

## An Analysis of Figurative Language in Eminem's Selected Song in Recovery Album

\*<sup>1</sup>Alif Naufal; <sup>2</sup>Ika Chairiyani; <sup>3</sup>Rini Septa Angraini

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

Corresponding email: [alifnaufal317@gmail.com](mailto:alifnaufal317@gmail.com)

Article Data	Abstract
<p><b><u>Article History:</u></b> Received : 23 April 2025 Revised : 21 Mei 2025 Accepted : 05 Juli 2025 Published: 23 Juli 2025</p> <p><b><u>Keywords:</u></b> figurative language, eminem, recovery album</p>	<p>The researcher employed qualitative research methods as the data consists of written or spoken words. The data was collected from Eminem's selected song in the "Recovery" album, released in June 2010. The researcher followed eight steps for data analysis, including listening to the songs, reading the lyrics, underlining words related to figurative language, identifying and classifying specific lyrics, reanalyzing the lyrics, coding, and finally, creating tables and pie charts. There were 16 instances of total figurative language found in this research. In the song lyrics of these 6 types of figurative language, hyperbole is the most dominant, accounting for 25%. This is followed by metonymy and personification, each at 19%, and metaphor, also at 19%. Similes come next at 12%, followed by irony at 6%, and lastly, litotes at 0%.</p>

### INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a crucial tool in literary works and music that can transform and enrich the meanings of words. According to Thirumalai (2002), English is studied all over the world because people realize that it may be used as a passport to develop in one's career, earn more money, gain more information, and communicate. Figurative language is not merely decorative but also shapes how we understand and experience the world. They argue that metaphors, as a primary form of figurative language, not only depict relationships between disparate things but also mold our understanding and response to everyday reality.

In the context of music, particularly in works like Eminem's album "Recovery," the use of figurative language allows artists to express personal experiences, complex emotions, and philosophical thoughts in captivating and memorable ways. For instance, Perrine (1974) explains that similes and metaphors not only adorn poetry or song lyrics but also deepen our understanding of universal themes such as love, loss, and personal growth. While there has been significant research on Eminem's work, there remains a need for a more in-depth exploration of his use of figurative language, particularly within an album as thematically rich as "Recovery".

Understanding how Eminem employs figurative language to navigate his narrative and convey broader themes is crucial for appreciating the artistic and emotional depth of the "Recovery."

album. This exploration promises to contribute significantly to both literary and music studies by offering a nuanced perspective on the intersection of language, emotion, and personal experience in modern music.

One of the notable figures in Eminem's *Recovery* album is Eminem himself, who is both a singer and songwriter. Eminem gained widespread popularity due to his distinctive voice and the powerful language features in his music. He often employs both colloquial and formal language, which resonates with a diverse audience. His songs frequently convey deep personal experiences and universal messages, making them accessible to listeners around the world. Each track on the *Recovery* album carries significant emotional and narrative value, providing insights and reflections that are valuable to many. Eminem's music includes a variety of sounds, rhythms, and lyrics, all of which contribute to the richness of his messages. To fully grasp the meaning and content of his songs, analysing the lyrics and understanding the figurative language he uses is essential.

## **METHODS**

### **Design**

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach. The result of this study was provided in the form of a description. The researcher employed content analysis as the research method, which enables the making of replicable and valid inferences through the interpretation and coding of textual material. In this study, a song album was analysed using a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, involving the interpretation and coding of textual material. The researcher was analysed figurative language in Eminem's "*Recovery*" album based on Charles Dillon Perrine's theories, supported by the works of M.H. Abrams, Gorys Keraf (2009), and Reaske's, five songs from the "*Recovery*" album have been selected for analysis: "Not Afraid," "Love the Way You Lie," "No Love," "Space Bound," and "Cinderella Man" and "Talkin' to Myself."

### **Data Collection**

"Document analysis can involve written or text-based artifacts (textbooks, novels, journals, meeting minutes, etc.) or non-written records (photographs, audiotapes, videotapes, images, etc.) (Ary, 2010), the documents used as supportive data in this research include song lyrics from Eminem's "*Recovery*" album and other supplementary documents to ensure the completeness of the data."

