



## **STYLISTIC DEVICES IN MODERN MUSIC: AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN “BABY QUEEN” BY GORILLAZ**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the use of figurative language in the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz. The research aims to identify and analyze the types of figurative language used in the lyrics and to explore their contribution to the song’s emotional and interpretative depth. The analysis employs several methods from several theorists, including data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The findings reveal 19 instances of figurative language throughout the song, comprising four metaphors, two personifications, three symbols, two hyperboles, two synecdoche, two repetitions, one allusion, and one instance of irony. Among these, metaphor emerges as the most dominant type, suggesting that the songwriter employs comparison as a key expressive device to convey complex ideas and emotions. The use of various figurative forms enriches the song’s lyrical quality, enhancing its emotional appeal and allowing for multiple layers of interpretation. Through these stylistic choices, Gorillaz successfully evoke imagination and invite listeners to engage in deeper speculation about the meaning behind the lyrics. This research not only contributes to the understanding of how figurative language functions in song lyrics but also serves as a useful reference for students and readers interested in literary analysis. It is hoped that this study will foster a deeper appreciation of figurative expression in modern music.

**Keywords:** *Baby Queen, Figurative language, Gorillaz, literary study, song’s lyrics*

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan bahasa kiasan dalam lagu “Baby Queen” karya Gorillaz. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis jenis-jenis bahasa kiasan yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu, serta mengeksplorasi kontribusinya terhadap kedalaman emosional dan interpretatif lagu tersebut. Analisis ini menggunakan metode dari beberapa teoretisi, termasuk reduksi data, presentasi data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan total 19 contoh bahasa kiasan dalam lagu tersebut, terdiri dari 4 metafora, 2 personifikasi, 3 simbolisme, 2 hiperbola, 2 sinekdoke, 2 pengulangan, 1 alusi, dan 1 ironi. Di antara jenis-jenis tersebut, metafora muncul sebagai jenis yang paling dominan, menunjukkan bahwa pencipta lagu menggunakan perbandingan sebagai alat ekspresi utama untuk menyampaikan ide dan emosi yang kompleks. Penggunaan berbagai bentuk bahasa kiasan memperkaya kualitas lirik lagu, meningkatkan daya tarik emosionalnya, dan memungkinkan interpretasi berlapis-lapis. Melalui pilihan gaya ini, Gorillaz berhasil memicu imajinasi dan mengajak pendengar untuk terlibat dalam spekulasi yang lebih dalam tentang makna di balik lirik. Penelitian ini tidak hanya berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang bagaimana bahasa figuratif berfungsi dalam lirik lagu, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai referensi berguna bagi mahasiswa dan pembaca yang tertarik pada analisis sastra. Diharapkan penelitian ini dapat meningkatkan apresiasi terhadap ekspresi figuratif dalam musik modern.

**Kata kunci:** *Bahasa kiasan, Baby Queen, Gorillaz, Lirik Lagu, studi sastra*

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the ways humans communicate with each other. Language is crucial for humans to communicate effectively with one another. Through language, humans can express ideas, thoughts, and feelings, including happiness, sadness, and others. According to Chomsky, language is not only a means of communication but also an innate cognitive system shaped by Universal Grammar, meaning that humans possess an internal capacity to generate and interpret language beyond explicit instruction (Chomsky, 1972). These words and sentences represent ideas and thoughts. According to this definition, language is not only a tool for communication but also a tool for thinking; by learning a language, we also learn how to think.

Language can also take the form of spoken, written, sign, or symbolic language. Spoken language is language produced by the mouth and perceived by the ear, such as everyday conversation, lectures, and singing. Written language is language conveyed in written form and perceived by sight, such as newspapers, articles, and novels. Additionally, sign language is a language that uses hand movements, body posture, and facial expressions, such as when communicating with deaf people. Symbolic language is a language that uses signs or symbols, such as mathematical symbols, musical notation, and images. The many forms of language reflect the fact that humans can understand one another and describe things to one another in various ways.

