Figurative Language in Song Lyrics of The Album "The Record" By Boygenius

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Abstract. This study aims to identify and analyze the types of figurative language found in the song lyrics of Boygenius's album "The Record." The research specifically seeks to determine the various figurative language devices present in selected tracks and to interpret the meanings behind these expressions using Leech's theory of meaning. By focusing on figurative language, the study aims to enhance the understanding of how artistic language in indie music conveys complex emotions and themes, enriching both literary appreciation and linguistic analysis. The data source for this research consists of the lyrics from four selected songs: "Emily I'm Sorry," "True Blue," "Cool About It," and "Not Strong Enough" from Boygenius's album "The Record." Data collection was conducted through an observation and note-taking technique: the researcher listened to the songs on Spotify and obtained the lyrics from www.genius.com. The method of analysis employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with the researcher identifying and categorizing instances of figurative language in the lyrics. The study was guided by the framework of Knickerbocker and Reninger for figurative language types and Leech's theory for interpreting the meanings, which include conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic meanings. The study's results revealed a total of 36 instances of figurative language across the selected songs, encompassing similes, metaphors, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox. Of these, 36 examples were analyzed in detail to explore their meanings. The findings demonstrate that Boygenius's lyrics utilize a diverse range of figurative language, each contributing to the emotional depth and artistic resonance of the songs. The analysis also showed that all seven types of meaning proposed by Leech are present in the lyrics, highlighting the complexity and richness of figurative expression in contemporary indie music.

Keywords: Boygenius, Figurative Language, Meaning, Song Lyrics, The Record

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans need communication to share meanings, and one way they achieve this is through language. Language serves as the most effective tool for conveying messages, thoughts, feelings, and goals, facilitating understanding among individuals. Language plays a crucial role in how humans interact in daily life, allowing us to share and express ideas through spoken and written forms. Depending on the context, we can communicate both directly and indirectly. One of the coolest things about language is how we use figurative language. This includes phrases that don't mean exactly what they say but instead add creativity and depth to our communication. It helps us express complicated ideas and feelings, especially in books and stories, where it can create strong images and connect with readers on a personal level. By using figurative language, we make our conversations richer and better connect with what others are thinking and feeling. This concept relates to semantics, which is the study of how language conveys ideas. When we look at linguistic semantics, we explore how the words we select help us express and structure our deeper thoughts. (Kreidler, 2002). Figurative language, such as metaphors and idioms, is often derived from more Complex structures than seemingly

simple literal expressions. Moreover, figurative language employs the same linguistic and pragmatic operations as ordinary literal language. (Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001). In contemporary society, many people enjoy listening to songs, a medium that effectively channels and expresses our emotions. (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018) Explain, music is an art form that combines singing and instrumental performance, allowing us to articulate our feelings in a nuanced and impactful way. Thus, figurative language in song lyrics enhances the emotional resonance of the music, demonstrating how both forms of communication share a common purpose to express complex human experiences.

According to Fatikha & Masykuroh (2022), authors often utilize song lyrics as a means of expressing a wide range of emotions and ideas, making them a significant literary form. Creates aspects of beauty to effectively convey the author's message. Song lyrics present a unique form, encompassing various elements such as the use of beautiful words and wordplay with deep meaning. These lyrics often incorporate imaginative language to engage and attract music listeners. One of the most popular music genres among young people today is indie, which resonates deeply with listeners for its authenticity and emotional honesty. According to a review of figurative language in contemporary music, "Indie music is especially popular among young people because it often expresses emotions and experiences that are relatable to their daily lives". This genre's appeal is further amplified by its frequent use of figurative language such as metaphor, simile, and irony, which allows artists to communicate complex feelings and ideas in a way that feels personal and genuine (Mangaraja et al., 2023).

Indie rock, derived from the term "independent" is a music genre that emerged in the mid-1980s. It is characterized by catchy pop melodies, loud, distorted guitars, and driving rhythms. This genre encompasses various subgenres, including post-hardcore, college rock, noise rock, lo-fi, emo, and riot grrrl. Indie rock embodies a DIY ethos, emphasizing independence from major record labels and commercial influences. Its peak period, roughly from 1986 to 1996, significantly impacted the music scene (Press, 2014). Indie music refers to music produced outside the influence of large commercial record labels, with artists often self-producing, self-releasing, or collaborating with smaller independent labels (Hibbett, 2005). The unifying factor among indie artists is the prioritization of creativity and authenticity over commercial success. Boygenius is an ideal subject for academic analysis because their collaborative songwriting showcases a unique interplay of multiple voices and perspectives, enriching the lyrical and emotional complexity of their work. Each member, Phoebe Bridgers, Julien Baker, and Lucy Dacus, brings a distinct narrative style and personal history, resulting in songs that are layered with nuanced figurative language and diverse thematic content. This

collaborative dynamic allows for a deeper exploration of identity, vulnerability, and interpersonal relationships, making their music a rich text for studies in literary devices, gender, and modern youth culture (Wald, 2023, p. 2*).* Boygenius, a supergroup that debuted in 2018, their songs are renowned for featuring rich figurative language. Their lyrics serve as a form of expression that employs various figurative types, which can be challenging for some listeners to interpret due to the implicit meanings and metaphors involved. "The Record" album is a significant choice for academic analysis because it marks Boygenius's first full-length studio album, representing a culmination of their collaborative artistry and lyrical evolution. The album has received widespread critical acclaim for its emotional depth, thematic cohesion, and innovative use of figurative language (Pitchfork, 2023). As noted by music scholars, "the record showcases the trio's ability to intertwine personal narrative and poetic devices, making it a rich text for literary and linguistic study". The album's impact on both indie music and youth culture further justifies its selection as a focal point for examining contemporary songwriting techniques.

