

## THE ANALYSIS OF SIMILE IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S SONGS

**Rahelia Maria Tulung<sup>1</sup>, Mister Gidion Maru<sup>2</sup>, Tirza Kumayas<sup>3</sup>**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts*

*Universitas Negeri Manado, Tondano, Indonesia*

*Email: [mariatulung@gmail.com](mailto:mariatulung@gmail.com)*

**Abstract** : This study aims at describing simile in Taylor Swift Songs. It is conducted to identify the types, the function and the contextual meaning of simile used in Taylor Swift's Songs. In conducting this research, qualitative analysis is used. The data are analyzed through the steps of data reduction, data display, conclusion and verification as proposed by Miles & Huberman (2007). The instrument of collecting the data is the researchers themselves as the key instrument. The findings of this research show that there are two types of similes used in Taylor Swift's Songs those are open and closed simile. Simile allows readers to relate the feelings of the author to their personal experiences. The similes are used to make the song more imaginable and meaningful. The most important function of simile is to draw sharp pictures in the mind through comparisons, to give deeper insight into things, person, and ideas through suggestive association, or to explain abstract, complicated ideas in simple concrete imagery. It's better to use as it should be so the people will not be offended but should make comfortable sense. In using simile, we need to consider with the situation and context. The contextual meaning is the meaning of the words according to the situation in which they are used.

**Keywords** : *Simile, Taylor Swift, Song.*

### INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who need each other to live. In Social life, humans need to communicate with each other and language is the mean to do so. Liando (2016) explains that without language, a conversation cannot be created, and without communication, people are unable to communicate with one another. It means that humans communicate information, skills, and knowledge via their linguistic ability Yule (2022). Sudarsono, Samola and Maru (2018) then add that in social interactions, some people communicate more than they express themselves, using language that conveys meanings more effectively. This feature of language is called figurative language.

Everyone has their own way to express their thoughts. In expressing their ideas, sometimes they use figurative language to

convey a specific meaning. According to Abram and Harpham (2014), figurative language deviates from what a language's speakers typically understand as the meaning or order of words in order to convey a specific meaning. It means figurative language is an expression of language whose meaning differs from its literal interpretation (Sumigar, Maru, and Tuerah, 2021). We can observe that people frequently speak in their own unique ways in daily life. As pointed out by Maru, et. al. (2023), people use language to communicate with others to meet their desires and needs, to express their inner thoughts and emotions, to comprehend abstract and complicated ideas, to study, to make norms, and to preserve their culture. There are various ways then express the idea of the mind. It is sometimes flat, funny, serious, ordinary, and others use a

specific meaning that is metaphorically by comparing words like simile.

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two unrelated objects and highlights their similarities. In contrast to a metaphor, a simile creates comparison using the words "like" or "as". Brugman, et. al. (2019) describes that a simile is a comparison of two things that are fundamentally dissimilar; it is denoted by the words like or as. Similes provide as direct comparisons. It makes it clear that one thing is comparable to another. It needs terms like "like" or "as" to demonstrate how comparable it is, for instance "he is like a king" or "cute as a kitten" come to mind.

The simile can be found in our daily conversation or even in songs. Sumgigar, Maru, and Tuerah (2021) affirms that song is one of the media for communication. People often use the similes to emphasize the meaning that they are trying to convey to the reader or listener like in Taylor Swift's songs. Taylor Swift is one of most artists in America. The songs of Taylor Swift sometimes use similes to convey the message through the song. The songs have a deep meaning but sometimes people cannot understand what simile meant in that song.

Based on the background above, the researchers intend to analyze simile used in Taylor Swift's songs. The purpose of the study is to identify the forms, the function and the contextual meaning of simile used in Taylor Swift's Songs.

