

An Analysis of Hyperbole in the Album "One Thing at a Time" by Morgan Wallen

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ABSTRACT

Figurative language is a linguistic device that involves using words, phrases, or expressions beyond their literal or dictionary meanings. Figurative language is commonly used in song lyrics to enhance the depth, emotion, and impact of the song. The research aims to identify the use of hyperbole in the album "One Thing At A Time" by Morgan Wallen and to analyze the meaning of the hyperbole found in the songs. The data collection involves several steps, including listening to the songs, reading scripts, and categorizing hyperbolic expressions within the lyrics. The collected data was then analyzed descriptively using a qualitative method. The theory by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) was applied to identify the hyperbole in the song lyrics, and the theory by Leech (1981) was used to interpret the meaning. The results showed that there were ten data of hyperbole found in five songs by Morgan Wallen. The study highlighted the importance of the singer's use of hyperbole in the song, emphasizing how he can create powerful feelings and provide multiple levels of meaning that the listeners can relate to.

Keywords: *Figurative Language; Hyperbole; Song Lyrics*

A. Introduction

In general, communication is the most crucial element in daily life that helps people communicate with one another. Since language is a tool for communicating, it is impossible to build relationships in the social world without having a solid understanding of language (Nosi et al., 2022). According to Altikriti (2016), language is a medium for people to share their opinions, experiences, ideas and emotions. Language has also become a tool used by people to carry explicit meanings, such as in figurative language (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

Figurative language is a linguistic device that involves using words, phrases, or expressions in a way that goes beyond their literal or dictionary meanings (Nursolihat & Kareviati, 2020). Instead of conveying information directly, figurative language adds depth and layers of meaning to the text. It often involves comparing one thing to another or using words to represent concepts or ideas beyond their straightforward definitions (Yusnitasari et al., 2022). Figurative language is often used in song lyrics to

make the listeners explore the meanings and engage with the music on a deeper, more emotional, and intellectual level (Damayanti & Agung, 2022).

Songwriters use figurative language in their lyrics to make their songs more emotionally powerful and engaging (Grensideng & Agung, 2023). It helps songwriters express their feelings and bring new ideas (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018). The use of figurative language makes the songs unique, relatable, and enjoyable for the listeners. By using figurative language, songwriters can create a sense of common understanding by incorporating symbolism that can go beyond personal experiences and connect with universal themes (Rumambi, 2020). Furthermore, the creative words in figurative language match the rhythm of the music, creating a harmonious fusion that is pleasing to the ear.

Hyperbole is a type of figurative language that involves exaggerating things to make a point or create a vivid effect (Stern & Callister, 2019). Hyperbole is employed in song lyrics to create emphasis, evoke strong emotions, add humor, and make a lasting impact on listeners (Yabarmase, 2023). Listeners are more likely to remember a song that uses exaggerated language to convey its message (Fauziah, 2022). Sometimes, extreme situations or feelings are difficult to describe accurately. Hyperbole allows songwriters to convey the importance of these experiences in a way that resonates with listeners. Hyperbole can convey relatable feelings or situations in an exaggerated way, making listeners connect with the song based on their own experiences (Yunanda et al., 2021).

Several studies regarding the use of hyperbole in songs have been conducted previously. The study conducted by Sari et al. (2021) aimed to find out and examine the significance of hyperbole as employed in the song lyrics of the *Sempiternal* album by Bring Me the Horizon. The results were obtained from a sample of eleven songs included in the album. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing the theoretical framework of figurative language proposed by Knickerbocker and Renninger (1963) to identify lyrics containing hyperbole. Additionally, the theory of meaning developed by Leech (1981) was employed to assess the significance and interpretation of the hyperbole found in the lyrics. The research revealed that there was a total of thirteen instances of hyperbole identified within the lyrics. The interpretations

derived from the lyrics including hyperbole could be categorized into three distinct types: connotative, affective, and conceptual. The primary meaning was connotative in nature, as the hyperbole could not be interpreted through a strictly lexical analysis.

