

EXPRESSING FAILURE OF LOVE WITH REFERENCE TO SONG LYRIC  
BY NIKI ZEFANYA'S NICOLE ALBUM

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**ABSTRACT**

This study entitled Expressing Failure of Love with Reference to Song Lyrics Niki Zefanya's 'Nicole' Album aims to identify hyperbole representations and analyze the meaning. The data were taken from all songs in an album of Niki Zefanya's album namely 'Nicole'. The song lyrics were taken from Genius website. This study applied the documentation method and note-taking technique. The lyrics of the song were selected into those that represent hyperbole. This study was analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods to examine the data. The theories applied in this study were the theory of figurative language by Knickerbocker and Reninger, hyperbole forms by Claridge, and the theory of meaning by Leech. The analysis was presented informally. The analysis used descriptive analysis written in paragraph form. This study focused on finding three out of seven forms of hyperbole, those are single word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, and clausal hyperbole, and also focused on thematic meaning. The result of the study shows that there are representations of hyperbole and also found gradations in the severity of Niki's failure of love between all the songs in the album. Expression of failure of love can be divided into tender, ordinary, and harsh.

**Keywords:** failure of love; figurative language; hyperbole; meaning; Niki Zefanya; song lyrics

**INTRODUCTION**

Hyperbole is a type of figurative language with statements that are often exaggerated (Rani & Refnaldi, 2020). The main purpose of hyperbole is to make something bigger or smaller to create a more dramatic or powerful impression. According to Reaske (1966:34), hyperbole is a figure of speech which employs exaggeration. It uses words to illustrate something, which causes an overreaction. Sometimes it is used for comedic purposes and also serious purposes.

The use of hyperbole in literary works can be in the form of verbal or non-verbal communication. Verbal hyperbole can be seen in the characters who have dialogue in the film. Apart from that, hyperbole can also be in non-

verbal form, namely in the song lyrics. Lyrics have the function to convey the writer's feelings and ideas. To create interesting and artistic songs, attractive language is needed. According to Claridge (2011), hyperbole can make things appear more important, more frightening, or more desirable, thus arousing specific attitudes and feelings. The variety of hyperbole forms helps the songwriter to create lyrics.

Songs have very diverse themes. One of them is about love. There are various types of love, there is love at first sight, there is passionate love and there is also love failure. Failure of love is a painful phase that most people have experienced, where someone experiences the end of a relationship with their partner. Breaking up love in psychology is a

very painful thing, whether the couple has been in a long or short relationship. Apart from the end of a relationship, love failure can also be seen in how someone is in a relationship, but they don't feel happy when they are in that relationship, as if they are forcing them to stay together.

There are some previous studies related to figurative language and meaning. An international article from Ogli and Erkinovna (2022) contrasts the English and Uzbek languages, this study seeks to identify and categorize hyperbole in both languages. On the other hand, Septiadewi and Pratiwi (2023), study objectives were to analyze several words, phrases, and clauses in the 'Mockingbird' song sung by Eminem (2004) which have denotative and connotative meanings and find the relation between the meaning found to the context of the singer's real life. Meanwhile, Nurhusnaini (2020) investigates the meaning of hyperbolic expression and describes how it was used in Jokowi's political speech. Khairunnisa Al-Izzati (2023) and Ekawati (2016), classify the types of hyperbole attached to the data but they have different data sources, the first one is the Jollibee advertisement on Instagram and the second one is the lyrics of love songs by Bruno Mars.

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), hyperbole is an exaggeration of the importance of a word or event, while understatement refers to downplaying the importance. Both are types of figurative language that are used to add emphasis and evoke a feeling. Imagery is another type of figurative language that is directly linked to the senses and uses description to appeal to our senses. Claridge (2011), stated there are seven forms of hyperboles, those are single word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, clausal hyperbole, numerical hyperbole, the role of superlative, comparison, and repetition.

The present research focused on finding three out of seven forms of hyperbole represented in song lyrics based on the Claridge (2011) theory, those are single word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, and clausal hyperbole. This study centered on thematic meaning because the theme of the album focused on the failure of love. The data is taken from all songs in Niki Zefanya's 'Nicole' album. The purpose of this

study is to identify the representations of hyperbole and analyze the meaning in the song lyrics of Niki Zefanya's Nicole Album. The song lyrics applied type figurative language in her album called 'Nicole' and the focus of this study is hyperbole. There are also three gradations in the severity of Niki's failure of love between all the songs in the album. This level is based on how someone conveys their feelings and has had a broken heart due to various causes. The statement through hyperbole has a different meaning from the literal meaning, hence the meaning of the hyperbolic expression is analyzed with thematic meaning.