### **Semantics**

Semantics is a subset of semiotics, a more comprehensive study of signs (Long, 2019). It deals with language as a system of signs and words as signs (words as symbols). According to Firuza (2020), the study of meaning is referred to technically as semantics, and as meaning is a

component of language, semantics is a branch of linguistics. Semantics is the study of meaning conveyed through language (Swarniti, 2021; Simatupang, 2019). An utterance is anything the speaker says, whether it is a word or a full sentence (Risidianoto, et. al., 2019).

Based on the explanation above, semantics concern with the study about the meaning through the language. It deals with the various sign and symbol and what they represent. Semantics is a subfield of linguistics that deals with how language users interpret words and expressions. It is common knowledge that language is used to convey meaning for other people to understand.

### **Figurative language**

Figurative language deviates from what a language's users consider to be the usual or standard, significance, or sequence of words in order to obtain a particular meaning (Abram & Harpham, 2014). According to Utami, et. al. (2021), figurative language refers to any non-literal use of a word, phrase, sentence, or group of phrases that deviates from the typical or primary sense of a specific language unity. Literature and poetry that engages the reader's senses often use figurative language. Figurative language comes in a wide variety of forms. any particular word or word meaning, including metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, allegory, paradox, and metonymy. In this study, the sole focus is the simile.

### **Simile**

According to Akram, et. al. (2022), a simile is a comparison between two dissimilar items. Similes are used to describe things by contrasting two dissimilar items. According to Borghi, et. al. (2019), a simile is a comparison of two

objects that are fundamentally dissimilar and is denoted by the words “like” or “as”. Similes are used to compare two things in order to communicate a concept that is more creative and imaginative. A metaphor is metaphorical when it compares two sorts of entities that are essentially dissimilar to one another (Israel et al., 2004). There are open and closed similes (Tartakovsky & Shen, 2019).

### **Type of Simile**

There are two types of related similes. Azizah (2019) states that similes can be either closed or open. When comparing two things, a closed simile indicates the similarities between the items. The reader is supposed to look up the similarities in a dictionary or interpret them in an open simile, which compares two things without mentioning any similarities. In a closed simile, the shared property is specifically mentioned to explain the comparison's starting point. As an illustration of a closed simile, the statement "my room is as cold as Antarctica" identifies "cold" as a characteristic that both the room and Antarctica possess. However, the majority of similes do not state the connection explicitly, enabling readers to guess what the two things have in common. "My room feels like Antarctica," an open simile that leaves the shared quality of being frigid implied, expresses the same comparison.

### **Function of Simile**

The most crucial role of a simile is to create vivid mental images through comparisons, to provide better understanding of objects, people, and ideas by suggestive association, or to clarify abstract, difficult concepts using straightforward, tangible imagery. A simile must adhere to the following four requirements: 1) It contains comparative words like "like," "as," or "as if," among

others. 2) When comparing, there should be two components: the primary phrase (tenor) and the secondary term (vehicle). 3) There must be a significant contrast between the two items. 4) At least one quality should be the same in the two items.

### **Contextual Meaning**

According to Skelac and Jandrić (2020), contextual meaning refers to a word's significance in relation to the context in which it is employed. Various circumstances convey many meanings. Crystal adds that the information transmitted about the type of use a linguistic unit has in its social setting is likewise classified as contextual meaning. According to Cheng, et. al. (2019), context refers to the function that words and objects serve as signifiers. It is possible to assert that textual context has significance. According to the justification provided, the contextual meaning of a word is its meaning in relation to the context in which it is employed. A sentence's meaning might vary depending on the context.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is conducted in the framework of the qualitative method since the data of this study are in the form of words rather than the number. According to Mohajan (2018), “Qualitative research is descriptive”. It means that qualitative research is often used to describe the characteristics of a particular group, situation, or phenomenon (Doyle, et. al., 2020). It provides a detailed account of the experiences and perspectives of the research object. Thus, the result of the research contained quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation.

In collecting the data, the researchers use the script of the songs as the data sources in conducting this research, and the

researchers themselves as the main instrument. The sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary sources are fifteen songs by Taylor Swift. The secondary sources are some other books or articles related to the title found on the internet for helping the researchers conduct this study.