### **Data Analysis**

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach. The result of this study was provided in the form of a description. The researcher employed content analysis as the research method, which enables the making of replicable and valid inferences through the interpretation and coding of textual material (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, a song album was analysed using a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, involving the interpretation and coding of textual material.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

From the data presented, the writer concludes that there are numerous uses of figurative language in the song lyrics analysed from Eminem's *Recovery* album. For more explanation, the researcher will create a table for more details.

**Table 1. The “Not Afraid”**

<b>NO</b>	<b>lyric</b>	<b>Type of figurative language</b>
<b>1</b>	I’m ‘bout to go green, and I’m only getting’ started.	<b>Metaphor</b>
<b>2</b>	I’m climbing out of the side of the bathroom window.	<b>Personification</b>
<b>3</b>	I’m not afraid to take a stand. Everybody, come take my hand.	<b>Irony</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Breaking out of this cage</b>	<b>Metonymy</b>

**Table 2. “Love The Way You Lie”**

<b>No</b>	<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Type of figurative language</b>
<b>1</b>	It’s like I’m huffing paint, and I love it the more I suffer, I suffocate.	<b>Simile</b>
<b>2</b>	The sky is falling.	<b>Personification</b>
<b>3</b>	Just gonna stand there and watch me burn.	<b>Hyperbole</b>
<b>4</b>	Spewing venom	<b>Metonymy</b>

**Table 3. “No Love”**

<b>No</b>	<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Type of figurative language</b>
<b>1</b>	I’m alive again, more alive than I have been in my whole entire life. I can see these people’s ears perk up as I begin.	<b>Simile</b>
<b>2</b>	Alive again	<b>Metonymy</b>

**Table 4. “Space Bound”**

<b>No</b>	<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Type of figurative language</b>
<b>1</b>	I’m like a satellite that’s lost in space.	<b>Metaphor</b>
<b>2</b>	The sky is falling.	<b>Personification</b>
<b>3</b>	I would rather die than let you go.	<b>Hyperbole</b>

**Table 5. “Cinderella Man”**

No	Lyric	Type of figurative language
1	Music is my time machine.	Metaphor
2	I’m the maniacal monster.	Hyperbole

**Table 6. ”Talkin’ To Myself”**

No	Lyric	Type of figurative language
1	I’m a machine, I’m a robot.	Hyperbole

## Discussion

### Simile

According to the theory, a simile involves indirectly comparing two things using the words “like” or “as.” In essence, a simile is a direct comparison between two things that are different. Here are some lyrics from Eminem’s album “Recovery” that use the figurative language of simile.

a. “No Love”

*“I’m alive again, more alive than I have been in my whole entire life. I can see these people’s ears perk up as I begin.”*

The lyric includes a simile because it uses the word “as.” Eminem compares the reaction of people’s ears perking up to how animals react when they hear something interesting or important. This simile conveys that his presence and words are so impactful that they immediately capture the attention of his audience, highlighting his revival and significant influence.

b. “Cold wind blows”

*“So stick to the script like adhesive.”*

Eminem uses the simile “like adhesive” to stress the importance of adhering strictly to a plan or set of instructions. Just as adhesive firmly sticks to surfaces, sticking to the script means following a plan closely and not deviating from it.

c. “Love the Way You Lie”

*“It’s like I’m huffing paint, and I love it the more I suffer, I suffocate.”*

Eminem uses “like” compares the destructive nature of his tumultuous relationship to the act of huffing paint, which is harmful but addictive. This simile illustrates how the pain and chaos of the relationship provide a twisted sense of pleasure or attachment, even though it causes emotional suffocation and suffering.

### **Metaphor**

Here are three lyrics of Eminem’s selected song in recovery album using metaphor:

- a. “Not afraid”

*“I’m ‘bout to go green, and I’m only getting’ started.”*

This lyric is a metaphor where “going green” is not literally about the colour but represents becoming environmentally conscious or starting fresh. It signifies a new beginning or a transformation in Eminem’s life. The literal meaning of “going green” would relate to environmentalism, but here it metaphorically indicates personal growth and renewal.

- b. “Cinderella Man”

*“Music is my time machine.”*

In this metaphor, music is not literally a time machine, but it represents a tool that allows Eminem to revisit different times and emotions from his past. The literal meaning of a time machine refers to a device that travels through time, but here it metaphorically describes how music can evoke memories and emotions from different periods of his life.

