

# HYPERBOLIC EXPRESSIONS IN ONE DIRECTION'S LOVE SONG LYRICS

*Ruminda*

*Nida Kharimah*

Jurusan Sastra Inggris

Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

[adnimur@gmail.com](mailto:adnimur@gmail.com)

[nidakharimah14@gmail.com](mailto:nidakharimah14@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Hyperbole is an exaggerate expression which is often used in literary works such as poem, novel and song lyric. This research will analyze how the hyperbolic expressions are shown in One Direction's love song lyrics by using Claridge's theory of hyperbole. The objects taken for this research are from love song lyrics of One Direction which are taken from 3 albums. The finding shows that from the analyzed data, the hyperbolic expressions are shown from their gradability and intensification, context, and problem of literal meaning.

Keywords: hyperbole, hyperbolic expressions, love song lyrics

## ABSTRAK

Hiperbola adalah ekepresi melebih-lebihkan yang sering digunakan dalam karya-karya sastra seperti puisi, novel, dan lirik lagu. Penelitian ini akan menganalisis bagaimana ekspresi hiperbola ditunjukkan dalam lirik lagu cinta One Direction dengan menggunakan teori hiperbola dari Claridge. Objek yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah lirik-lirik lagu cinta One Direction yang diambil dari 3 album. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari data yang dianalisis, ekspresi hiperbola ditunjukkan melalui *gradability and intensification*, konteks, dan masalah makna literal.

Kata kunci: hiperbola, ekspresi hiperbola, lirik lagu cinta

## INTRODUCTION

The name hyperbole is taken from the Greek word “hyperballein” which means ‘to exceed’. Hyperbole is a kind of figurative language which contains an overdo pronouncement, which has purpose for giving a pressure of some pronouncement or situation for making the impression and the influence greater and valuable.

Hyperbole is one of the most widely used figurative language, not only in literature, but also in everyday language. It makes the message of communication easier to catch since it emphasizes a contrast or even deceives the idea.

Hyperbole in literary works is very interesting to identify because hyperbole and literary works can make the literary works more interesting to read or to listen. Furthermore, hyperbole has an easy characteristic to identify.

According to Mora (2009:10), hyperbole can be defined as “a form of extremity, an exaggeration that either magnifies or minimizes some real state of affairs”. In traditional semantics and rhetoric studies, hyperbole is a figure of speech, and it is used in a figurative or nonliteral sense. For example:

A : Ah, see if I catch you round there I'll **kill** you!

B : Ups, Sorry.

Example above is actually a warning spoken from an older to a younger brother, but literally, killing is certainly not an issue for either of

them – and it is not clear to me what ‘I'll do something to you that approximately equals killing’ would mean.

One of the common literary works is song. Many song lyrics use hyperbole, because the song writers want to make the song more valuable and meaningful. Song lyric is a word arrangement which has tone (Awe 2003:12). Song lyric is the expression of someone about something which has been seen, listened or experienced. For expressing experience, the song writers play with the word and language for creating the impression and the uniqueness of the lyric. Generally, the way someone writes the song lyrics is as same as writing the poem. Luxemburg (1998:175) says that poem does not only involve kind of literary works but also involve language expression like aphorism, message, advertisement, slogan, politics, and song lyrics.

Lyric is a media to express and to communicate what the song writers think or feel about. In other words, lyric is a result of any kind of emotion of its writers. In a love song lyrics, mostly, the song writers like to exaggerate in the parable exaggerating, whenever people hear or see the lyric, people get a pleasure.

One Direction is a boy band from Ireland which has been productively created many love song lyrics since 2010. For six years One Direction has produced 5 albums,



these are *Up All Night* (2011), *Take Me Home* (2012), *Midnight Memories* (2013), *Four* (2014), *Made in the A.M* (2015). From these albums there are many love songs lyrics such as *You and I*, *Night Changes*, *History*, *What Makes You Beautiful*. The researcher selects these songs lyrics as the object of the research because One Direction is one of the most popular boy bands which sings the most popular song too.

Love song lyrics contain many hyperbolic expressions to describe life reality such as love enchantment and broken heart.

### Characteristics of Hyperbolic Expressions

Hyperbolic expressions can occur in the form of words, phrases, or clauses. Hyperbolic expressions can be seen from some characteristics. Claridge (2011:4) categorizes the characteristics of hyperbole into five categories, those are:

#### 1. Gradability and Intensification

Quantity is of course crucial for hyperbole, but the other differences can also be relevant in an individual instance of overstatement. Plant life and greenery is such an extralinguistic example, to name just a few item, there are *potted plants-garden-park-fields-forest-jungle*, where there is a clear contrast in the quantity of flora but additionally also in its quality. Example:

(1) *Norrine: That's Edward Fox on the radio*

*Chris: Aaargh. Brushing past the plant and it fell over, that's all.*

*Susan: This place is turning into a jungle.*

*Chris: It is, it is a **jungle** already*

*Susan: It's lovely isn't it?*

From the example above it can be analyzed that the potted plants found in the house are described as a jungle. It clearly indicates the large amount of plants present, but also implicitly comments on the near impenetrability of jungle environment and thus providing an excuse or justification for knocking over the plants.

The example and explanation so far show that hyperbole is part of the larger phenomenon of intensification. Bolinger in Claridge (2011:9) calls intensification as the linguistic expression of exaggeration and depreciation, and lists hyperbole among the rhetorical figures used to realize it. Intensification can be more precisely defined as placement of a predication on a scale of intensity, or degree of realization of the predication on a scale of intensity or degree of realization of the predication, reaching from extremely/very low to very/extremely high (Claridge 2011:9). The following dialogue is an example of intensification.