The researchers apply the descriptive method in analyzing the data. Miles and Huberman (2007) explain that analysis is conducted using the following steps:

1. Data Reduction. Data reduction involves summarizing and identifying the key components related to the study problem. Then, the data is organized systematically to characterize and facilitate data searching in the event that it is no longer required. The researchers will choose their focuses and abstract the data in a field note as part of the data reduction procedure. When conducting research, the data is reduced.
2. Data Display. Data display is utilized to understand the full description of the outcome. This approach is used to arrange the data, description, or narration in order to derive conclusions as the second step in data analysis.
3. Conclusion and verification. Conclusions are reached at the end of the investigation. The researchers gathered the information and develop their interpretation.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section deals the with findings of the study to explore and explain the simile in Taylor Swift’s Songs. The analysis is carried out using the steps proposed by Miles and Huberman (2007). The object of this research is fifteen songs from six albums produced by Taylor Swift. The researchers purposively picked those fifteen

songs to be researched as those songs contain lyrics with similes. Those albums are *Tim McGraw* (2006), *Fearless* (2009), *Speak Now* (2010), *Red* (2012), *1989* (2014), and *Reputation* (2017). The object of this study is summarized in the table below.

**Table 1.** The object of The Study (Swift’s Songs with Similes in The Lyrics)

No	Albums	Songs
1	<i>Tim McGraw</i> (2006)	1. Tim McGraw
2	<i>Fearless</i> (2009)	2. <i>Tell Me Why</i>
3	<i>Speak Now</i> (2010)	3. Sparks Fly 4. Speak Now 5. Mean
4	<i>Red</i> (2012)	6. Red 7. Holy Ground
5	<i>1989</i> (2014)	8. Blank Space 9. Bad Blood 10. How You Get the Girl, 11. Clean 12. New Romantics
6	<i>Reputation</i> (2017)	13. King of My Heart 14. Call It What You Want 15. I Did Something Bad.

Having selected fifteen songs containing some similes, in this section the simile is displayed. The data are categorized into two types of similes. Those are open similes and closed similes. The first type of simile is the open simile. After selecting the songs, the researchers collected the data that use open similes. There are twenty-five open similes. The following is a song that the lyrics use the open simile:

**Table 2.** Open Similes in Swift’s Songs

Song	Lyric with Simile
Tim McGraw (2006)	1. <i>“The moon like a spotlight on the lake”</i>
Tell Me Why (2009)	2. <i>“And I need you like a heartbeat”</i>
Sparks Fly (2010)	3. <i>“The way you move is like a full-on rainstorm”</i>
Speak Now (2010)	4. <i>“A song that sounds like a death march”</i>
Speak Now (2010)	5. <i>“She floats down the aisle like a pageant Queen”</i>
Mean (2010)	6. <i>“You, with your words like knives”</i>
Mean (2010)	7. <i>“You, with your voice like nails on a chalkboard”</i>
Red (2012)	8. <i>“Loving him is like driving a new Maserati down a dead-end street”</i>
Red (2012)	9. <i>“Once you’re already flying through the free fall like the colors in autumn”</i>
Red (2012)	10. <i>“Losing him was blue like I’d never known”</i>
Holly Ground (2012)	11. <i>“Back when you fit in my poems like a perfect rhyme”</i>
Holly Ground (2012)	12. <i>“Spinning like a girl in a brand-new dress”</i>
Blank Space (2014)	13. <i>“You look like my next mistake”</i>
Blank Space (2014)	14. <i>“I can read you like a magazine”</i>
How You Get the Girl (2014)	15. <i>“Stand there like a ghost”</i>
Clean (2014)	16. <i>“You’re still all over me like a wine-stained dress”</i>
Clean (2014)	17. <i>“And every day is like a battle”</i>
New Romantics (2014)	18. <i>“But every night with us is like a dream”</i>
King of My Heart (2017)	19. <i>“Now you try on callin’ me, baby, like tryin’ on clothes”</i>
King of My Heart (2017)	20. <i>“And you move to me like I’m a Motown beat”</i>