Another study conducted by Astina et al. (2021) aimed to classify and analyze the various instances of hyperbolic language found within the songs of the musical duo Chainsmokers, with the objective of understanding its intended meaning. The primary theoretical framework employed for data analysis in the study was the figurative language theory proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), supplemented by Leech's theory of meaning (1981). The study used qualitative research methods in order to present a comprehensive understanding of the highlighted issues. Based on the finding, it was found that there was a total of 10 instances of hyperbole identified in 6 tracks from the album by Chainsmokers. Based on the analysis conducted, it could be inferred that the utilization of hyperbole held a significant importance within the context of song lyrics. Consequently, the use of sentences incorporating hyperbole in song lyrics was employed due to its capacity to convey concealed meanings, enhance the lyrical content's appeal, and obtain the listeners' attention with the songwriter's narrative.

The study written by Putri & Tustiawati (2022) aimed to identify the quantity of hyperbolic figures of speech present within the lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's song featured on the album titled "Sour". The researcher also attempted to assess the semantic significance of the hyperbolic sentences. The data that was examined underwent qualitative analysis in order to identify and interpret the various types and meanings in the song. The study identified a total of thirteen instances of hyperbole in the album. Additionally, the researchers discovered three different kinds of meaning in the song, namely connotative meaning, affective meaning, and conceptual meaning.

The three previous studies are relevant to the current study due to the focus in the analysis of hyperbole in song lyrics. However, the difference lies in the data source. The current study aims to identify the use of hyperbole in the album "One Thing At A Time" by Morgan Wallen and analyze the meaning. Since the album was released in 2023, it offers current and relevant song lyrics to be analyzed. Morgan Wallen often uses hyperbole in his songs to make them interesting by creating strong feelings to

connect with the listeners. It explores how hyperbole helps show emotions, thoughts, and stories from the singer. This study attempts to look into how hyperbole is used in the song lyrics to improve the listeners' understanding and how it makes the music more unique.

B. Research Method

This study employed qualitative method since it focuses on the analysis of hyperbole in the song lyrics by Morgan Wallen. The data was collected from the album "One Thing At A Time" by Morgan Wallen, specifically focusing on five songs that featured hyperbole in the lyrics, including "Everything I Love," "Ain't That Some," "I Wrote The Book," "Sunrise," and "Whiskey Friend". The songs were made available to the public in the year 2023. This research utilized four steps for data collection: listening to the songs attentively, cross-referencing lyrics through web sources, identifying hyperbolic lines, and categorizing data based on hyperbole type. The data analysis involved the application of theories proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) to identify the hyperbole in the song lyrics, and the theory by Leech (1981) to understand its intended meaning. The presentation of findings was conducted in a formal manner, wherein the use of tables served to improve the clarity of the data. Additionally, findings were also communicated in an informal manner through descriptive explanations. Descriptive methods were employed to understand the meanings of hyperbole in the songs.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

In this study, there were ten data that contained hyperbole found in five songs. Those ten data of hyperbole were analyzed based on the theory of figurative language proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) and supported by the theory of meaning by Leech (1981). Table 1 shows the detailed number of research findings regarding the number of hyperboles found in the song lyrics of Morgan Wallen in the album "One Thing At a Time," released in 2023.

Table 1. Hyperbole in the Album "One Thing At a Time" by Morgan Wallen

No.	Song Title	Number of Data	Percentage
1.	"Everything I Love"	4	40%
2.	"Ain't That Some"	1	10%
3	"I Wrote The Book"	2	20%
4.	"Sunrise"	2	20%
5.	"Whiskey Friend"	1	10%
TOTAL		10	100%

According to the findings in table 1, the song "Everything I Love" contained 4 data of hyperbole, which was equivalent to 40% of the total data. Moreover, 2 instances of hyperbole were found in each of the songs entitled "I Wrote The Book" and "Sunrise". Finally, the songs "Ain't That Some" and "Whiskey Friend" each included 1 data of hyperbole in the lyrics. A detailed discussion of the data analysis is presented as follows.