Humans also communicate not only literally but also figuratively. Literal language is the actual meaning conveyed to the intended audience, while figurative language is the opposite of literal language in that it has an indirect or implied meaning (Kosimov, 2022). According to Chomsky, figurative language enables us the freedom to think and communicate beyond the boundaries of literal language (Chomsky, 1972). In other words, we can conclude that figurative language can make something more interesting, as is commonly used in song lyrics. There are various figurative languages that can enrich the text and evoke emotions in the listener or reader. In the context of song lyrics, figurative language is a tool that connects the emotions, feelings, or mood between the writer and the listener, resulting in a literary work that can be enjoyed as poetry.

Song lyrics are a form of literary work that uses words sung with rhythm, melody, and rhyme to create an emotional experience for listeners (Tambunsaribu and Sigalingging, 2024). Song lyrics are akin to poetry and short stories, but accompanied by music (Kanzunnudin, Apriliyana, Roysa, and Surachmi, 2023). Song lyrics are more than just words with music, but they can also be studied like other literary works. In the modern era, many songs are no longer just for entertainment but have become important in shaping someone's lifestyle.

Previous studies on figurative language in song lyrics have shown that analyzing figurative expressions can reveal deeper meanings and hidden messages embedded within the text. Scholars often categorize figurative language into specific types to make interpretation clearer, more systematic, and more verifiable. The study of *“The Analysis of Figurative Language in ‘Endless*

*Love’ Song Lyric”* by Ibrahim Ibrahim, Muhaiminah Akib, and Ruslan Hasyim illustrates this point clearly. Their research aimed to identify the kinds of figurative language used in the song and interpret the meanings behind those figurative forms. Using a descriptive approach, they treated the lyric as the primary data source and supported their analysis with secondary sources, including books and scholarly articles. Their procedure involved extracting figurative expressions, classifying them into recognized categories (e.g., metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole), and interpreting the semantic and pragmatic functions each expression served within the song’s themes and emotions (Ibrahim, Akib, and Hasyim, 2019).

This study follows the same academic approach, as applying established analytical categories and methodologies enables more consistent, grounded findings and greater comparability with previous research, including the study mentioned above. By identifying different types of figurative language, researchers can better uncover how songwriters convey emotions, construct imagery, and communicate nuanced messages that may not be immediately apparent from a literal reading of the lyrics.

Gorillaz is a British virtual band created in 1998 by musician Damon Albarn and artist Jamie Hewlett. The band is known for its distinctive concept of animated members, eclectic visual style, and experimental fusion of musical genres, including alternative rock, hip-hop, electronic, and pop (Genius, 2025). Over the years, Gorillaz has gained global recognition for its innovative approach to storytelling through music, often exploring imaginative worlds, social themes, and emotional narratives through both sound and animation. Their albums frequently blend reality and fiction, allowing listeners to experience music in a multi-dimensional artistic form.

One of their songs, “Baby Queen,” was released as part of the album *Cracker Island* (2023). The song is notable for its dreamy, nostalgic atmosphere and its use of symbolic and emotional imagery that reflects the narrator's surreal experiences. “Baby Queen” was inspired by a real-life moment involving a young Thai princess who attended a Gorillaz concert years earlier, which later sparked Albarn’s reflection on memory, time, and imagination. The song’s lyrical content contains layers of figurative language that enrich the emotional tone and create a sense of fantasy, making it a compelling subject for linguistic analysis.

The data used in this study consists of the lyrics of the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz. This song is known for its symbolic and metaphorical expressions, which suggest deeper meanings beneath the literal text. The lyrics employ multiple layers of figurative language that evoke emotions, nostalgia, and imagination, enabling listeners to interpret the song on various levels. In the song, several figurative elements appear, including metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, synecdoche, repetition, irony, and allusion. This contributes to the uniqueness of the lyrical style and enhances the poetic depth of the text. The hidden messages within the song are conveyed through figurative language, making the lyrics rich in imagery and open to interpretation. Because the lyrics demonstrate a variety of these linguistic features, the song is suitable for linguistic analysis, especially for identifying how figurative language functions to shape meaning,

tone, and emotional nuance in contemporary music. For this reason, "Baby Queen" provides suitable data for analyzing figurative language in contemporary music.

