

**EXPLORING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE LYRICS OF 'WHEN
WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?' BY BILLIE EILISH**

SKRIPSI



Presented to
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro
in partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of Sarjana in the English Education

BY
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ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
IKIP PGRI BOJONEGORO
2025

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2025

APPROVAL SHEETS

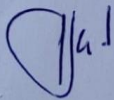
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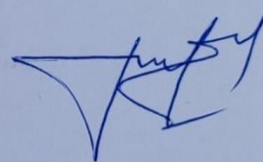
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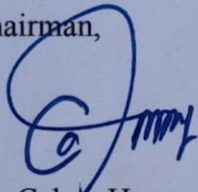
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This is to certify that this skripsi has been approved by the Board of Examiners as the requirement for the degree of Sarjana in English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro on July 29th 2025.

Bojonegoro, July 29th 2025

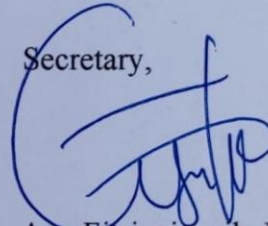
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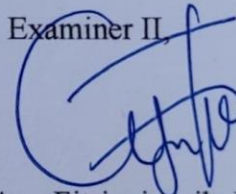
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MOTTO

Your parents at home are waiting for you to come back with proud results, don't let them down. Save your complaints, because your fatigue is not worth their struggle to support you.

-Ika DF

"Surely with difficulty there is ease"

(Q.S Al-Insyirah: 5-6)

Other people won't understand our struggles and hard times, all they want to know is the success stories. So fight for yourself even though no one will applaud you. Our future selves will be very proud of what we strive for today.

Orang lain gak akan paham struggle dan masa sulitnya kita, yang mereka ingin tahu hanya bagian success stories nya aja. Jadi berjuanglah untuk diri sendiri meskipun gak akan ada yang tepuk tangan. Kelak diri kita di masa depan sangat bangga dengan apa yang kita perjuangkan hari ini.

-Gilang Ramadhani

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1. My beloved father, Moch. Choliq. He did not have the chance to experience education up to college, but he was able to educate, pray, provide encouragement and endless motivation to the author so that the author could complete his education to a bachelor's degree.
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8. Thank you to myself. Nurul Aini. Thank you for putting aside your ego and choosing to get back up and finish all of this. Thank you for controlling yourself from various pressures outside the circumstances and never wanting to decide to give up, you are great, Nurul Aini.

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned below:

Name : NURUL AINI
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In order to uphold academic integrity, sincerely and without coercion from any parties, I hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

EXPLORING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE LYRICS OF 'WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?' BY BILLIE EILISH

Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found, I personally accept the consequences in accordance with the applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions.

Bojonegoro, 15 JULI 2025



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ABSTRACT

Aini,Nurul. 2025. Exploring Figurative Language in the Lyrics of When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? by Billie Eilish. Skripsi, English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisor (1) Oktha Ika Rahmawati, S.Pd.,M.Pd. Advisor (II) Dr. Moh. Fuadul Matin, S.S., M.Pd.

Keywords : *Figurative Language, Billie Eilish's Song Lyrics, English Language Learning, Descriptive Qualitative Analysis.*

This study aims to explore the use of figurative language in the song lyrics of When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? album by Billie Eilish. The purpose of this study is to identify the types of figurative language used, interpret its meaning, and understand its benefits in English learning. This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through document analysis of selected song lyrics, including "Bad Guy," "When the party's over," "Xanny," "I love you" "Bury a Friend," "Ilomilo," and "Listen Before I Go". Data validation was carried out using source triangulation techniques. The analysis focused on identifying types of figurative language, such as metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, and irony, and interpreting their meaning in the context of the song. The results show that Billie Eilish's lyrics are rich in figurative language that conveys deep emotional, psychological, and social themes such as anxiety, loss, and criticism of societal norms. Metaphor and hyperbole were found to be the most dominant types of figurative language. Furthermore, understanding figurative language through song lyrics can improve students' vocabulary, reading comprehension, and appreciation of English literature, making songs an effective medium for language learning.

ABSTRAK

Nurul, Aini. 2025. Eksplorasi Bahasa Figuratif dalam Lirik Lagu When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? karya Billie Eilish. Skripsi, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Pembimbing (I) Oktha Ika Rahmawati, S.Pd.,M.Pd. Pembimbing (II) Dr. Moh. Fuadul Matin, S.S., M.Pd.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Figuratif, Lirik Lagu Billie Eilish, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Analisis Kualitatif Deskriptif.