Discussion

Data 1

"I dug myself into a hole in the wall, and I gotta drink my way out"

The lyric in data 1 is not meant to be taken literally; rather, it is an exaggerated and metaphorical way of saying that the singer is in a challenging or problematic situation and intends to use excessive drinking as a coping mechanism to deal with it. The imagery created by "dug myself into a hole in the wall" suggests that the singer has made a mistake or found himself in a difficult circumstance, similar to someone literally digging a hole in a wall. This imagery is already somewhat exaggerated. Then, the phrase "drink my way out" takes this exaggeration further by implying that drinking will somehow solve or alleviate the situation, which is not a realistic solution in real life. Overall, the hyperbole in this lyric adds depth and emotion to the song, emphasizing the singer's feelings of being overwhelmed and resorting to dramatic measures by drinking excessively to address his problems.

Data 2

"There's folks out there ain't T-R-Y'd this"

In data 2, the singer intentionally spells out the word "tried" as "T-R-Y'd" using a phonetic spelling to emphasize the regional accent or dialect. This alteration of the spelling exaggerates the distinct pronunciation and highlights the singer's connection to a particular culture or background. By employing this hyperbolic spelling, the singer not only adds a sense of authenticity and relatability to the lyrics but also amplifies the unique voice of the song. It creates a vivid picture of the setting and the people the singer references, ultimately enhancing the song's storytelling and emotional impact.

Data 3

"Ain't gettin' read enough to keep me on a straight line"

The hyperbole in data 3 is found in the phrase "Ain't gettin' read enough." In this context, the hyperbole lies in the exaggeration of the singer's claim that whatever is "not getting read enough" significantly impacts their ability to stay on a "straight line," which generally implies following a morally upright or responsible path. By saying that something is not "getting read enough," the singer is likely referring to important life lessons, guidance, or rules to which they should pay more attention to lead a better life. The hyperbole amplifies the idea that their lack of adherence to these teachings has an outsized effect on their behavior, emphasizing their struggle and the consequences of their actions. This hyperbolic statement adds a layer of emotion and urgency to the lyrics, highlighting the internal conflict and the singer's recognition of his own shortcomings.

Data 4

"But, damn, if I don't do it every Friday night"

The hyperbole in the lyric in data 4 is expressed through the clause "if I don't do it every Friday night." In this context, the hyperbole lies in the exaggeration of the singer's consistency in performing certain actions every Friday night. The use of the word "damn" in the beginning of the sentence serves to emphasize the singer's surprise,

resignation, or perhaps even frustration at the regularity of their behavior. By stating that they "do it every Friday night," the singer refers to a recurring behavior or habit that might not actually happen every Friday night but is being presented in an exaggerated manner for dramatic effect. The hyperbole emphasizes the routine nature of the behavior and adds a sense of inevitability to it, revealing a pattern that the singer might be conflicted about or reflecting on. The hyperbole adds depth to the lyrics by conveying a sense of consistency and inevitability in the singer's actions, while also hinting at their internal thoughts and emotions surrounding that behavior.

Data 5

"You're in every conversation, every smoky situation"

The hyperbole in the lyric in data 5 is shown in the part "You're in every." The hyperbole is found in the exaggerated statement that the person the singer refers to is present in "every conversation" and "every smoky situation." The singer uses this hyperbolic expression to convey the overwhelming nature of their thoughts and feelings about this person. By suggesting that the person is ubiquitous in these situations, the singer emphasizes the impact this individual has on their thoughts and experiences. In reality, it is unlikely that the person is literally present in every single conversation or smoky situation. Instead, the hyperbole highlights the person's significance in the singer's life and the extent to which they are on the singer's mind. The hyperbolic statement adds intensity and emotion to the lyrics, emphasizing the effect that this person has on the singer's thoughts and surroundings.

Data 6

"You're the memories I'm drinkin', you're the thoughts I'm always thinkin', girl"

In data 6, hyperbole is used to emphasize the idea that the person being referred to holds an incredibly significant place in the singer's thoughts and emotions. The hyperbolic statement suggests that every sip the singer takes is a reminder of this person and the memories associated with them. By stating that the person is "the memories I'm drinkin'," and "the thoughts I'm always thinkin'," the singer employs exaggeration to emphasize the person's constant presence in their mind and their emotional impact. This

goes beyond the literal act of drinking or thinking and into a more symbolic representation of how deeply the person has affected the singer's thoughts and feelings.