Call It What You Want (2017)	21. <i>“My baby’s fit like a daydream”</i>
Call It What You Want (2017)	22. <i>“My baby’s fly like a jet stream”</i>
Call It What You Want (2017)	23. <i>“Loves me like I’m brand new”</i>
Call It What You Want (2017)	24. <i>“All the jokers dressin’ up as kings”</i>
I Did Something Bad (2017)	25. <i>“So, I play ‘em like a violin”</i>

The second type of simile is the closed simile. After selecting the songs, the researchers collected the data that use closed similes. There are three closed similes. The following is a song that the lyrics use the closed similes.

**Table 3.** Closed Similes in Swift’s Songs

Song	Lyric with Simile
Speak Now (2010)	1. <i>“Wearing a gown shaped like a pastry”</i>
Bad Blood (2014)	2. <i>“Salt in the wound like you’re laughing right at me”</i>
Clean (2014)	3. <i>“And the sky turned black like a perfect storm”</i>

After summarizing and separating the data in the previous steps, the data are described and interpreted by the researchers to reveal the function and contextual meaning of similes that are used.

1. *“The moon like a spotlight on the lake”* (Tim McGraw – 2006).

The function of this simile is this expression is shown the feeling by the singer. Through this song the singer has feel so happy when she remembered the moment with the boy she loves. The contextual meaning of this simile is through this song the singer expresses the situation that she was there when the reflection of the moon is bright and intense beam of light directly on the lake when you think happiness.

2. *“And I need you like a heartbeat”* (Tell Me Why – 2009).

The function of this simile is this expression is included because the author presupposes himself to need her boyfriend like a heartbeat. The contextual meaning of this simile is she was felt in difficult circumstances because she can't a heartbeat away from her boyfriend because she needs and loves him even though her boyfriend temporarily hurt her.

3. *“The way you move is like a full-on rainstorm”* (Sparks Fly – 2010).

The function of this simile is this expression is this song uses simile by comparing the boy like a full-on rainstorm when he moves. The contextual meaning of this simile is the author was felt that the boy acts suddenly and rashly like a full-on rainstorm and the girl still has a hope in the life and wants to meet again.

4. *“A song that sounds like a death march”* (Speak Now – 2010).

The function of this simile is this song uses simile by comparing a song that sounds like a death march. The contextual meaning of this simile is through this song the author expresses her feeling that she was listening a slow music, solemn march in funeral procession when she was in wedding procession.

5. *“She floats down the aisle like a pageant queen”* (Speak Now – 2010).

The function of this simile is this expression compared the woman floats down the aisle like a pageant queen. The contextual meaning of this simile is the author expresses the woman moved slowly a passage between rows of seats in a church like a beauty contest.

6. *“You, with your words like knives”* (Mean – 2010).

The function of this simile is this song uses the simile by comparing the words and the knives. The contextual meaning of this simile is that is oversimplified her sad feeling that the author feels so bad with sharp words aimed like knives, to say or do something unkind and feel even more unhappy.

7. *“You, with your voice like nails on a chalkboard”* (Mean – 2010).

The function of this simile is this song uses the simile by comparing the voice and the nails. The contextual meaning of this simile is it's conveying the emotion feeling by the author that increasing and overflowing as much the voice, to say something that is right to express the opinion and influence decisions.

8. *“Loving him is like driving a new Maserati down a dead-end street”* (Red – 2012).

The function of this simile is this expression shows the feeling by the author is in falling in love situation. The contextual meaning of this simile is she was so happy in her life, so she conveyed herself like driving a new Maserati means the Italian luxury car.

9. *“Once you're already flying through the free fall like the colors in autumn”* (Red – 2012).