Therefore, this study aims to explore and categorize the figurative language found in the lyrics of "Baby Queen" by Gorillaz. By identifying the types of figurative language, this research seeks to clarify how figurative expressions function within the song and contribute to its overall meaning and emotional impact. Through this analysis, the study hopes to deepen appreciation of song lyrics as literary works and highlight the importance of figurative language in enriching musical expression.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. Metaphor**

According to Lakoff and Johnson, as cited in Jawad, metaphor is defined as "a figure of speech in which one concept that describes a particular idea is used to describe another for the sake of analogy and comparison," drawing from Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual framework. (Jawad, 2024). Also, according to Keraf in Palupi, metaphor is an analogy used to distinguish two things directly in a brief form (Palupi, 2021). Metaphor doesn't use words "like" or "as" to compare one thing to another, unlike a simile, which uses the words "like" or "as". For example, "She's a night owl." It compares a person to an owl. Owls are known as nocturnal birds that stay active at night. The example illustrates that the person stays up late and engages in activities such as studying for an exam, working overtime, or completing a thesis assignment due to a deadline. Another example, "He was a robot toy with a dying battery." It compares a person to a robot toy. Robot toys use batteries to power on and enable the robot to move and speak. When the batteries are low, the robot toy's movement and voice become slower than they used to. The example suggests that the person is so tired that they're performing activities without thinking, slowly and weakly, like a robot about to shut down. Metaphors are widely used to simplify complex meanings and create imagery in literature and everyday communication (Kosimov, 2022).

### **b. Personification**

According to Abrams, personification is when an inanimate object or abstract concept is described as if it has life, human attributes, or feelings (Syamsu and Weda, 2023). This figure of speech is used to make descriptions more vivid, imaginative, and emotionally expressive. By ascribing human traits to nonhuman entities, writers can help readers connect more deeply with the ideas conveyed. Personification also creates a more engaging and relatable image, allowing abstract concepts or natural elements to feel alive and active in the reader's imagination. Through this technique, language becomes richer and more expressive, making descriptions more interesting and easier to visualize.

For example, "The sun smiled down at us." The sentence says that the sun is smiling, which is a human action. It means that the weather was bright, warm, and pleasant. The word "smiled" gives a cheerful and friendly feeling. It helps create a positive mood without explicitly stating it. Another example sentence is "Time flies when you are having fun." It means that time appears to

pass very quickly when someone is enjoying themselves. The word "flies" gives the feeling that time is moving fast and slipping away. It helps convey how short, enjoyable moments feel without saying it explicitly.

### **c. Symbolism**

According to Wibisono and Widodo, symbolism is something that stands for a more complex or deeper idea, which can be an object, a person, a situation, or even an action (Riwu, Ortalisje, and Tlonaen, 2023). Symbolism allows writers to express ideas indirectly, enabling readers to grasp deeper meanings through familiar objects or situations. Instead of stating an idea plainly, authors use symbols to create layers of meaning, making the text richer and more meaningful. Through symbolism, readers are encouraged to think, interpret, and connect the symbol with broader themes or emotions. This means that simple things we see, or experience in everyday life, can be used to represent larger or more abstract meanings.

For example, the color black. The color black can represent death. In many places, people wear black clothes when someone dies. Although black is merely a color, it is often used to convey feelings such as sadness, loss, or endings. Writers and artists use black to help people feel these emotions without saying them directly. Thus, the color black becomes a symbol of something deeper and more emotional.

### **d. Hyperbole**

According to Sperber and Wilson, hyperbole is a form of loose language in which the literal meaning is intentionally exaggerated to convey a more relevant, implied meaning to the listener. They argue that hyperbole requires inferential interpretation rather than literal decoding in order to achieve optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). Hyperbole does not aim to present information literally; instead, it exaggerates reality to create a dramatic effect. For example, the sentence "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" is not meant to be taken literally. The speaker does not actually intend to eat a horse, but the expression is used to show that the person is extremely hungry. Through exaggeration, the feeling becomes more vivid and easier for the listener to understand.

Another example of hyperbole is "I have told you a million times!" In this case, the speaker has not literally repeated the same statement a million times. Rather, the exaggeration underscores the speaker's frustration and annoyance at having to repeat the same thing repeatedly. Hyperbole helps strengthen the emotional impact of the message, making the expression more powerful and expressive. By employing exaggeration, speakers can convey feelings, reactions, or situations in ways that capture attention and add emphasis, which is why hyperbole is commonly found in everyday conversation, literature, and even persuasive speech.