Abstrak—Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penggunaan bahasa figuratif dalam lirik lagu album When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? karya Billie Eilish. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis bahasa figuratif yang digunakan, menafsirkan maknanya, dan memahami manfaatnya dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen dari lirik lagu terpilih, termasuk "Bad Guy," "When the party's over," "Xanny," "I love you" "Bury a Friend," "Ilomilo," dan "Listen Before I Go". Validasi data dilakukan menggunakan teknik triangulasi sumber. Analisis difokuskan pada identifikasi jenis bahasa kiasan, seperti metafora, personifikasi, simbolisme, hiperbola, dan iron, serta penafsiran maknanya dalam konteks lagu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lirik Billie Eilish kaya akan bahasa kiasan yang menyampaikan tema tema emosional, psikologis, dan sosial yang mendalam seperti kecemasan, kehilangan, dan kritik terhadap norma-norma masyarakat.. Metafora dan hiperbola ditemukan sebagai jenis bahasa kiasan yang paling dominan. Lebih jauh lagi, memahami bahasa kiasan melalui lirik lagu dapat meningkatkan kosakata siswa, pemahaman membaca, dan apresiasi karya sastra Inggris, menjadikan lagu sebagai media yang efektif untuk pembelajaran bahasa

PREFACE

All praise and gratitude the researcher offers to the presence of Allah SWT who has bestowed grace, health, strength, and patience, so that the researcher can complete this skripsi entitled "Exploring Figurative Language in the Lyrics of 'When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?' by Billie Eilish" well. This skripsi was compiled as one of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor's degree in English Education at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. In the process of compiling this skripsi, the researcher gained a lot of valuable experience and knowledge, especially regarding the analysis of figurative language (figurative language) in modern literary works in the form of song lyrics, as well as its potential use as a learning medium in the context of English education.

The researcher expresses his deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support, assistance, and encouragement during the process of compiling this thesis. The researcher sincere respect and gratitude go to Mrs., Oktha Ika Rahmawati, S.Pd.,M.Pd, and Mr. Dr. Moh. Fuadul Matin, S.S., M.Pd., as the supervisor who has patiently and dedicatedly provided guidance, direction, and suggestions that are very meaningful in every stage of the preparation of this skripsi. The researcher also thanks all lecturers and staff in the English Language Education Department of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro for the knowledge, support, and facilities provided during the study period. The author also thanks fellow students of the English Language Education Department who have supported each other from the beginning of the lectures until now.

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The Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of study.

Language is a fundamental tool of communication, utilized by people across the globe at all times. It plays a crucial role in human existence, as without it, meaningful interaction would be impossible. The world is home to a vast array of languages, with English being one of the most prominent. Often referred to as a global language, English has gained widespread significance and is essential for international communication. And for humans, language is the primary means of conveying thoughts, information, and emotions, whether spoken or written. It is one of the most important instruments for communication, allowing individuals to interact, share knowledge, and offer support to one another. Without language, it would be impossible for people to connect and collaborate.

Language holds immense value in our lives. It is the foundation of how we communicate with others. When individuals do not share the same native language, they rely on language to exchange ideas and messages. Effective communication is essential for ensuring that information is conveyed accurately and understood. For singers, language serves an additional function. It not only communicates lyrics but also acts as a bridge, allowing artists to connect with their audience on an emotional and artistic level. Language, in this sense, is a powerful tool for expression and connection. However, the use of figurative language serves as a means to convey the intended meaning of an expression while minimizing the possibility of multiple interpretations.

Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions that convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation. As a result, understanding the intended meaning requires interpretation, as the expressions may not make sense if taken literally based on their dictionary definitions (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020).(Muhammad et al., 2021) She argues that figurative language is commonly used not only in written forms but also in spoken communication. This is particularly evident in literary works, including magazine articles, advertisements, novels, and poetry.

There are various types of figurative language. For instance, a metaphor is a figure of speech that draws a comparison between two things that share similarities. Personification involves attributing human qualities to animals or non-human entities. Hyperbole is a rhetorical device that uses exaggeration for emphasis or effect. Simile, on the other hand, directly compares two things using connecting words like "as" or "like"(Ferawaty Puspitorini, 2021). Figurative language incorporates imagery, allowing the writer or speaker to describe something through unconventional comparisons. This approach is used to create a stronger effect, spark interest, and enhance clarity. By employing this technique, vivid and engaging images are produced(Hilmi et al., 2018)

Figurative language serves to evoke emotions and create vivid imagery, enabling the speaker or writer to communicate meanings that extend beyond literal descriptions. By utilizing metaphors, similes, and other figures of speech, authors and speakers can express complex ideas or emotions more effectively. Additionally, figurative language enhances the aesthetic quality of language,

fostering deeper interpretation and encouraging critical thinking. It is also frequently used in song lyrics, among other forms of creative expression. However, the use of figurative language serves as a means to convey the intended meaning of an expression while minimizing the possibility of multiple interpretations.