- c. “Space Bound”

*“I’m like a satellite that’s lost in space.”*

This lyric uses the metaphor of a satellite lost in space to describe feeling emotionally adrift or disconnected. The literal meaning of a satellite lost in space involves being physically stranded, but metaphorically, it represents feeling isolated and uncertain in his personal life or relationships.

### **Personification**

Here are three lyrics of Eminem’s selected song in recovery album using personification:

- a. “Not Afraid”

*“I’m climbing out the side of the bathroom window.”*

This lyric uses personification by giving the action of “climbing out” a sense of physical activity that implies a struggle or escape. While literal climbing out of a bathroom window refers to an actual physical act, metaphorically, it suggests overcoming obstacles or escaping from a difficult situation, imbuing the action with human-like determination and struggle.

- b. “Space Bound”

*“My heart’s on fire.”*

This lyric personifies the heart by attributing it with the capability to catch fire. Literally, a heart cannot be on fire, but metaphorically, it conveys intense emotional pain or passion. The personification here emphasizes the depth and intensity of his feelings, suggesting that they are burning with extreme emotion.

- c. “Love the Way you Lie”

*“The sky is falling.”*

In this lyric, personification is used by attributing human-like action to the sky. Literally, the sky does not fall, but metaphorically, it suggests that things are collapsing or falling apart in his life. This personification helps to express a sense of overwhelming disaster or crisis.

### **Hyperbole**

Here are four lyrics in Eminem selected song in recovery album using hyperbole

- a. “Cinderella Man”

*“I’m the maniacal monster.”*

The term “maniacal monster” is a hyperbole that exaggerates Eminem’s intensity and emotional state. Literally, he isn’t a monster, but the hyperbole emphasizes his extreme feelings and the intensity of his return to the music scene, portraying himself as a powerful force.

b. "Space Bound"

*"I would rather die than let you go."*

This lyric uses hyperbole to exaggerate the depth of Eminem's emotional attachment. The literal meaning of dying is not meant to be taken literally but rather to stress how incredibly important the person is to him. The hyperbole highlights the strength of his feelings and how he perceives the situation as unbearable without the other person.

c. "Love the Way you Lie"

*"Just gonna stand there and watch me burn."*

The phrase "watch me burn" is a hyperbole used to exaggerate the emotional pain and sense of betrayal Eminem feels. Literally, he is not on fire, but the hyperbole emphasizes the intensity of his suffering and the extent to which he feels exposed and hurt.

d. "Talkin 2 Myself"

*"I'm a machine, I'm a robot."*

Eminem describing himself as a "machine" or "robot" is hyperbolic because it exaggerates his detachment and relentless work ethic. Literally, Eminem is not a machine or robot, but the hyperbole conveys how he feels emotionally detached and mechanically driven in his efforts.

### **Irony**

Here are some lyrics of Eminem song in recovery album within using irony:

a. "Not Afraid"

*"I'm not afraid to take a stand Everybody come take my hand."*

Literal of meaning Eminem is asserting his willingness to face challenges and invite others to join him in doing the same. He is expressing confidence and leadership in overcoming difficulties. The irony in this lyric lies in the juxtaposition of his call for unity and strength with the personal struggles he describes throughout the album. Although he's encouraging others to follow him and face their fears, he himself grapples with significant internal battles and vulnerabilities. The contrast between his public persona of strength and his private struggles adds a layer of irony, as the very message of bravery is set against the backdrop of his own ongoing recovery and personal challenges.

### **Metonymy**

a. "Not Afraid"

*"Breaking out of this cage"*

The word "cage" is used metaphorically to represent Eminem's struggles, obstacles, or mental confinement. It suggests a sense of being trapped or restricted. By using "cage," Eminem indirectly refers to the difficulties he faces in his life, rather than explicitly stating them. Metonymy In this context, "cage" is a metonym because it substitutes a broader concept (struggles, challenges) with a specific word ("cage") that represents confinement or limitation.

b. "Love the Way you Lie"

*"Spewing venom"*

The phrase "spewing venom" metaphorically describes the act of verbally attacking someone with harsh, hurtful words. "Venom" refers to poison, and by using this term, Eminem emphasizes the toxic and destructive nature of the words being spoken during an argument. Metonymy Here, "venom" serves as a metonym because it stands in for the hurtful words themselves. It represents the emotional impact and harmful intent behind the verbal abuse, without directly naming the words.

c. "No Love"

*"Alive again"*

The phrase "alive again" metaphorically expresses a feeling of rejuvenation, vitality, or renewal after overcoming a challenging or difficult period in life. It implies a sense of being revitalized and emotionally restored. Metonymy: "Alive again" can be seen as metonymy because it substitutes the broader concept of emotional revival or renewed energy with a specific phrase that conveys that state. It indirectly represents the positive emotional state Eminem feels after overcoming adversity.