### **e. Synecdoche**

Synecdoche comes from the Greek word *synecdoche*, which means "similarity of parts." In short, a synecdoche is a figure of speech that uses a part to represent the whole or uses the whole

to indicate a part. Synecdoche not only condenses an expression but also reinforces the message the writer or speaker intends to convey. Abrams in Nainggolan and Elfrida defines synecdoche as "a trope that ideally emphasizes the close relationship between elements, condensing a large dynamic into a single concrete image" (Nainggolan and Elfrida, 2023). In this way, readers or listeners are immediately emotionally connected to the chosen "part," while mentally reconstructing the "whole" that it represents.

However, the classification of synecdoche is still debated among scholars. Traditional rhetoric categorizes synecdoche as a standalone figure of speech, but Cognitive Linguistics, particularly the work of Lakoff and Johnson, proposes that synecdoche should be understood as a subtype of metonymy. Lakoff and Johnson argue that synecdoche functions through a metonymic relation in which "the part stands for the whole or the whole for the part," suggesting that synecdoche is not merely a stylistic device but a cognitive process that reflects how humans conceptualize meaning (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

For example, the phrase "All hands on deck" uses the word "hands" to denote sailors or crew members. In reality, it is not only the hands that are required, but the whole person. This expression is commonly used to call everyone to help or take action. The use of hands rather than people makes the message more vivid and emphasizes the urgency, teamwork, and readiness required in the situation.

#### **f. Repetition**

Repetition in figurative language is a rhetorical device that involves the deliberate reiteration of one or more words or phrases within a sentence or passage to emphasize an idea, create rhythm, or heighten emotional impact. It serves various communicative functions such as emphasizing intensity, mood, imagery, humor, or threat, thereby enriching the poetic or rhetorical quality of the text. According to Liontas in Muhammad, Hidayat, and Alek, repetition is used to highlight intensity and mood and to create a rhythmic or poetic effect in language (Muhammad, Hidayat, and Alek, 2021). This figurative device enhances the expressive power by making an idea more prominent or memorable to the audience.

Repetition often occurs across artistic forms, and in song lyrics, it serves to reinforce a message or emotional tone, contributing to the song's atmosphere and listener engagement. By repeating key phrases or words, the songwriter can draw attention to central themes or emotions. For example, "Let it rain, let it pour, let it wash away the pain." It repeats the phrase "let it" several times throughout the sentence. Repetition is a figurative language device used to emphasize a feeling, an idea, or a message by saying the same words or phrases more than once. In this example, the repeated phrase "let it" creates a rhythmic and emotional effect that shows acceptance and release.

The word "rain" symbolizes sadness, struggle, or hardship, whereas "wash away the pain" symbolizes renewal and healing. By repeating let it, the speaker expresses the idea of surrendering

to the situation and allowing emotions or challenges to flow naturally. It strengthens the emotional impact and helps the listener feel the speaker's willingness to move on from the past.

The example suggests that the person is prepared to accept difficult times or emotional pain, believing that, after enduring the storm, they will experience peace and healing. The repetition adds emphasis and makes the sentence more poetic and powerful, which is often used in songs or poems to create rhythm and emotional depth.

#### **g. Allusion**

Allusion in figurative language is a literary device in which a speaker or writer refers indirectly to a person, event, place, or work of art, often relying on the reader's familiarity with the reference to convey deeper meaning or context. According to Abrams and Harpham, allusion works as a subtle nod that enriches the text by invoking associations outside the immediate narrative, allowing multiple layers of interpretation without explicit explanation (Abrams and Harpham, 2015). Keraf in Sembiring also stated that an allusion is a figure of speech that makes a reference to people, places, events, or literary works directly (Sembiring, 2020). For example, "He met his Waterloo in the final exam." It alludes to the Battle of Waterloo, where Napoleon Bonaparte was finally defeated. The phrase "met his Waterloo" is often used to describe someone facing their greatest defeat or downfall.