One of the key reasons for selecting these four songs from the twelve tracks on the record is their popularity and impact, as evidenced by streaming data and critical reception. According to Spotify and other streaming platforms, "Not Strong Enough," "Cool About It," "Emily I'm Sorry," and "True Blue" are consistently the most played and most discussed tracks from the album. For example, as of April 2024, "Not Strong Enough" had surpassed 70 million streams on Spotify, making it the album's breakout single and a viral hit among both fans and critics (Spotify, 2024). Similarly, "Emily I'm Sorry" and "True Blue" have each garnered tens of millions of streams, and all four songs were highlighted in multiple year-end lists and critical reviews as standout tracks (Pitchfork, 2023).

These songs are also the most frequently referenced in media coverage and fan discussions, further indicating their resonance and popularity. According to Billboard, "Not Strong Enough" became Boygenius's first song to top the Billboard Adult Alternative Airplay chart, and all four tracks were promoted as singles or featured in major performances, increasing their visibility and listenership (Billboard, 2023).

This research aligns with previous studies by Taufiq & Cahyati (2022), which focused on figurative language in Taylor Swift's album "Folklore." However, this study uniquely analyzes the figurative language within Boygenius's album, delving into how these artists express feelings and emotions through their lyrics. Notably, a gap remains in comparative studies across different indie artists and genres, limiting a deeper understanding of how musicians utilize figurative language. This gap presents an opportunity to explore stylistic and

thematic variations in their use of such language and how these choices affect listener emotions and interpretations, ultimately enhancing audience engagement with the music. Additionally, it is essential to consider the cultural and contextual factors influencing the choices made by indie artists in their figurative language. Examining the interplay between lyrics and visual elements, such as music videos or narrative aspects in video games, can create a more enriching artistic experience.

In education, teaching figurative language through song lyrics can be effective at both high school and university levels. This approach helps students enhance their understanding and comprehension skills. English teachers can incorporate songs into their lessons as they tend to be engaging and enjoyable for learners. Additionally, using songs to explore figurative language not only motivates students to learn but also broadens their understanding of both language and culture. It encourages critical thinking and provides opportunities for feedback, ultimately improving students' comprehension abilities. Analyzing figurative language in song lyrics is important for improving language and literary skills. It helps broaden vocabulary and sharpens critical thinking and interpretation skills. Plus, it makes learning more engaging and relevant. When we look at figurative language through the lens of songs, we can also understand the cultural and social contexts that shape these expressions. This kind of analysis can ignite interest and motivation in learning, turning it into a more dynamic experience. Additionally, it encourages creative writing by allowing individuals to experiment with different styles of figurative language. Ultimately, exploring figurative language in music not only deepens our understanding of meaning but also fosters literacy and creativity. (Fatimah et al., 2020). This study analyzes the figurative language in Boygenius's "The Record" album, aiming to enhance the understanding of artistic expression in indie music. It explores how figurative language serves as a strong tool for conveying emotions and complex themes, possible listeners to connect deeply with the music. Moreover, this study emphasizes the artistic choices made by songwriters and how these choices elevate the overall emotional impact of the songs (Permana & Rajeg, 2018). Types like hyperbole are employed to express intense emotions, underscoring the importance of lyrical analysis in understanding how artists communicate their feelings and experiences through music, a critical aspect of appreciating the emotional depth of indie music. Subekti et al., 2023).

2. METHOD

This study examines the figurative language and meaning in the lyrics of Boygenius's album *The Record* using the theories of Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) on figurative

language and Geoffrey Leech's (1981) theory of meaning. The analysis focuses on four selected songs: "Cool About It," "True Blue," "Not Strong Enough," and "Emily I'm Sorry." Through these songs, various figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, and paradox are identified to uncover the depth of the lyrics' emotional and conceptual content. These literary devices are not merely decorative; they enrich the expressive quality of the lyrics and enhance the listener's experience. **(Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963; Leech, 1981)**

Each figurative expression in the lyrics is categorized according to Leech's seven types of meaning: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic. For instance, metaphors like "You can't help but become the sun" convey affective and connotative meanings by linking emotion to imagery. Similarly, hyperboles such as "Black hole opened in the kitchen" amplify the emotional impact and portray psychological states. Ironies and paradoxes add layers of meaning and reflect the inner turmoil or contradictions faced by the speaker, especially in the context of intimate relationships, vulnerability, and identity. **(Leech, 1981; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)**