## **Type of Figurative Language**

### **a. Personification**

Personification is when non-human objects are given human traits. Personification is a troupe of questionable value best approached with trepidation and suspicion.

For an example:

a.) But your words cut like knives

In the example provided, the figurative language used is personification. This technique attributes human characteristics to inanimate objects. The lyrics contain words that suggest these objects have human traits or actions.

### **b. Metaphor**

Metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. It is also consistent with this view. Metaphor is often understood as involving the interpretation (or conceptualization) of one entity in terms of something. For an Example:

a.) Shot me out of the sky you're my kryptonite.

It creates an implicit or hidden comparison between two unrelated things that share some common traits. The term "kryptonite" refers to something or someone that weakens you, even if you are otherwise very strong.

### **c. Simile**

A simile is a method of comparing one thing to another by illustrating its similarities, and it explicitly indicates this comparison in a text using the words "as" or "like." For Example:

a.) Her eyes are like a star, east star.

For the example, "Her eyes are like a star, east star" The term "explicit comparison" is used to describe expressions that convey similar meanings. In the example provided, the words 'like' and 'as' suggest that some lines of the poem use similes.

### **d. Irony**

Irony is often used to reveal a speaker's typically negative attitude toward some referent topic (Colston, 2015). In irony, sarcasm is sometimes used to ridicule or make fun of someone or something.

For example:

a.) How quick you did job, till I wait for a long time.

b.) Boy, you're so alien

The first example indicates that completing the task requires a long time, which causes the friend to wait for an extended period as well. However, it primarily expresses the frustration of being dissatisfied with the situation.

### **e. Metonymy**

Metonymy is a strategy commonly used to make sense of reference association. Metonymy is closely related to and sometimes hard to distinguish.

For example:

a.) Mike called the American government the white house.

It means that the location or country uses a particular color as a symbol to represent it. In this context, the white color is the one chosen by the author to serve as the symbol.

### **f. Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is represented by an utterance exceeding the facts by piling up too many semantic features of the same kind, which is recognizable via contextual or general word knowledge and which transports emotional meaning (Claridge, 2010). For example:

a.) I will be waiting for you for a thousand years.

The phrase "a thousand years" is an exaggeration, as living for such a length of time is impossible since no one lives for a thousand years. Similarly, the idea of craving "throughout the wind" is an extreme exaggeration and highly unrealistic.

### **g. Litotes**

Litotes is a figure of speech featuring a phrase that utilizes negative wording or terms to express a positive assertion or statement. Litotes is a common literary device, most often used in speech, rhetoric, and nonfiction. For example:

The phrase “I don’t hate it” is an example of litotes. Here, the negative terms “don’t” and “hate” are used together to convey the opposite meaning or a positive sentiment. By saying “I don't hate it,” the speaker is subtly expressing “I like it.” However, because the speaker does not explicitly state “I like it,” the positive sentiment is softened and understated. This use of litotes demonstrates the speaker’s intention to convey a positive feeling without directly stating it or being overly enthusiastic. Instead of directly saying “I like it,” litotes expresses a lack of dislike.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research is based on the analysis and discussion detailed in the previous chapter. It covers the types of figurative language used in Eminem’s album *Recovery* and identifies the most dominant types of figurative language found within the album. There were 16 instances of total figurative language found in this research. In the song lyrics of these 6 types of figurative language, hyperbole is the most dominant, accounting for 25%. This is followed by metonymy and personification, each at 19%, and metaphor, also at 19%. Similes come next at 12%, followed by irony at 6%, and lastly, litotes at 0%. In some studies, it was found that the most commonly used types of figurative language by songwriters are hyperbole, metonymy, and personification.

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