Song is a form of literature, and figurative language is an integral component of it. Songs are artistic compositions that convey ideas in a concise and poetic manner. These expressions are crafted through words and set to music. The definition of lyrics or songs can be viewed as a form of poetry or an extension of spoken language. Lyrics go beyond the realm of literature, encompassing elements of proverbial expressions and carrying profound implied meanings (Nurcitrawati et al., 2019). Songs are a widely used medium for expressing ideas, thoughts, or emotions. Within song lyrics, creators have the opportunity to convey their ideas or share their deepest feelings. Songwriters often employ wordplay to create a powerful impact on listeners, combining imaginative lyrics or poetic expressions with musical composition and melodies to produce a pleasing and captivating auditory experience (Rahmadhanti et al., 2022). Furthermore, a song is considered one of the most prominent forms of literature. It is important to note that a song is a concise, rhythmic composition that reflects the songwriter's imagination, emotions, ideas, visions, and messages, all conveyed through the lyrics. These lyrics communicate specific messages to the audience. A song consists of carefully crafted words that are written and performed by a selected artist. Typically, the songwriter has a specific audience in mind for whom the song is intended (Dewi et al., 2020). This

allows listeners to understand the ideas and emotions conveyed by the songwriter. The lyrics of a song serve as a tool for the songwriter to convey a message. These words are a vital part of the song, often reflecting the thoughts and creativity of the singer or lyricist.

Song lyrics are short poems composed of several verses set to music and meant to be sung. In crafting these lyrics, songwriters or composers often enhance their language by incorporating figurative expressions, making the songs more engaging and appealing to listeners (Setiawan, 2014). Song lyrics fall within the literary genre, as they are artistic expressions that reflect the author's emotions, conveyed through carefully chosen words. However, not all song lyrics are immediately clear upon first reading. Some artists use figurative language to express ideas in unique and unconventional ways, prompting listeners to interpret the meaning beyond the literal words (Taufik & Cahyati, 2022). Song lyrics serve as a medium for songwriters to convey their messages, making them one of the most essential elements of a song. Typically, lyrics reflect the thoughts and imagination of the singer or lyricist. Songs are produced in various genres, such as rock, jazz, pop, and many more. Nowadays, listening to music is often a way for individuals to express their current emotions or state of mind. However, understanding a song's lyrics can sometimes be challenging, particularly when the song incorporates figurative language. When listeners engage with music without fully grasping the meaning of its lyrics, there is a risk of misunderstanding the song's intended message. This can occasionally lead to misconceptions about the artist's intentions or perspectives.

When a song captures the listener's interest, it can become an effective and engaging tool for introducing, explaining, and teaching the vocabulary within it in a manner that is both enjoyable and meaningful. According Ifadah (2012, p. 364), Humans often unconsciously retain fragments of songs in their minds, enabling them to frequently repeat what they have recently heard. As a result, songs can serve as an effective teaching tool to help everyone improve their English proficiency. Through songs, they can learn and memorize unfamiliar vocabulary while repeatedly singing along to what they hear. This repetition makes it easier to remember new words and use them appropriately in various contexts. Moreover, they can imitate the pronunciation and intonation of words in the songs, which contributes to improving their speaking and listening skills. In addition, the ability to understand figurative language is an essential skill for recognizing the creative ways singers convey messages. Rather than directly stating the meaning of words, figurative language uses metaphors or symbolic expressions to add depth and significance. This technique enhances the appeal of songs, making them more engaging, vibrant, and dynamic while providing a clearer and more imaginative depiction. Expression and appreciation play a crucial role when performing or listening to music. Therefore, understanding the figurative meaning within a song is vital for gaining a deeper appreciation of its artistry.

Through this research, the goal is to foster a greater public appreciation for artistic works, particularly songs, as they encapsulate deep emotions and communicate diverse messages designed to resonate with listeners. Billie Eilish has been chosen as the focus of this study due to the intricate and hidden

meanings often embedded in her songs. The tracks selected from her album are deeply connected to human experiences, with lyrics that validate listeners' imaginations by reflecting relatable, everyday emotions and events. Understanding the figurative language in song lyrics is crucial, as it reveals the depth and creativity of the expressions embedded in each line, making them a rich subject for analysis.

This research focuses on analysing the lyrics of selected songs from Billie Eilish's debut album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go*, which was released on March 29, 2019, when Eilish was just 17 years old. The album received critical acclaim, quickly topped the Billboard 200 chart, and became one of the best-selling albums of the year. The seven songs selected for this study, "Bad Guy," "When the party's over," "Xanny," "I love you" "Bury a Friend," "Ilomilo," and "Listen Before I Go". were chosen due to their rich use of figurative expressions. This study aims to identify and analyse the types and meanings of figurative language found in these lyrics, focusing specifically on five types: metaphor, hyperbole, personification, symbolism, and irony. By exploring these elements, the research not only uncovers the deeper meanings conveyed in Eilish's lyrics but also highlights the potential of figurative language as an engaging and meaningful resource for English language learning.