The use of figurative language in *The Record* reflects complex emotional narratives, often oscillating between longing, confusion, and self-discovery. This lyrical richness not only elevates the artistic quality of the album but also allows listeners to connect deeply through shared human experiences. The study highlights that figurative language, when systematically analyzed, reveals not only poetic creativity but also psychological and cultural insights embedded in contemporary songwriting. **(Gibbs, 1994; McCarthy & Carter, 2004)**

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The third chapter explores the main findings of this study. The data gathered, carefully examined, and interpreted are presented in this chapter to address the issues raised in Chapter I. The outcomes are analyzed within the context of the song lyrics in the album, resulting in a thorough explanation of the findings. This chapter offers insights that may influence future studies in this area and establishes the foundation for the subsequent conclusions and suggestions.

Figurative Language and Meaning Found in Boygenius's Album "The Record"

This part presents the data collected in the album "The Record" by Boygenius, which is analyzed using the theory of Figurative Language proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger

(1963) and Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning. The songs analyzed are: (1) Cool About It, (2) True Blue, (3) Not Strong Enough, (4) Emily I'm Sorry.

Figurative Languages in and their meaning types in "Cool About it"

This section presents a detailed discussion on figurative language and the various types of meaning found in the lyrics of Boygenius's album *The Record*. Figurative language, such as simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox, plays a crucial role in enriching song lyrics by expressing ideas and emotions beyond their literal sense. Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning, which examines conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic meanings.

The lyrics of "Cool About It":

Met you at the dive bar to go shoot some pool
And make fun of the cowboys with the neck tattoos
Ask you easy questions about work and school
I'm trying to be cool about it
Feelin' like an absolute fool about it
Wishin' you were kind enough to be cruel about it
Tellin' myself I can always do without it
Knowing that it probably isn't true
I came prepared for absolution, if you'd only ask
So, I take some offense when you say, "No regrets"
I remember it's impossible to pass your test
But I'm trying to forget about it
Feelin' like I'm breaking a sweat about it
Wishin' you would kindly get out of my head about it
Tellin' myself, one day, I'll forget about it
Knowing that it probably isn't true
Once, I took your medication to know what it's like
And now I have to act like I can't read your mind
I ask you how you're doing and I let you lie
But we don't have to talk about it
I can walk you home and practice method acting
I'll pretend bein' with you doesn't feel like drowning
Tellin' you it's nice to see how good you're doing
Even though we know it isn't true

Simile Found in Song "Cool About It"

A simile is a way to compare two different things using words like "like" or "as." Writers use similes to create clear images and help readers better understand their ideas.

Data 1: *I'll pretend bein' with you doesn't feel like drowning* (Cool About It, line 27)

This simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things using the words "like" or "as". In this lyric, the phrase "doesn't feel like drowning" uses the word "like" to compare the emotional experience of being with someone to the physical sensation of drowning. The comparison is not literal the speaker is not drowning, but the feeling of being overwhelmed, suffocated, or in distress is likened to the experience of drowning. The use of "like" makes this a textbook example of a simile.

The figurative above can categorize affective meaning because, according to Leech's theory, it refers to the emotional effect or attitude that a word, phrase, or sentence conveys. It is about the feelings and emotions expressed by the speaker and evoked in the listener. In this lyric, the simile "feel like drowning" powerfully communicates the speaker's emotional state, specifically, a sense of being overwhelmed, anxious, or emotionally suffocated in the relationship.

Metaphor Found in Song "Cool About It"

A metaphor is a way to compare two things, similar to a simile, but it does so without using the words "as" or "like." It is a form of figurative language that makes a statement suggesting one thing is another, even if they are not the same.

Data 2: *"And now I have to act like I can't read your mind"* (Cool About it, line 22)

In this line, the phrase "read your mind" does not mean reading words from someone's mind as if it were a book. Instead, it figuratively means understanding or knowing what someone else is thinking or feeling without them having to say it. By using the verb "read," which is commonly associated with interpreting written text, the lyricist draws a comparison between the act of reading a book and the act of intuitively understanding another person's thoughts. This helps listeners grasp the idea of deep emotional insight or connection in a vivid and relatable way.

The phrase "And now I have to act like I can't read your mind" can be categorized as having conceptual meaning based on Leech's theory, because the metaphor "read your mind" helps the listener understand the abstract idea of intuitively knowing someone's thoughts by comparing it to the concrete act of reading.

Personification Found in Song "Cool About It"

Data 3: *"Wishin' you would kindly get out of my head about it"* (Cool About it, line 17)

The line "Wishin' you would kindly get out of my head about it" is an example of personification because it gives human qualities or abilities to a non-human subject, in this case, the speaker's thoughts or memories about someone. Normally, only a person or a living being can physically "get out" of a place. Here, the lyric treats the persistent thoughts or memories as if they are a person who can be politely asked to leave the speaker's mind.

The line "Wishin' you would kindly get out of my head about it" can be categorized as having conceptual meaning based on Leech's theory, because the personification helps the listener understand the abstract idea of persistent thoughts or memories by comparing them to a person who can physically leave the speaker's mind.