The example suggests that the person failed badly in the final exam after having been confident or successful beforehand, much like Napoleon, who was once powerful but eventually suffered a crushing defeat.

#### **h. Irony**

Irony is a figure of speech in which something said is different or opposite from its actual meaning. In other words, irony opens up a new world to readers about which messages are to be understood literally and which messages are actually conveyed or intended by the writer.

According to D.C. Muecke, "Firstly, irony is a double-layered or two-story phenomenon. Secondly, there is always some kind of opposition that may take the form of contradiction, incongruity, or incompatibility. Thirdly, there is an element of 'innocence' in irony." (Muecke, 1970). This indicates that irony is a literary device that builds tension through the contrast between expectation and reality while maintaining the innocence that makes it satirical. For example, "The fire station caught fire." This sentence is an example of irony because it shows the opposite of what people expect. A fire station is supposed to be the safest place from fire, yet it ultimately burns down. Irony occurs when reality contradicts expectations, creating surprise or humor.

The example illustrates that unexpected events can occur even to those who are most prepared. It shows how life can be unpredictable and full of surprising twists. The use of irony makes the sentence more interesting.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In this analysis, the researcher uses a qualitative descriptive method to examine the figurative language in the song lyric “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz. The descriptive qualitative approach focuses on interpreting meanings, identifying language patterns, and understanding how figurative expressions contribute to the overall message of the song. According to Bogdan and Taylor in Nisa, Faisal, and Pratima, “Research methods that produce data in the form of words written or spoken by people and actions that can be seen” (Nisa, Faisal, and Pratima, 2025). This method allows the researcher to analyze the lyrics in their natural form without altering or manipulating the original data. Through this approach, the researcher can explore how Gorillaz constructs imagery, emotion, and narrative using various stylistic devices.

The data used in this study consists of the lyrics of the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz. To ensure transcription accuracy, the lyrics were sourced from verified, official sources, including YouTube Music and Genius. Any unclear parts were rechecked by listening directly to the audio track. Transcription conventions were preserved by keeping the original punctuation, capitalization, repeated lines, and spacing exactly as presented in the official lyric format.

First, researchers sort the data in the song lyrics to identify which verses contain figurative language, then remove parts that are irrelevant to the research, making it easier for researchers to summarize and analyze. During this stage, the song was read multiple times to identify whether a line conveyed literal or non-literal meaning. Figurative expressions were determined according to definitions established in the literature review: metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, synecdoche, repetition, allusion, and irony.

To increase coding accuracy, two researchers participated in the identification process. Both researchers independently reviewed and categorized each figurative expression. After the independent coding step, the results were compared. Any differences in classification or interpretation were discussed until an agreement was reached. Although this increases reliability, the absence of a third coder or formal inter-rater reliability calculation remains a limitation of the study and may introduce interpretive subjectivity. After sorting the data, the figurative language was categorized by type, including simile, symbolic metaphor, and other types. Then, each type of figurative language was accompanied by examples of song verses containing figurative language.

The last is grouping, researchers verified how figurative language affects the meaning of a song. Here, researchers relate the function of figurative language to the aesthetic and communicative effects in song lyrics, thereby ensuring that their analysis is valid and supported by prior examples.



## FINDING

This table below presents the results of an analysis of the lyrics of the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz, which helped researchers group figurative language by type. The next section discusses figurative language, provides examples from the song’s lyrics, and explains the verse’s intended meaning.

Tabel 1. Result Analysisi of of the lyrics of the song “Baby Queen”

Type	Total	Example
Metaphor	4	<i>“Down in the abyss where the night never turns to daylight”</i>
Personification	2	<i>“She kept me in a polaroid”</i>
Symbolism	3	<i>“Under Garuda’s mirror lights”</i>
Hyperbole	2	<i>“She fell into the generals”</i>
Synecdoche	2	<i>“Pinned upon her wall”</i>
Repetition	2	<i>“In my dreams where you’ve been”</i>
Allusion	1	<i>“Garuda”</i>
Irony	1	<i>“You’ve grown up”</i>

### 1. Metaphor

The song “Baby Queen” contains multiple metaphors that express themes of emotional growth, fame, and nostalgia. The line “She had grown up into a queen” compares the woman’s maturity to that of royalty, suggesting confidence, independence, and a transition from innocence to authority. Rather than describing literal royalty, the metaphor represents a psychological or social transformation, possibly reflecting how fame elevates someone to a higher status in the public eye.