Data 7

"You ruined damn near everything I love"

The hyperbole in data 7 is expressed in the lyric "damn near everything." In this context, the hyperbole is in the exaggeration of the damage caused by the person being referred to. The singer emphasizes that many of the things he loves have been negatively affected or damaged by the actions or presence of this person. In reality, it is unlikely that literally everything the singer loves has been ruined by this person. However, the hyperbolic statement serves to intensify the singer's feelings of betrayal, hurt, and disappointment, showcasing the significant impact that this person's actions or behaviors have had on their life. The use of hyperbole adds an emotional weight to the lyrics, conveying the depth of the singer's pain and the scale of the consequences they feel due to the person's actions.

Data 8

"Soon as that bobber hits the water, girl, your memory starts to float"

The hyperbole in data 8 is expressed through the phrase "your memory starts to float." The hyperbole is found in the form of metaphorical association of the person's memory with the action of a bobber hitting the water. A bobber is a floating device attached to a fishing line to signal when a fish is biting. By saying, "your memory starts to float," the singer uses an exaggerated comparison to emphasize the idea that the person's memory immediately comes to mind as soon as the bobber touches the water. The hyperbole enhances the emotional impact of the lyric by creating a vivid image of how strongly the person's memory affects the singer. It suggests that their memory is so prominent and significant that it arises instantaneously in the singer's mind, just like the immediate reaction of a bobber floating when it touches the water's surface. The hyperbole highlights the lingering thoughts and feelings the singer has about the person and their memories together.

Data 9

"I even took you to my hometown to meet my mama"

The hyperbole in the lyric in data 9 is found in the statement "even took you to my hometown." The hyperbole is shown in the implication that taking someone to one's hometown to meet the family is an especially significant and meaningful gesture, possibly implying a higher level of commitment or seriousness in the relationship. While introducing a partner to one's family is indeed an important step in a relationship, the use of "even" suggests that this action is portrayed as going above and beyond expectation. By describing this action as something noteworthy enough to mention in the lyrics, the singer is likely emphasizing the depth of their feelings for the person they are singing to. The hyperbole enhances the emotional significance of the relationship milestone they are describing. The hyperbolic statement highlights the singer's desire to convey the extent of their feelings and the lengths they've gone to express their commitment or affection.

Data 10

"I can't go anywhere near the whiskey 'cause you used to drink it with me."

In data 10, hyperbole is used to emphasize the emotional impact of the situation. The singer states that he cannot even be around whiskey anymore because it reminds him of his past experiences with someone who used to drink it with him. This exaggeration intensifies the feeling of longing or sadness associated with the memories, suggesting that the connection to the person he used to share those moments with is so strong that it affects even his ability to be near whiskey. In reality, the idea that someone cannot be near whiskey at all due to memories is an exaggerated representation of the emotional struggle the singer is facing. It is a poetic way of conveying the depth of his emotions and the impact of his past experiences on his current state of mind.

D. Conclusion

In this study, the researchers explored five different songs in the album "One Thing At a Time," which showcased figurative language, particularly hyperbole.

Through careful analysis, It was found that the songs contained ten instances of hyperbole. The study revealed how the singer's imaginative storytelling and emotional expression resonated with the listeners, especially in the song "Everything I Love," which prominently used hyperbole to evoke emotions. The research emphasized the significance of hyperbole in the music, highlighting the singer's ability to create a strong emotional impact and intricate layers of meaning for the listeners to explore and connect with.

Since this study focuses on the analysis of hyperbole in song lyrics, it is suggested that future researchers analyze the use of hyperbole in different types of data sources, such as movies, vlogs, or advertisements, to broaden the understanding of how this figurative language device operates across various forms of media and communication. By examining hyperbole in different contexts, researchers can uncover patterns and trends in its usage that might not be apparent when solely focusing on song lyrics. This cross-media analysis could provide insights into how hyperbole contributes to storytelling, persuasion, and emotional resonance across various platforms, ultimately enriching our understanding of the broader role of figurative language in communication and media.

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