Hyperbole Found in Song "Cool About It"

Hyperbole is a way of speaking where you exaggerate things to make a point or be funny. It means saying something that isn't true but helps show how strong your feelings are.

Data 4: *"Feelin' like an absolute fool about it"* (Cool About it, line 6)

In data 4, the speaker describes the phrase "absolute fool" as an exaggeration of the speaker's feelings. No one is truly an "absolute" fool; this is an overstatement to emphasize just how embarrassed, regretful, or self-critical the speaker feels in the situation.

This line categorizes affective meaning because it expresses the intensity of the speaker's emotions, using exaggeration to help the listener feel the depth of their self-doubt and vulnerability.

Data 5: *"Feelin' like I'm breaking a sweat about it"* (Cool About it, line 16)

In this hyperbole show the phrase "breaking a sweat" is an exaggeration for feeling nervous or anxious. While the situation may be emotionally stressful, it's unlikely the speaker is sweating just from thinking about it. The line overstates the physical response to emphasize the intensity of the speaker's anxiety or discomfort.

This categorizes affective meaning because this line uses exaggeration to express and amplify the emotional turmoil the speaker is experiencing, helping the listener feel the depth of their stress.

Data 6: *"I'll pretend bein' with you doesn't feel like drowning"* (Cool About it, line 27)

In this line, the phrase "feel like drowning" is a hyperbole because it strongly exaggerates the speaker's emotional experience. The speaker is not drowning but uses this vivid image to express how overwhelming and suffocating the relationship feels emotionally. The exaggeration highlights the intensity of the speaker's distress and discomfort.

This figurative language can be categorized as affective meaning because it conveys the speaker's deep emotional turmoil and vulnerability.

Irony Found in Song "Cool About It"

Irony in language involves saying one thing while meaning another, creating a contrast between what appears to be true and what is. Essentially, it highlights the gap between perception and reality cleverly or humorously.

Data 7: *"Wishin' you were kind enough to be cruel about it"* (Cool About it, line 6)

In data 7, the speaker describes that it's ironic to wish someone would be "kind" by being "cruel." Kindness and cruelty are opposites, so the desire for a cruel act (ending things decisively) to be an act of kindness (providing clarity or closure) is inherently ironic. The speaker's wish flips expected meanings, showing how sometimes pain can be preferable to uncertainty.

This line categorizes affective meaning because this line captures the emotional contradiction and pain in wanting something that hurts. After all, it would ultimately be helpful.

Data 8: *"Tellin' you it's nice to see how good you're doing / Even though we know it isn't true"* (Cool About it, line 28-29)

In this line, the speaker says it is "nice" to see the other person doing well, but the true feeling is the opposite they know it is not nice or true. This is an example of verbal irony, where the literal words express positivity, but the speaker's real emotions are sadness, bitterness, or resentment. The contrast between what is said and what is meant highlights the emotional pain and pretense in the relationship.

This figurative language can be categorized as affective meaning because it conveys the speaker's conflicted emotions and hidden feelings.

Figurative Languages in and their meaning types in "True Blue"

This section delves into the rich world of figurative language and the diverse meanings woven into the lyrics of Boygenius's album The Record. Figurative language encompassing similes, metaphors, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox serves as a powerful tool in songwriting. It allows artists to convey complex ideas and deep emotions that transcend literal interpretations. Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning provides a framework for understanding the layers of meaning in these lyrics. His theory categorizes meaning into several types: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic.

The lyrics of "True Blue":

You said you wanted to feel alive

So we went to the beach

You were born in July '95

In a deadly heat

You say you're a winter bitch

But summer's in your blood

You can't help but become the sun

When you moved to Chicago

You were spinnin' out

When you don't know who you are

You fuck around and find out

When you called me from the train

Water freezin' in your eyes

You were happy and I wasn't surprised

And it feels good to be known so well

I can't hide from you like I hide from myself

Now you're movin' in

Breakin' a sweat on your upper lip

And gettin' pissed about humidity

And the leaky faucet

You already hurt my feelings three times

In the way only you could

But it feels good to be known so well

I can't hide from you like I hide from myself

I remember who I am when I'm with you

Your love is tough, your love is tried and true-blue

Blue

You've never done me wrong, except for that one time

That we don't talk about

Because it doesn't matter anymore

Who won the fight? I don't know

We're not keeping score

And it feels good to be known so well

I can't hide from you like I hide from myself
I remember who I am when I'm with you
Your love is tough, your love is tried and true-blue
Blue
Blue
Blue

Metaphor Found in Song "True Blue"

A metaphor is a way to compare two things, similar to a simile, but it does so without using the words "as" or "like." It is a form of figurative language that makes a statement suggesting one thing is another, even if they are not the same.

Data 9: *"You can't help but become the sun"* (True Blue, line 7)

In data 9, the speaker describes this line as a metaphor because it directly equates the person to "the sun" without using "like" or "as." The speaker suggests that the person radiates warmth, light, and positivity, much like the sun itself. It conveys the idea that this person naturally shines and brings brightness to those around them.