The phrase *“Down in the abyss where the night never turns to daylight”* also functions metaphorically. The word abyss does not refer to a physical space but conveys emotional emptiness, confusion, or despair. The contrast between night and daylight strengthens the metaphor, implying that the situation offers no clarity, hope, or emotional resolution. In this way, the lyric suggests a deep inner struggle or a sense of losing direction.

Another metaphor appears in *“I fell into the vanity.”* Vanity is described as if it were a physical location someone could fall into, implying a psychological descent rather than a literal one. This expression suggests that the narrator becomes overwhelmed or consumed by pride, superficiality, or public attention, which is a common theme in songs addressing identity, fame, and self-image.

Similarly, the line *“The mirrored lights of our dreams”* likens dreams to reflections, suggesting that they are bright and attractive yet fragile or illusory. The metaphor suggests that

aspirations may look beautiful from a distance but are intangible or distorted when examined closely. The image of mirrors emphasizes illusion and reinforces the tension between appearance and reality within the song.

The line "*She fell into the generals*" is also metaphorical, although it requires clearer interpretative grounding. The phrase does not literally describe falling among military leaders; instead, it may reflect being influenced or controlled by strict authority figures, systems, or expectations. In the context of the song's themes of fame and identity, generals could symbolize powerful structures, such as the media, industry figures, or societal pressures, that shape and discipline a person's behavior. This interpretation aligns with the broader pattern of metaphors in the song that contrast freedom with confinement and individuality with external control.

Collectively, these metaphors illustrate a journey marked by transformation, emotional struggle, and the tension between authenticity and illusion. Through symbolic language, the song portrays how fame and growing up can bring power and self-awareness, yet also loss, pressure, and disconnection from the past.

## **2. Personification**

Personification is employed in the song to ascribe human actions or characteristics to nonhuman ideas, rendering abstract emotions more vivid and expressive. In the line "*Down in the abyss where the night never turns to daylight*," the word night is treated as if it has the human ability to refuse or resist change. The idea of night choosing not to turn into daylight implies intention, which is a distinctly human capacity. This makes the emotional darkness feel active rather than passive, intensifying the sense of hopelessness and continuity of sadness.

Another example appears in the line "*She takes flight*." Although the woman is a person, the act of flight is not literal; instead, it ascribes a nonhuman, birdlike quality to her. The expression suggests freedom, escape, or rising above circumstances, making the movement metaphorical rather than physical. In this case, flight represents a conscious decision or aspiration, reinforcing the emotional shift from confinement to liberation.

The phrase "*The mirrored lights of our dreams*" also employs personification by endowing the abstract noun "dreams" with human-like qualities, such as the ability to shine, reflect, and appear animated. This implies that dreams are alive, active, and capable of interacting with the world rather than remaining static or unreachable. By attributing these qualities to dreams, the lyric creates a surreal atmosphere where internal desires seem to move, react, and glow like conscious entities.

Together, these examples demonstrate that personification is not only decorative but also functional in shaping the song's emotional tone. By portraying nonhuman elements as if they possess intention or agency, the lyrics intensify the narrative's surreal, dreamlike quality and allow listeners to experience the emotions more directly and vividly.

### **3. Symbolism**

Symbolism plays an important role in “Baby Queen” because it provides deeper meaning to the imagery and allows abstract ideas to be expressed indirectly. The words “princess” and “queen” symbolize stages of growth, with “princess” denoting youth, innocence, and an early stage of identity, while “queen” denotes maturity, confidence, and authority. This symbolic progression reflects a journey from childhood to adulthood and from vulnerability to self-possession.

The Polaroid in the line “*She kept me in a Polaroid that was pinned up on her wall*” symbolizes memory and nostalgia, suggesting that the speaker exists primarily as part of her past. Unlike a live moment, a Polaroid captures a single frozen instant, preserving it permanently without the ability to evolve or change. This contrasts sharply with the symbolic shift from princess to queen, which emphasizes growth and transformation. The static nature of the Polaroid suggests that while the woman has progressed and changed, the speaker remains stuck in an earlier emotional moment, unable to continue developing alongside her.