The function of this simile is it uses the simile to convey the feeling by author as she was trying to reassure something good in her life. The contextual meaning of this simile is the time in someone's life that a sudden drop in the value of something that cannot stop but still fight about the dreams and believe that could reach it.

10. *“Losing him was blue like I'd never known”* (Red – 2012).

The function of this simile is this expression this expression using a simile to

conveyed the feeling by the author. The contextual meaning of this simile is she cannot breathe easily and be sad that she has been lost someone she loves. So, he comparing to show that it is her own feeling.

11. *“Back when you fit in my poems like a perfect rhyme”* (Holly Ground – 2012).

The function of this simile is this expression is about author feeling too certain someone she is awesome. The contextual meaning of this simile is the author used to convey about her feeling to someone that she awesome when in Holy Ground when she met someone in that place. She was trying to always be there for that someone so that the author carefully chosen for the images and ideas and a piece of writing like perfect particular rhythmic to ideas her suggested to remembered the moment.

12. *“Spinning like a girl in a brand-new dress”* (Holly Ground – 2012).

The function of this simile is this expression uses the simile by comparing the spinning and brand-new dress. The contextual meaning of this simile is the author conveyed her journey of love so big and wide like brand-new dress that completely new, especially not yet used by another just she only has and spinning very fast without moving forward so happy to enjoy the atmosphere.

13. *“You look like my next mistake”* (Blank Space – 2014).

The function of this simile is the look is like a reflection of her life story with her previous ex-boyfriend. The contextual meaning of this simile is this expression shows courage. The writer has passion in life and tries to hold it. So, she won't let someone else's next mistake becomes a reflection of her relationship before it ends.

14. *“I can read you like a magazine”* (Blank Space – 2014).

The function of this simile is the author compares a person to such a magazine. The contextual meaning of this simile is she presupposes that magazine is used to read and provide information so that the author uses them to convey her feelings which can read someone, understand the situation someone's intentions that appear on paper.

15. *“Stand there like a ghost”* (How You Get the Girl – 2014).

The function of this simile is she revealing by comparing someone stand as a ghost to do things she won't. The contextual meaning of this simile is this expression is shown that the author is in a difficult situation, seems appearing as a pale, almost transparent form.

16. *“You're still all over me like a wine-stained dress”* (Clean – 2014).

The function of this simile is this expression is shown his broke feeling. The contextual meaning of this simile is the author was trying to receive the things she couldn't. Through this song the author wants to show that the sadness because someone that loves make the author cannot move on from that someone.

17. *“And every day is like a battle”* (Clean – 2014).

The function of this simile is this expression is to conveying someone's feeling to a certain boy she loves. She compared it like day and a battle. The contextual meaning of this simile is the day and a battle is if something changes (from) day to day, it changes often and try hard to change the situation.

18. *“But every night with us is like a dream”* (New Romantics – 2014).

The function of this simile is it uses the simile to convey the feeling by authors as

she was trying to reassure something good in her life. The contextual meaning of this simile is she still fights about the dreams and believe that she could reach her relationship with someone who loved.

19. *"Now you try on callin' me, baby, like tryin' on clothes"* (King of My Heart – 2017).

The function of this simile is the author comparing by exaggerating like tryin' on clothes to keep you warm, to be comfortable, or for the way it makes you look ask a question to going back together in a relationship again. The contextual meaning of this simile is this expression is about the feeling that when it's over they will revived and certainly will back again.

20. *"And you move to me like I'm a Motown beat"* (King of My Heart – 2017).

The function of this simile is she conveyed herself like a Motown beat. The contextual meaning of this simile is it's a type of popular music that was produced by an American record company based in Detroit in the 1960s and 70s. It oversimplified her happiness is like the Motown beat when they are taking together. So, this expression shows the feeling by the author that she was so happy in her life.

21. *"My baby's fit like a daydream"* (Call It What You Want – 2017).