This line is affective in meaning because this metaphor expresses the speaker's feelings and emotional response to the person, highlighting admiration, warmth, and affection.

Data 10: *"Your love is tough, your love is tried and true-blue"* (True Blue, line 39)

This metaphor in this line, "tough" and "tried and true-blue," are metaphors for the nature of the person's love. "Tough" means strong and resilient; "tried and true-blue" means loyal, genuine, and unwavering. The phrase "true-blue" itself is a metaphor for steadfast loyalty and honesty.

Figurative language above categorizes connotative meaning because this metaphor carries connotations of trustworthiness, reliability, and deep emotional value, going beyond the literal meaning to evoke positive associations with the color blue and the phrase "true blue."

Data 11: *"Summer's in your blood"* (True Blue line 6)

"Summers in your blood" metaphorically expresses that warmth, brightness, and vitality are inseparable from the person's core being, making these qualities as natural and essential to them as their blood.

The metaphor "Summer's in your blood" is best categorized as having connotative meaning according to Leech's theory, because it relies on the emotional and associative qualities of "summer" to describe someone's character in a non-literal, figurative way.

Personification Found in Song "True Blue"

Personification is when we describe non-human things like objects, animals, or even ideas as if they have human traits or emotions.

Data 12: *"Water freezin' in your eyes"* (True Blue, line 13)

In data 12, the speaker describes that this line gives the human action of "freezing" to "water" in someone's eyes (tears). Tears cannot freeze in someone's eyes in this context; instead, it personifies the tears as if they are actively freezing, which evokes a sense of intense coldness or emotional numbness.

Based on the figurative language above this line categorize affective meaning because this personification conveys the emotional state of the person, perhaps sadness, pain, or emotional coldness, by attributing a physical, human-like action to tears.

Metonymy Found in Song "True Blue"

Metonymy is a way of using language where one word is substituted for another because the two are closely connected. It's a figure of speech where the name of one thing is used to represent something else with which it has a strong relationship.

Data 13: *"Breakin' a sweat on your upper lip"* (True Blue, line 24)

In data 13, the speaker shows that the line, "sweat" on the "upper lip" is used as a metonym for physical exertion or nervousness. Instead of saying "you're working hard" or "you're anxious," the lyric uses the physical sign ("sweat") as a stand-in for the experience or emotion.

This is categorized as connotative meaning because this metonymy conveys the feeling of effort, discomfort, or emotional tension through a physical detail, enriching the emotional landscape of the song.

Synecdoche Found in Song "True Blue"

Synecdoche is a figure of speech where a part of something represents the whole or vice versa.

Data 14: *"You were born in July '95 / In a deadly heat"* (True Blue, line 3-4)

In data 14, the speaker mentions that "July '95" and "deadly heat" are used as synecdoche. "July '95" (a specific month and year) stands for the entirety of the person's birth and early life, while "deadly heat" refers to the summer season as a whole, not just the temperature but the atmosphere and circumstances of that time.

The figurative language above is categorizing connotative meaning because this usage evokes a sense of time, place, and emotional context, using a specific part (a month, a weather condition) to represent a broader experience.

Data 15: *"Leaky faucet"* (True Blue, line 28)

This synecdoche in the line "leaky faucet" is a part of the home, but in the context of the song, it stands for the larger experience of living together and the small irritations or challenges that come with it. The mention of the faucet represents the home environment and the shared domestic life.

This is categorizing a connotative meaning because this phrase uses a small, concrete detail to evoke the larger, sometimes imperfect, reality of a shared life.

Paradox Found in Song "True Blue"

A paradox is a way of using words that combines ideas that seem to contradict each other.

Data 16: *"And it feels good to be known so well / I can't hide from you like I hide from myself"* (True Blue line 15–16)

This paradoxical speaker admits that being deeply known feels good, yet also reveals that they cannot hide from this person the way they can hide from themselves. The paradox is in the comfort and discomfort of intimacy: it is both reassuring and unsettling to be truly seen.

This is an affective meaning because this paradox expresses the complex emotions of vulnerability and comfort in a close relationship.

Hyperbole Found in Song "True Blue"

Hyperbole is a way of speaking where you exaggerate things to make a point or be funny. It means saying something that isn't true but helps show how strong your feelings are.

Data 17: *"You already hurt my feelings three times / In the way only you could"*

(True Blue, line: 30–31)

In data 17 show by saying someone has hurt your feelings "three times" in a short span, and "in the way only you could," is an exaggeration for effect. It dramatizes the emotional impact and uniqueness of the relationship, making the hurt feel bigger and more significant than a literal count

This is an affective meaning because this hyperbole expresses the speaker's intense and unique emotional response to the other person's actions, emphasizing the depth of feeling.

Data 18: *"You say you're a winter bitch / But summer's in your blood / You can't help but become the sun"*(True Blue, line 5–7)

This hyperbole in the line "becomes the sun" is an obvious exaggeration. No one can become the sun; this hyperbole is used to stress how radiant, warm, or life-giving the person feels to the speaker.