The wall where the photograph is pinned further reinforces this idea. It symbolizes emotional and temporal distance, marking a boundary between the past and the present. The speaker remains on the wall as a reminder rather than an active part of her current life, highlighting separation and disconnection.

The phrase “*Garuda’s mirror lights*” symbolizes cultural identity and heritage. As the national emblem of Thailand, Garuda connects the woman to her origins and suggests that her identity is shaped by cultural history and symbolism rather than by personal experience alone. The mirrored lights imply reflection and recognition, suggesting that culture helps her understand who she is or where she comes from.

The abyss symbolizes emptiness and emotional disorientation, while dreams symbolize longing and imagination, representing the blurred line between memory and desire. Together, these symbolic elements illustrate how the song weaves memory, identity, and emotional change into a narrative of loss, transformation, and self-discovery.

### **4. Hyperbole**

The song uses hyperbole to intensify the speaker’s sense of longing. The line “Where the night never turns to daylight” exaggerates the sadness by making it feel endless; at the same time, “*She takes flight*” heightens her departure into something almost unreal, emphasizing how unreachable she has become. The repeated chorus “In my dreams (dream, dream, dream, dream)” further exaggerates her omnipresence in his mind, suggesting he can’t escape thoughts of her even while asleep. Together, these hyperbolic elements fuse into a portrait of longing that feels overwhelming and inescapable, showing how entirely the speaker is consumed by her absence.

### **5. Synecdoche**

Synecdoche in the song compresses complex relationships and identities into small, loaded objects that expose the emotional distance between the speaker and the past. In “*She kept me in a*

Polaroid," the photo becomes more than a snapshot. It stands in for the entire relationship, reducing the speaker to a fixed, unchanging relic she can look at without engaging with him. This shift from lived experience to static representation signals how thoroughly he has been removed from her present. The reference to "*Garuda's mirror lights*" operates similarly: invoking Garuda, Thailand's national emblem, relies on a single cultural marker to represent the weight of a broader national identity shaping the emotional backdrop. Both moments rely on synecdoche to condense expansive emotional and cultural realities into isolated fragments. These fragments reveal a relationship that now survives only through symbols rather than connection, reinforcing the song's emphasis on distance, memory, and loss.

## **6. Repetition**

Repetition is one of the strongest features in "Baby Queen." The constant refrain "*You've grown up, oh, Baby Queen*" is repeated many times to emphasize the passage of time and the change in the woman's life. The repetition of "*In my dreams (dream, dream, dream, dream)*" creates a dreamlike rhythm and underscores the singer's inability to stop thinking about her. The line "*Where you've been (dream, dream, dream, dream)*" repeats to show his ongoing wonder and sadness about her absence. The repeated phrase "*Oh, Baby Queen*" also adds emotion and affection, showing that she still holds a special place in his heart. Through repetition, the song captures the feeling of memories that replay in the mind.

## **7. Allusion**

In the song "Baby Queen" by Gorillaz, the allusion refers to a specific real-life event involving royalty. Damon Albarn, the frontman, wrote the song after dreaming of a 1997 Blur concert in which Princess Siribha Chudabhorn of Thailand, then a teenager, unexpectedly jumped into the crowd. The song indirectly references the princess and the surreal nature of that moment through lines such as "*under Garuda's mirror lights / she takes flight*," blending biography, dream imagery, and royal symbolism.

This type of allusion relies on the listener's familiarity with the real event or the figure being referenced. Without this shared cultural knowledge, the references may simply appear symbolic or fictional rather than grounded in reality. However, for listeners who recognize the underlying event and its historical context, the meaning becomes richer, transforming the song into a layered narrative that evokes nostalgia, youthful rebellion, and a sense of ethereal memory. Thus, allusion functions not only as a figurative language tool but also as a cultural bridge, enhancing emotional depth by embedding external references within the poetic fabric of the lyrics.