The function of this simile is it uses simile to conveying the expression of the author that has a special someone. The contextual meaning of this simile is she exaggerated her special someone such a daydream because has not yet begun to walk or talk with her because it is likely seeming like delusion.

22. *"My baby's fly like a jet stream"* (Call It What You Want – 2017).

The function of this simile is it uses simile to conveying the expression of the

author that has a special someone. The contextual meaning of this simile is she exaggerated her special someone such a jet stream because it isa narrow current of strong winds high above the earth that move from west to east on high above.

23. *"Loves me like I'm brand new"* (Call It What You Want – 2017).

The function of this simile is it is using simile by comparing the feeling of the author such it I'm brand new. The contextual meaning of this simile is that is oversimplified her happy feeling that she felt recently created or having started to exist recently, and falling in love to someone else.

24. *"All the jokers dressin' up as kings"* (Call It What You Want – 2017).

The function of this simile is this song uses the similes by comparing the jokers and the kings dressin' up. The contextual meaning of this simile is it's shown that the jokers are always has done something that annoys in the city but to be the best or most successful in the middle felt when falling in love.

25. *"So, I play 'em like a violin"* (I Did Something Bad – 2017).

The function of this simile is the author still plays the relationship like a violin the neck and played by moving a bow across the strings in a relationship. The contextual meaning of this simile is this expression is shown her broke feeling. She was trying to receive the things she couldn't. Through this song the author won't to stop to playing something bad in her relationship because she had lied to from whom she loved.

26. *"Wearing a gown shaped like a pastry"* (Speak Now – 2010).

The function of this simile is this expression compared a gown and a pastry. A gown and a pastry look shaped that



means having a particular shape or form. The contextual meaning of this simile is through the song the author conveying that she stays and do not want to move. Because she wants to stay in that place and be hopeful, she was there in front of someone who she loves, hat wedding immediately.

27. *“Salt in the wound like you’re laughing right at me”* (Bad Blood – 2014).

The function of this simile is this expression compared the wound and the laugh. The contextual meaning of this simile is when she has the wound that who puts salt over there it makes the wound hurts more. Same with someone is laughing at somebody else that makes somebody else be hurting, resentful. The same felt is hurt. Trough the song the author conveying that she is hurt with someone, because the someone had betrayed her and happy of sadness from her.

28. *“And the sky turned black like a perfect storm”* (Clean – 2014).

The function of this simile is this expression compared the sky and a storm. The sky and a storm look black that means having the darkest color there is. The contextual meaning of this simile is through the song the author conveying that she cannot move on from ex-boyfriend when of a very dark night. Because she had tried to stopped to remember her boyfriend but she couldn’t. The situation is same an extreme weather condition with very strong wind, heavy rain, and often thunder and lightning on the sky turn black that is the condition of her.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation of this research, the researchers conclude that there are some similes used in Taylor Swift’s songs. It found in two types that is open and closed according to the definition of simile stated by Beardsley (1981:136). The

researchers find that twenty-five similes used open and three similes used closed in fifteen songs by Taylor Swift. Similes used open are dominant that similes used closed.

The similes are used to make the song more imaginable and meaningful. Similes can be found in everywhere such in language, literature and music. It is interesting because the simile can make our language more descriptive and enjoyable. So, the use of simile is better in order to make it sense more meaningful, imagine and obviously.

The most important function of simile is to draw sharp pictures in the mind through comparisons, to give deeper insight into things, person, and ideas trough suggestive association, or to explain abstract, complicated ideas in simple concrete imagery. And last but not least is the contextual meaning is the meaning of the words according to the situation in which they are used. Different situation may give different meaning in a sentence.

The researchers would like to recommend some suggestions to be considered as follow: Simile is an important part that we must understand in songs. Not just in song, simile can also find in daily conversation and in literary work. In using simile, we need to consider with the situation and context. It’s better to use, as it should be so the people will not be offended but should make comfortable sense. Hopefully, this research can be useful for the further studies that related on this topic as the reference for their study.

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