The figurative language above was connotative meaning because this hyperbole conveys the overwhelming positivity and warmth the person brings, going beyond literal meaning to evoke an emotional association.

Irony Found in Song "True Blue"

Irony in language involves saying one thing while meaning another, creating a contrast between what appears to be true and what is. Essentially, it highlights the gap between perception and reality cleverly or humorously.

Data 19: *"You've never done me wrong, except for that one time / That we don't talk about / Because it doesn't matter anymore"* (True Blue, line 40–42)

The speaker describes this as an example of verbal irony. The speaker says, "You've never done me wrong," but immediately admits there was "that one time," which they then dismiss as unimportant. The irony is that something significant did happen, but the speaker pretends it doesn't matter, downplaying its importance while drawing attention to it.

This categorizes an affective meaning because this irony expresses complex feelings about forgiveness and unresolved issues, showing both affection and lingering hurt.

Figurative Languages in and their meaning types in "Not Strong Enough"

This section explores the vibrant use of figurative language and the multiple layers of meaning embedded within the lyrics of Boygenius's album The Record. Devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox are powerful tools in songwriting, enabling artists to express complex thoughts and profound emotions that go beyond straightforward, literal language. To analyze these nuances, Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning offers a valuable framework. Leech divides meaning into several categories: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic, each illuminating different aspects of how language operates within the lyrics.

The lyrics of "Not Strong Enough":

Black hole opened in the kitchen

Every clock's a different time

It would only take the energy to fix it

I don't know why I am

The way I am

Not strong enough to be your man

I tried, I can't

Stop staring at the ceiling fan and

Spinning out about things that haven't happened

Breathing in and out

Drag racing through the canyon

Singing "Boys Don't Cry"

Do you see us getting scraped up off the pavement?

I don't know why I am

The way I am

Not strong enough to be your man

I lied, I am

Just lowering your expectations

Half a mind that keeps the other second-guessing

Close my eyes and count

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

Always an angel, never a god

I don't know why I am the way I am

There's something in the static

I think I've been having revelations

Coming to in the front seat, nearly empty

Skip the exit to our old street and go home

Go home alone

Metaphor Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

A metaphor is a way to compare two things, similar to a simile, but it does so without using the words "as" or "like." It is a form of figurative language that makes a statement suggesting one thing is another, even if they are not the same.

Data 20: *"Black hole opened in the kitchen"* (True Blue, line 1)

In data 20, the speaker shows that it is a direct metaphor. The lyric does not mean a literal black hole, but rather uses "black hole" to represent a sense of emptiness, chaos, or emotional heaviness that suddenly appears in a familiar, everyday space. It powerfully conveys the feeling of being overwhelmed by something invisible and consuming.

The figurative language above is affective meaning because this metaphor expresses the speaker's emotional state, feelings of emptiness, depression, or anxiety by comparing them to the cosmic phenomenon of a black hole.

Data 21: "Always an angel, never a god" (Not Strong Enough, line 32)

In Data 21, the speaker compares themselves to an "angel" and contrasts it with "god." This metaphor is not literal but suggests a sense of being good, supportive, or self-sacrificing ("angel") but never powerful, in control, or worshipped ("god"). It highlights feelings of inadequacy or limitation in the relationship.

This categorizes a connotative meaning because this metaphor carries connotations of purity, goodness, and limitation, suggesting the speaker feels unable to reach a higher, more commanding status.

Personification Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

Personification is when we describe non-human things like objects, animals, or even ideas as if they have human traits or emotions.

Data 22: *"There's something in the static"* (Not Strong Enough, line 35)

In data 22 shows, this line, "static" (the noise or interference on a radio or TV) is described as if it contains "something" an unknown presence, message, or feeling. This gives the static a mysterious, almost animate quality, as if it holds secrets or meaning. The static is personified as an entity capable of holding or conveying something significant.

This categorizes a connotative meaning because this personification adds emotional and interpretive depth, suggesting that even the background noise in life may be trying to communicate something to the speaker.

Data 23: *"Every clock's a different time"* (Not Strong Enough, line 2)

Here, the personification, the clocks are described as if they have individual will or agency, each "choosing" a different time. This personifies the clocks, reflecting a sense of disorder or the feeling that time is out of sync with the speaker's life.

This is connotative meaning because this line uses personification to evoke a sense of confusion, disarray, or emotional fragmentation, suggesting that even the environment mirrors the speaker's inner chaos

Synecdoche Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

Synecdoche is a figure of speech where a part of something represents the whole or vice versa.

Data 24: *"Half a mind that keeps the other second-guessing"* (Not Strong Enough, line 19)

Here, "half a mind" could be seen as using a part (half the mind) to represent the conflicted state of the whole person. While this is more metaphorical, it is the closest line in the lyrics to synecdoche, since it references a part (half a mind) to suggest the experience of the whole self.

The phrase "half a mind that keeps the other second-guessing" in the Boygenius lyric is best categorized as having connotative meaning it uses figurative language to suggest internal conflict and indecision, going beyond the literal meaning of the words.