## **METHOD**

This research utilized qualitative descriptive research. The data were taken from twelve songs in Niki Zefanya's album 'Nicole'. Those were Anaheim, Autumn, Backburner, Before, Facebook Friends, High School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, Milk Teeth, Ocean and Engines, On the Drive Home, Take a Chance with Me, and The Apartment We Won't Share. The lyrics of the songs were taken from the Genius website (<https://genius.com/>). During the process of conducting the study, the data were collected using the documentation method and the note-taking technique. All the songs on Nicole's album were listened to, and the lyrics were read in full to select the lines of the lyrics that contained hyperbole, dividing them into notes for each song. Then, the selected lyrics were analyzed for thematic meaning because the theme of the album was the failure of love; therefore, there were three gradations of it: tender failure of love, ordinary failure of love, and harsh failure of love.

Since this study used non-numerical data, the descriptive qualitative method was employed to examine the data. The data in this study were analyzed with systematic description to identify the representation of hyperbole used in the song lyrics in Nicole's album by Niki Zefanya, applying three out of seven forms of hyperbole: single word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, and clausal hyperbole, based on Claridge's theory (2011). Additionally, the thematic meanings of the hyperbole implied in the songs were explained using Leech's theory (1981) because the theme

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of the album was the failure of love, with its three gradations: tender failure of love, ordinary failure of love, and harsh failure of love.

### DISCUSSION

In this section explained twelve data analysed in this study. Each datum utilized form of hyperbole and thematic meaning.

#### Datum 1

Song title : Anaheim

Lyrics : Cause I have yet to learn how not to be his, this city will surely **burn**

It contains a single word hyperbole because the word 'burn' exaggerates about how the event of the stage of love life would be happen. In the reality the city would not 'burn' just because the woman fails in her love life. The woman uses the word 'burn' to emphasize what will happen to the city if they keep their relationship. The word 'burn' here gives an excessive description of the woman's feelings and represented a harsh failure of love. The woman stated that her feelings as the city would really burn or could be said as 'lose' in tender or 'fade' in ordinary, if they continued to insist on keep their relationship

#### Datum 2

Song title : Autumn

Lyrics : I ripped my heart out and put it in your hands

This line is clausal hyperbole. The woman saying "ripped" her heart out and placed it in the man's hands, which means she wants to tell how deep her feelings are to him. She also says 'put it in your hand', which means she really believed that the man will take care of her feelings. It's a dramatic way of expressing deep love, trust, and vulnerability. It can imply a sense of trust, devotion, or commitment in a relationship.

The woman here wanted to show her harsh failure of love because the lines 'I ripped my heart out and put it in your hands' it seems a violent thing, she conveys how she really believed the man to take care of her heart. If compared to the tender failure of love, the lines would be 'I believe in you with all my heart', in this statement have the same energy because they express how much she believed the man.

#### Datum 3

Song title : Before

Lyrics : Before I fly back to my **death**

This part of lyrics contains single word hyperbole. The 'death' represents a place where she came from and had to part with the man she loved. It means that in this case to emphasize implied the woman's feeling of dread or heaviness associated with returning to a less desirable situation or circumstance, being apart from the man. If compared to the tender failure of love, the word 'death' could be her 'home' if the woman doesn't feel hurt to be apart from the man. Meanwhile, for the ordinary failure of love, the woman could say 'death' as 'far away' because she had to separate because of some problem with the man.

#### Datum 4

Song title : Backburner

Lyrics : 'Cause I don't feel alive 'til I'm burnin' on your backburner

It contains clausal hyperbole because it has excessive statements. The woman was used to be a backburner, she states that she doesn't feel alive if the man stops considering her as his backburner. This is a kind of harsh failure of love because the woman seems really desperate until she feels it wasn't a problem to be treated as someone's mistress. The woman even stated that she would not live if the man stopped making her as his second choice. As a backburner, people tend would feel vitality or meaning only when they are used as a second choice because they are used to being treated that way. This implies that they thrive on the attention or recognition they receive when they are not the primary focus of other people's affection or interest. Basically, she feels most alive or relevant when they are the 'backup' by someone else.

#### Datum 5

Song title : Facebook Friends

Lyrics : And most nights, I don't feel like a half

This line has a clausal hyperbolic expression, 'most nights, I don't feel like a half' It emphasizes the woman feels incomplete because lost her past lover. This is a kind of ordinary failure of love because if someone breaks up usually they would lose some part of their life, because previously there was someone who accompanied them every day and night, meanwhile after break up that habit disappeared along with the past lover.

#### Datum 6

Song title : High School in Jakarta

Lyrics : I had a **heart attack**

This line contains phrasal hyperbole. The phrase 'heart attack' is an exaggerated expression that includes in harsh failure of love. She wanted to convey that she was really shocked at that time until feels like she had heart disease. The phrase 'heart attack' was didn't really happen. It expresses her feeling of intense shock or surprise rather than a literal medical event. In the tender failure of love, the woman could say she was 'shocked' instead of 'heart attack'.