## **8. Irony**

The lyrics include a few allusions that connect the story to real events and cultural symbols. The line "*I met the princess from Thailand again*" refers to a real moment when Damon Albarn, the lead singer of Gorillaz, met a young Thai princess who attended one of their concerts. It makes the song both personal and historical. The phrase "*Garuda's mirror lights*" alludes to Garuda, the mythical bird and national emblem of Thailand, thereby highlighting the cultural background of

the woman in the song. The words "princess" and "queen" also allude to fairy-tale stories where an innocent girl becomes a powerful figure. These allusions mix real memories with myth and imagination, creating a poetic and emotional story.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal that metaphor is the most prominent form of figurative language found in the song *Baby Queen* by Gorillaz, followed by symbolism, hyperbole, synecdoche, repetition, and other figurative devices. This pattern aligns with previous studies, which indicate that metaphors frequently appear in song lyrics because they allow songwriters to compress complex emotional states into concise and poetic expressions (Haq, Weda, Iskandar, 2024, and Ibrahim, Akib, and Hasyim, 2019). The frequency and arrangement of figurative language types also show similarities with earlier analyses of modern pop and alternative music, in which metaphor and symbolism often predominate because they help construct identity, emotional tone, and narrative depth. However, some differences emerge when compared with other research on Gorillaz lyrics, in which hyperbole was the most frequent figurative type (Fauziah, 2022). These results are consistent with the findings presented in this manuscript and support the argument that figurative language functions not only as a stylistic choice but also as an essential communicative tool in contemporary music.

Some differences emerged when comparing the figurative language patterns in this song with previous studies. For example, repetition and irony appear in *Baby Queen*, but they are less frequent than in earlier research examining pop music, in which repetition is often used as a structural and rhythmic device (Muhammad, Hidayat, and Alek, 2021). One possible explanation is the narrative writing style of Gorillaz, which frequently incorporates surreal imagery, cultural references, and symbolic storytelling rather than repeated phrases typical of mainstream pop. In addition, the allusions to cultural and historical references associated with Thailand suggest that the song's meaning depends partly on cultural knowledge. This differs from many song-lyric analyses, in which meaning is constructed primarily through universal emotions rather than culturally grounded symbolism.

These findings have meaningful implications for theory and practice, especially in lyric analysis, songwriting, and music pedagogy. From a theoretical perspective, the dominance of metaphor and symbolism supports the view that figurative language enhances emotional depth, cognitive engagement, and artistic expression rather than serving as decoration. In songwriting practice, the symbolic progression from princess to queen demonstrates how writers can implicitly convey character development and emotional transformation. For educators, the results suggest that song lyrics provide accessible yet analytically rich material for teaching literary concepts such as metaphor, symbolism, interpretation, and intertextual meaning. Therefore, music lyrics may serve as effective instructional texts in language education and stylistic analysis.

Although the study contributes to a deeper understanding of figurative language in modern music, it has certain limitations. The analysis focuses on a single song, which limits the generalizability of the findings to Gorillaz's overall songwriting style or to other artists in the

alternative rock genre. In addition, the interpretation of symbolism and allusion may vary depending on cultural familiarity and personal interpretation, meaning subjectivity remains a methodological challenge. Future research could compare figurative language across multiple songs or albums by Gorillaz, or extend the analysis to cross-genre contexts to identify broader stylistic tendencies. Additional research could also employ corpus analysis, cognitive linguistics, or multimodal analysis to explore how figurative elements interact with musical arrangement, visual elements, and cultural context.

## CONCLUSION

This study examines nine types of figurative language found in the lyrics of the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz using various theorists’ methods, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The researcher found 19 uses of figurative language in the lyrics, namely 4 metaphors, 2 personifications, 3 symbolisms, 2 hyperboles, 2 synecdoche, 2 repetitions, 1 allusion, and 1 irony. This indicates that metaphor, a type of figurative language, predominates in the lyrics.

This indicates that the song “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz is heavily embellished with various types of figurative language, making it full of emotion and hidden meaning and prompting the listener to speculate. This study analyzes the use of figurative language in the song lyrics of “Baby Queen” by Gorillaz. It is expected that this study will help students better understand figurative language. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that this study can contribute positively and serve as a reference for those interested in figurative language.

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