Paradox Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

A paradox is a way of using words that combines ideas that seem to contradict each other.

Data 25: *"It's a bad idea and I'm all about it"* (Not Strong Enough, line 1)

In data 25, the speaker describes this line as paradoxical because it expresses enthusiasm for something the speaker simultaneously acknowledges as a "bad idea." The contradiction between knowing something is wrong and still wanting to pursue it creates a striking paradox, highlighting the complexity of desire and self-awareness.

Figurative language above categorizes an affective meaning because this paradox conveys the speaker's emotional conflict wanting what they know is not good for them, emphasizing the irrational side of human feelings.

Data 26: *"Not strong enough to be your man / I tried, I can't"* (Not Strong Enough, line chorus)

The paradox is that the repeated admission of not being "strong enough" to fulfill a role, despite having tried, is paradoxical because it suggests both effort and inevitable failure. The speaker's attempt to meet expectations is at odds with their inability to do so, underlining the tension between aspiration and limitation.

This categorizes affective meaning because this paradox highlights vulnerability and the pain of falling short despite genuine effort, deepening the emotional resonance of the lyrics

Hyperbole Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

Hyperbole is a way of speaking where you exaggerate things to make a point or be funny. It means saying something that isn't true but helps show how strong your feelings are.

Data 27: *"Black hole opened in the kitchen"* (Not Strong Enough, line 1)

In data 27, the speaker describes the emotional state as a "black hole opened in the kitchen," which is a clear hyperbole. It exaggerates the feeling of emptiness, chaos, or

depression by comparing it to a cosmic event that is impossibly large and destructive for a mundane setting like a kitchen.

Based on the figurative language above, this categorizes an affective meaning because this hyperbole intensifies the emotional weight, making the listener feel the depth and magnitude of the speaker's distress.

Data 28: "So many hills to die on" (Not Strong Enough, line 3)

This hyperbole in the phrase "so many hills to die on" is an exaggeration. It suggests that countless issues or arguments feel life-or-death when in reality, not every disagreement or problem is that significant. The hyperbole emphasizes the overwhelming feeling of constant conflict or emotional stakes.

This is a connotative meaning because this hyperbole conveys the sense of being overwhelmed by many challenges, highlighting the emotional landscape of the song.

Irony Found in Song "Not Strong Enough"

Irony in language involves saying one thing while meaning another, creating a contrast between what appears to be true and what is. Essentially, it highlights the gap between perception and reality cleverly or humorously.

Data 29: *"Not strong enough to be your man / I tried, I can't"* (Not Strong Enough, line 16)

The speaker describes an example of situational irony. The speaker confesses they are "not strong enough to be your man," even though they have tried. The irony comes from the expectation that trying hard should lead to success or fulfillment of a role, but the actual outcome is failure and inadequacy. The phrase also plays with gender expectations and emotional vulnerability, as "being your man" is traditionally associated with strength.

Figurative language above categorizes affective meaning because the irony here highlights the emotional pain and vulnerability of the speaker, who is unable to live up to expectations despite their efforts.

Figurative Languages in and their meaning types in "Emily I'm Sorry"

This part takes a close look at how Boygenius uses figurative language to add depth and richness to the lyrics on their album The Record. Tools like simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, and paradox aren't just decorative they help the artists express complicated ideas and intense emotions that can't be captured by plain, literal words. To really understand these layers, Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning is especially helpful. Leech breaks down meaning into several categories: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic, each one shedding light on a different way that language works within the lyrics.

The lyrics of "Emily I'm Sorry":

She's asleep in the back seat

Looking peaceful enough to me

But she's wakin' up inside a dream

Full of screeching tires and fire

We're comin' back from where no one lives

Pretty much just veterans

When I pointed out where the North Star is

She called me a fuckin' liar

Emily, I'm sorry, I just (Emily, I)

Make it up as I go along

And I can feel myself becoming (I can feel)

Someone only you could want

Headed straight for the concrete

In a nightmare, screaming

Now I'm wide awake, spiraling

And you don't wanna talk

Just take me back to Montreal

I'll get a real job, you'll go back to school

We can burn out in the freezing cold

And just get lost

Emily, I'm sorry, baby (Emily, I)

You know how I get when I'm wrong (You know how I get)

And I can feel myself becoming (I can feel)

Somebody I'm not, I'm not, so

Emily, forgive me, can we (Emily, I)

Make it up as we go along?

I'm twenty-seven and I don't know who I am (Don't know who I am)

But I know what I want

Emily, I'm sorry

Emily, I'm sorry

I'm sorry

Metaphor Found in Song "Emily I'm Sorry"

A metaphor is a way to compare two things, similar to a simile, but it does so without using the words "as" or "like." It is a form of figurative language that makes a statement suggesting one thing is another, even if they are not the same.

Data 30: *"She's wakin' up inside a dream / Full of screeching tires and fire"* (Emily I'm Sorry, line 1)

This metaphor compares Emily's inner emotional chaos to being trapped inside a vivid, chaotic dream filled with intense and alarming images like "screeching tires and fire." It conveys the sense of distress and confusion without literally meaning she is dreaming, but rather that her emotional state feels overwhelming and dangerous.