Despite the widespread recognition of Billie Eilish's *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*, including multiple prestigious awards in 2019, there remains a notable gap in comprehensive studies analysing the figurative language within the album's songs. The tracks from this album make extensive

use of figurative language that conveys profound, often implicit meanings, touching on themes such as mental health, societal pressures, and existential fears. However, few have delved deeply into interpreting the layered meanings embedded in the lyrics. The figurative language in some of these songs is abstract and metaphorical, making it challenging to fully comprehend their meanings using conventional tools like dictionaries or lyric websites.

The study emphasizes the importance of metaphorical language in interpreting the messages conveyed through the lyrics. The album's lyrics are characterized by eloquent, poetic language that evokes strong emotions and encourages reflection. A careful analysis of the figurative expressions used will enable listeners to grasp a deeper understanding of the songs, especially those by Billie Eilish. The primary focus of this research is to identify the types of figurative language used in the album and explore the meanings behind these expressions, providing a more profound insight into the messages contained within the songs.

This study primarily focuses on analysing the figurative language found in the lyrics of selected songs from Billie Eilish's internationally acclaimed debut album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*. The main objective of this research is to identify the types of figurative expressions used in the songs and to interpret the meanings they convey within the lyrical context. Figurative language is a vital component of literary and everyday communication, and understanding it is essential for English language learners, particularly in developing their interpretive and analytical skills.

By examining figurative elements such as metaphor, hyperbole, personification, symbolism, and irony, this study aims to uncover the deeper messages embedded in Eilish's song writing. The research also highlights the educational value of figurative language by showing how exposure to authentic, creative expressions in song lyrics can enhance learners' appreciation of English as a living, expressive language. Thus, the core focus of this research lies in both the literary analysis of figurative language and its pedagogical implications for English language education.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem of this research is as follows:

1. What types of figurative language are present in the song lyrics from Billie Eilish's album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*
2. What are the figurative meanings conveyed in the lyrics of the songs from Billie Eilish's album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*?
3. What are the benefits of studying or knowing the meaning and types of figurative language for learning English at school?

C. Objective of the Study.

The aim of this research is:

1. To analyse the different types of figurative language found in the song lyrics from Billie Eilish's album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*.
2. To explore the figurative meanings embedded in the song lyrics from Billie Eilish's album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*.

3. To understand the benefits or learn the meanings and types of figurative language for English learning in tenth grade classes.

D. Significances of the study.

The results of this research must be applicable and useful in several ways, both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical Significances

This research will help clarify and broaden the understanding of figurative language, offering valuable insights for those interested in the subject, and contributing to the development of theory, especially within the field of figurative language.

2. Practical Significances

Practically usually consists of many things. The practical benefits of this study include benefits for educators, students, readers, and potential researchers. Here's an additional explanation:

- a. For the Teachers: This research supports teachers by providing inspiration for teaching figurative language. Song lyrics and the analysis results can serve as valuable resources for use in the teaching and learning process.
- b. For the Students: This research provides a comprehensive understanding of various types of figurative language, especially through the analysis of song lyrics, assisting students in grasping both the types of figurative language and the meanings embedded in song lyrics.

- c. For Future Researchers: This study can serve as a valuable reference for new information related to figurative language theories. The data and analysis results may support future researchers in conducting their own investigations.
- d. For Readers: It is anticipated that readers will find this research beneficial, especially those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the meanings behind the song lyrics in the album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* from Billie Eilish's, and that they will derive value from this research.

E. Definition of Terminologies.

1. Figurative language

Figurative language is a distinctive form of expression that reflects the writer's individuality and inner essence (Pandanwangi & Anggraeni, 2021). (Dewi et al., 2020) It is argued that figurative language is an essential aspect of literary studies, requiring a deep understanding when analyzing and interpreting literary works. Figurative language refers to a form of expression that employs figures of speech, conveying one idea while meaning another (Pandanwangi & Anggraeni, 2021). Accordingly, Figurative language is a form of expression that uses figures of speech to convey meaning beyond the literal, reflecting the writer's personality and creativity. It is an important aspect of literary studies that requires careful comprehension to understand its deeper meanings.

2. Song

A song is a form of artistic expression presented through text that can be performed vocally and accompanied by music(Yunanda et al., 2021). A song is a short musical composition that often includes lyrics. However, some composers create instrumental works or wordless pieces that mimic the characteristics of a singing voice, blending melody and vocal elements(Maulana & Suprayogi, 2022). Songs are musical compositions designed for vocal performance, with or without accompaniment, and can be performed individually or by groups(Dewi et al., 2020). Therefore, A song is a musical work that combines melody and vocals, often accompanied by music and lyrics. It can be performed by one or more people, with or without instrumental accompaniment, and may also include instrumental pieces resembling a singing voice.