**Datum 7**

Song title : Keeping Tabs

Lyrics : I ball a fist and die inside

This line contains clausal hyperbole. It exaggerates the intensity of the woman's emotional pain by implying 'I ball a fist' this action is often associated with feelings of anger, frustration, or tension. This expression shows that the woman is feeling emotional or depressed until the woman is physically collapsing inwardly. The woman wanted to convey her intense emotional distress or frustration after the man she loved left her.

This is a kind of the harsh failure of love because the woman used the phrase 'die inside' and it could mean that the woman feels empty and hopeless. She expressed how the impact for her after the man left her without any explanation. In the tender failure of love, the woman would probably say 'feel empty' after her man left her, rather than saying 'die inside' because the word 'die' means violent and it's the end of her life.

**Datum 8**

Song title : Milk Teeth

Lyrics : Said, I stole your heart, you called me a thief

'I stole your heart, you called me a thief' in the literal meaning, the line has meaning the woman stole the man's heart out of his body. However, this line expressed the man's told the woman he belongs to her but instead of being appreciated the woman, she accused of being a thief. It describes the dynamics of a relationship between two people where the woman feels she won the man's heart, while the other person feels that the feelings or relationship are unwanted.

Thus, this line is the harsh failure of love because the woman feels dumped by the man

she loved by calling her a thief, this shows that the man feels that her action is unwanted or inappropriate. In tender failure of love, the man would not say the woman as 'the thief', meanwhile he probably would called the woman 'taker' because she could get his heart even though she was called a taker without permission.

**Datum 9**

Song title : Ocean and Engines

Lyrics : I have so many questions but I'm pouring them into the ocean

'I have so many questions but I'm pouring them into the ocean' These two lines are clausal hyperbole because in literal a 'question' has no form and she talks like all her questions are shaped like water and pouring them into the ocean. Thus, the lines is ordinary failure of love because the statement wanted to expressing how the woman decided to restrain herself from asking the questions that were inside her because their relationship had ended.

**Datum 10**

Song title : On the Drive Home

Lyrics : And we'll be two pieces of driftwood Floating in a sea of missed calls and excuses

These two lines are clausal hyperbole. 'We'll be two pieces of driftwood' this statement is an impossible thing that could happens in literal. There is no way a human can be a driftwood. Driftwood refers to pieces of wood that have been washed ashore by the sea or a river. The woman wants to express how they ended up being two pieces of driftwood feeling adrift, disconnected, and lost.

'Floating in a sea' describes the feeling of emptiness and uncertainty in their relationship. "Missed calls" indicate an inability or inattention to communicate, while "excuses" indicate an inability to deal with problems or low engagement. Both of these things cause the relationship to feel disconnected and directionless. Thus, this is a kind of harsh failure of love because the woman exaggerates brutally how they feel isolated and disconnected, with their relationship on the verge of collapse due to lack of communication and inability to overcome problems.

**Datum 11**

Song title : Take a Chance with Me

Lyrics : His laugh you'd die for

This line contains single word hyperbole. The use of the single word 'die' shows the depth of the woman's emotion for the man. The single-word hyperbole with the word 'die' exaggerates the emotion that the woman feels. It emphasizes her deep admiration for the man she loves. The woman says that the man's laugh is so delightful or infectious that it's worth sacrificing her life for. In tender love failure, the woman would say she would 'pounding' if heard the man's laugh and she would 'melting' if it was the ordinary love failures.

#### **Datum 12**

Song title : The Apartment We Won't Share

Lyrics : The daughter we won't raise still waits for you

This line suggests a hyperbolic expression where the daughter that won't exist is depicted bittersweet sentiment. It implies that their 'daughter' is their 'dream' and will not be raised due to the circumstances the man left the woman. This expression describes their hopes or plans, but these plans will not come true. Their shared dreams or aspirations to always be together will not be achieved.

This is a kind of harsh failure of love because the woman really shows how much she loves the man the woman still has feelings of waiting or longing. Even though they are already broken up, the woman still has the impression that she misses the man. This shows that the emotional bond or relationship between the woman and the man is still ongoing, even though the shared dream does not come true.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, the following points can be drawn as conclusions. Niki Zefanya applied type figurative language in her album called 'Nicole' and the focus of this study is hyperbole. The selected forms of hyperboles for this study are single word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, and clausal hyperbole. There are also found gradations in the severity of Niki's failure of love between all the songs in the album. Expression of failure of love can be divided into tender, ordinary, and harsh. This level is based on how someone conveys their feelings and has had a broken heart due to various causes. The gradation of

failure of love has found in hyperbole expression in the song lyrics. Also, the statement through hyperbole has a different meaning from the literal meaning, hence the meaning of the hyperbolic expression is analyzed with thematic meaning, theory by Leech (1981).

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