This is categorized as a connotative meaning because the metaphor evokes strong emotional imagery and associations, helping listeners connect with the intensity of Emily's mental and emotional experience.

Data 31: "We can burn out in the freezing cold" (Emily I'm Sorry, line 2)

The speaker describes this metaphor, contrasts the idea of "burning out" (usually associated with heat, passion, or exhaustion) with the "freezing cold," creating a striking image of emotional or relational collapse in an environment that is cold and unwelcoming. It highlights the paradoxical and fragile nature of the relationship or situation.

This is a connotative meaning because this metaphor carries emotional tension and contradiction, enriching the listener's understanding of the complex feelings involved.

Paradox Found in Song "Emily I'm Sorry"

A paradox is a way of using words that combines ideas that seem to contradict each other.

Data 32: *"We can burn out in the freezing cold"* (Emily I'm Sorry, line 12)

This line is a clear paradox because it combines two contradictory ideas: "burn out" (which suggests heat, passion, or energy) and "freezing cold" (which suggests the absence of heat, numbness, or emotional distance). The lyric expresses the possibility of a relationship or feeling fading away ("burn out") even in an environment where warmth (emotional or literal) is absent. The contradiction highlights the complexity and fragility of the relationship.

This is connotative meaning because the paradox enriches the emotional landscape, evoking the tension and contradiction at the heart of the relationship.

Data 33: "I'm twenty-seven and I don't know who I am / But I know what I want"(Emily I'm Sorry, line 24-25)

This lyric is paradoxical because it presents the speaker as lacking self-knowledge ("I don't know who I am") while simultaneously claiming certainty about their desires ("But I know what I want"). Typically, knowing what you want is thought to come from knowing yourself, so the coexistence of these two states is contradictory yet emotionally honest.

This categorizes an affective meaning because this paradox captures the confusion and vulnerability of adulthood, where certainty and uncertainty can exist side by side.

Hyperbole Found in Song "Emily I'm Sorry"

Hyperbole is a way of speaking where you exaggerate things to make a point or be funny. It means saying something that isn't true but helps show how strong your feelings are.

Data 34: *"We're comin' back from where no one lives / Pretty much just veterans"* (Emily I'm Sorry, line 5)

Calling themselves "veterans" is an exaggeration, implying they've endured intense, battle-like experiences emotionally or mentally, even though they are not soldiers. This hyperbole emphasizes the depth of hardship or trauma they've faced.

This is connotative meaning because the exaggeration evokes a sense of emotional endurance and toughness, adding weight to their experience.

Data 35: *"But she's wakin' up inside a dream / Full of screeching tires and fire"* (Emily I'm Sorry, line 4)

This line exaggerates the emotional chaos and intensity of a dream by describing it as "full of screeching tires and fire." Most dreams are not filled with such dramatic imagery, so this is a hyperbolic way to convey the overwhelming and frightening nature of the character's inner chaos.

This is categorized as an affective meaning because the hyperbole amplifies the emotional distress and makes the listener feel the intensity of the experience.

Irony Found in Song "Emily I'm Sorry"

Irony in language involves saying one thing while meaning another, creating a contrast between what appears to be true and what is. Essentially, it highlights the gap between perception and reality cleverly or humorously.

Data 36: *"I'll get a real job, you'll go back to school"* (Emily I'm Sorry, line 18)

There is irony in the way "real job" and "go back to school" are presented as solutions to emotional turmoil or a failing relationship. The expectation is that practical, external changes will fix deep, internal issues. The line subtly mocks the idea that such changes are a cure-all, highlighting the disconnect between surface-level solutions and emotional reality.

This is an affective meaning because this irony points to the futility of trying to solve emotional pain with practical measures, underlining the complexity of the situation.

4. CONCLUSION

This final chapter concludes the exploration and discussion of figurative language and its meanings in the song lyrics of Boygenius's album "The Record." The study was conducted to identify the types of figurative language present in the album and to analyze the meanings behind these figures of speech using Leech's (1981) theory of meaning. Four out of twelve songs from the album were selected based on their richness in figurative language, allowing for a more focused and detailed interpretation.

Based on the results and discussion, the study successfully addressed its research aims. The analysis identified 36 data of figurative language in the selected lyrics, including one simile, eight metaphors, four personifications, three synecdoche, one metonymy, nine hyperboles, five ironies, and five paradoxes.

In addition, the study found that the meanings behind the figurative language in the album's lyrics encompass all seven types proposed by Leech (1981): conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic meaning. The analysis showed 36 data points found in the analysis of meaning in "*The Record*" by Boygenius. In summary, the use of figurative language in Boygenius's "The Record" serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a powerful tool for expressing complex emotions, personal experiences, and nuanced meanings. The findings of this study highlight the importance of figurative language in enriching song lyrics and enhancing listeners' engagement with the music. Further research could expand this analysis to other albums, genres, or artists to deepen the understanding of figurative language in contemporary music.

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