveys a sense of impending sadness or loss. The setting sky, as the sun goes down, is depicted as a reflection of the protagonist's emotional transition. Here, *sora* (sky), typically associated with freedom and tranquility, is juxtaposed with *kimi no sugata* (your figure), symbolizing someone about to disappear or leave. Lexically, these two entities are vastly different—*sora* refers to the vast space above the earth, while *kimi no sugata* represents a human figure. However, through the use of a simile, these objects are connected in a deeply emotional context. According to *Kokugojiten*, *sora* means "sky," while *kimi no sugata* translates to "your appearance." This comparison carries a powerful emotional connotation, where the physical transformation of the sky at sunset parallels the emotional changes experienced by the protagonist. It also reflects the inevitability of separation. As Keraf (2007: 138) states, a simile compares two different things, and in this case, *sora* and *kimi no sugata* are linked to emphasize themes of sadness and loss.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that similes in YOASOBI's lyrics explicitly compare two different things to enhance the emotional meaning of the songs. By juxtaposing natural elements, such as the evening sky and a person's figure, and contrasting opposing emotions, such as happiness and sadness, similes in YOASOBI's lyrics create a more transparent and more profound image for listeners. This figurative device helps convey themes of loss, emotional transitions, and separation in a more poetic and visually evocative manner.

#### D. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figurative language device that exaggerates something to create a dramatic or strong emotional effect (Keraf, 2002: 141). In song lyrics, hyperbole is often used to emphasize deep emotions, whether in the context of love, loss, hope, or despair. By amplifying a situation, hyperbole leaves a stronger impression on listeners, making the conveyed emotions more intense. YOASOBI, known for its poetic and emotionally charged lyrics, frequently employs hyperbole to illustrate the intensity of the characters' feelings in its songs. This study identifies several instances of hyperbole that effectively create a profound emotional impact in the lyrics of *The Book 1* album by YOASOBI.

##### Data 7

ただ過ぎる日々に呑み込まれたの  
それでもただもう一度だけ会いたくて

*Tada/sugiru/bibi/ni/nomikomareta/no*  
*Sore/demo/tada/monichido/dake/aitakute*

"Only/passing/days/swallowed/by  
that/but/only/once/more/only/want to meet."

(Song: YOASOBI - *Harujion*)

In this lyric excerpt, hyperbole is evident in the phrase *ただ過ぎる日々に呑み込まれたの* (*Tada sugiru hibi ni nomikomareta no*), which translates to "I was swallowed by the passing days." The phrase *呑み込まれた* (*nomikomareta*) literally means "swallowed," an action that time or days cannot physically perform, creating an exaggerated or hyperbolic impression. According to the *Kokugojiten* dictionary (p. 782), *過ぎる* (*sugiru*) means "to pass," while *呑み込まれた* is the passive form of *呑み込む* (*nomikomu*), which literally means "to be swallowed" by the body.

The use of the word *swallowed* in this context intensifies the protagonist's feeling of being metaphorically "consumed" by time, indicating a sense of entrapment, loss, or even emptiness due to the passage of time without the presence of a loved one. This hyperbole strongly expresses the protagonist's emotional state, depicting an extreme sense of being worn down by the continuous passage of days. When combined with the phrase *ただもう一度だけ会いたくて* (*tada monichido dake aitakute*), meaning "just wanting to meet once more," the hyperbole further amplifies the depth of longing and the protagonist's desire to relive a past happiness.

The use of hyperbole in this lyric creates a dramatic effect that deeply resonates with listeners, making the emotions of loss and longing feel even more intense. According to Keraf (2002:

141), hyperbole deliberately exaggerates reality to convey emotions more powerfully, which is clearly demonstrated in this lyric.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of figurative language in the lyrics of *The Book 1* by YOASOBI reveals the use of metaphor, personification, simile, and hyperbole, all of which enrich the emotional depth of the songs. Metaphors connect abstract concepts with concrete objects and are crucial in constructing more profound imagery of emotions and atmospheres within the songs. Meanwhile, personification attributes human qualities to abstract concepts, simile explicitly compares two things to clarify emotions, and hyperbole exaggerates feelings to create a dramatic effect. The overall use of these figurative devices enhances the meaning of the lyrics and strengthens the emotional expression conveyed.

YOASOBI's lyrics utilize these figurative language elements to depict deep emotions poetically and imaginatively. This stylistic approach makes the songs more vivid and allows listeners to experience heightened emotions and connect personally with the song's message. As a result, YOASOBI has successfully created a form of verbal art that is entertaining and emotionally evocative, enriching the overall music-listening experience.

## REFERENCES

- Baa, S., Wardani, S. B., Iskandar, Weda, S., & Arafah, B. (2023). Lexical metaphors in Westlife's selected song lyrics. *XLinguae*, 16(1), 132–154. <https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2023.16.01.10>
- Hermintoyo, M. (2018). Kalimat Metaforis Sebagai Sarana Estetika dalam Lirik Lagu nDangdut. *Nusa: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 13(3), 380. <https://doi.org/10.14710/nusa.13.3.380-389>
- Juliana, J., Anggraini, R., & Ardytha, A. (2023). Analysis of Metaphorical Expressions Used in Johnny Cashes' Song Lyrics. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 7(2), 5963–5968. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v7i2.7493>
- Keraf, G. (2009). *Diksi dan gaya bahasa: Komposisi lanjutan I*. Gramedia.
- Kridalaksana, H. (2011). *Kamus Linguistik* (Cetakan ketiga). Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by: With a new afterword*. University of Chicago Press.
- Riandi, A. P., & Aditia, A. (2022, September 21). *Fakta Menarik YOASOBI yang Tampil di Head in the Clouds*. Jakarta Halaman all. KOMPAS.com. <https://entertainment.kompas.com/read/2022/09/21/160000966/fakta-menarik-yoasobi-yang-tampil-di-head-in-the-clouds-jakarta>
- Shotillo Safarovich Shorakhmetov. (2024). The Power of Metaphor: Exploring the Impact of Figurative Language in Literature. *Texas Journal of Philology, Culture and History*, 28, 11–14. <https://doi.org/10.62480/tjpch.2024.vol28.pp11-14>
- Simarmata, C. C., Herman, H., & Silalahi, D. E. (2021). Figurative Language Used In Selena Gomez's Song Lyrics: A Semantic Analysis. *JEELL (Journal of English Education, Linguistics and Literature) English Department of STKIP PGRI Jombang*, 8(1), 183. <https://doi.org/10.32682/jechsl.v8i1.2127>
- Sirait, A. L., Siburian, J. Br., Sitompul, I. M., & Rangkuti, R. (2024). A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis Of Pink Floyd's Song Lyric "Time." *KLUSA (Kajian Linguistik, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Dan Sastra)*, 8(1), 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.33479/klaus.v8i1.903>
- Suzuki Osamu "Pangeran Bulan" | Detail Bab—Monogatary.com. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2025, from <https://monogatary.com/episode/109217>

- Thibodeau, P. H., Matlock, T., & Flusberg, S. J. (2019). The role of metaphor in communication and thought. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 13(5), e12327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12327>
- Tokugawa, M., Kawabata, Y., Nakamura, A., & Koichi, H. (2007). Kokugo jiten. In *Kokugo jiten* (6th ed). Sanseidō [三省堂].
- Yoasobi, S. (2020, Desember 4). *Osamu Suzuki "Pangeran Bulan"*. Retrieved December 13, 2023, from Monogatary: <https://monogatary.com/episode/109217>