(2) *Mark: **You're not fat***

*Joanne: **I am***

*Mark: You're not*



Anon: (unclear)

Helena: *Oh I know it's huge*

Joanne: *I am, it's grotesque isn't it?*

Helena: *Mm*

Joanne: ***I'm obese***

The difference between fairly normal weight or even *fat* and *obese* is literary more: more pounds. *Obese* in the medical sense is being pathologically overweight and in everyday language it still denotes a very pronounced degree of fatness. After the denial of Mark's statement 'you're not fat' and his next statement, *obese* is clearly intended as an escalation by Joanne.

While hyperbole is one means of intensification in the sense of gradability, the preceding paragraph indicates that it is also intensification in the emotional sense like emphasis or can also called intensity.

## 2. Context

The hyperbolic statement is contradicted by the actual facts, in so far as these stay below the limits of what is expressed. In other words, hyperbole is a highly contextually determined phenomenon. According to Claridge (2011:12), the notion of the context to be used in hyperbole is a wide one embracing:

- a. The extralinguistic, primarily physical context of the speech situation and also of the situations or things talked about. For example in the lexical items *tremendous, colossal, very*

*dramatic, devastating, catastrophe and disastrous* used in a program of super volcanoes (BBC World, Horizon, 13 September 2003) were clearly appropriate with regard to the danger they represent.

- b. The characteristic of the participants of the linguistic interaction including their psychological states (see dialogue 2).
- c. The social relationships of the participants (see dialogue 2). Regarding contextual factors named in (a) and (b) above, it is not only the physical states of Joanne (specifically her weight) that is relevant in dialogue (2), but also the way she feels about it and that refers to her psychological disposition. Dialogue (2) also relates with social relationship where Mark and Joanne either have different views on the contextual question of Joanne's weight or maybe not, and Mark is using cultural norms of politeness in denying her being overweight because of their social relationship.
- d. Mutual knowledge of the participants of various kind. The example is given by the following description.

(3) *As soon as the first goal went in, however, scored by LuaLua after Nolberto Solano's corner were headed on by Jermaine Jenas, **the wheels not only came off but the chassis***



*collapsed and the big end  
blew as well.*

Claridge (2011:13) agrees that the above description of a football match is hyperbolic while an informant argued that it is not. The informant is not a football fanatic; he said that it seemed a quite appropriate description for the losing side in a match ending with the result 4:0. It can be concluded that knowledge affects a context in hyperbole expression.

### 3. An encyclopedic meaning approach to meaning

Hyperbole as overstatement is a contextual phenomenon (in the widest sense). Speaker will be using quite extensive knowledge in the production and comprehension of hyperbolic expression. The following narration between a couple about their son cheaply buying an upmarket car in Germany and bringing it home to Britain shows the example of this.

(4) *Carlos: So he got this **super deluxe model with 25 wheels...***

*Marie: ...for the price of an Austin Mini.*

As we know that a car only has four wheels and it is very important for the function of the car. It is in this way that twenty-five wheels can make a car seem hyperbolically better, also it indicates speed, power, etc through its hyperbole.

### 4. The problem of literal meaning

Hyperbole can be also identified if people represent it by a literal meaning. According to Ariel in Claridge (2011:29), literal represents meaning that is coded, conventional, mostly compositional, unaffected by context, obligatory and automatic. For example,

(5) *Lucy: George, I think you're **the most selfish human being on the planet.***

*George: This is silly. Have you met everybody on the planet? (Two Weeks Notice, 2002)*

The expression *the most selfish human being on the planet* will be considered as hyperbole since this phrase can be literally meant as what the phrase means. It is why in dialogue (5), George, as the one who is labeled as *the most selfish human being on the planet* asked whether Lucy has met everybody on the planet or not.

### 5. Vagueness and Hyperbole Interpretation

Vagueness of lexemes also plays a role for the interpretation of some instance of potential hyperbole. The example is illustrated in the dialogue below:

(6) *Matthew: How many sides did you, you wrote like four sides.*

*Anon: Yeah*

*Matthew: How the fuck did you do that? I've only got like two and three quarters*

*Anon: No. I write **huge***

*Matthew: Yeah*

*Anon: My writing's **huge***



The word ‘huge’ is primarily part of the size scale including words like smalls, big, giant, etc and its dictionary definition is extremely large in size or amount. Furthermore, collocations of ‘huge’ are usually used for concrete things which are objectively of really big proportions or in a figurative use for abstract things that are felt to be really important (e.g., *hospital, company, industry, explosion, reward, value*).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The research method chosen by the researcher to analyze the problems of hyperbolic expressions in One Direction love song lyrics is qualitative analysis method.

According to Richard (2006:73), a common feature of qualitative approach is aimed to create understanding from data as the analysis proceeds. This means that the research design of qualitative approach differs from a study starts with an understanding to be tested, where often the hypothesis literally dictates the form, quantity, and scope of required data. This sort of approach or design preempts other ways of looking at the research question.

This research uses content analysis approach because the data that will be analyzed need an explanation descriptively. According to Hancock (2007:15), content analysis is used to find and understand the message or expression in the document, painting,

song, literary works, articles and the other kind of unstructured data.

Descriptive analysis is also applied in this research as it describes the facts before being analyzed (Ratna, 2015:53). It means the collected data are described before they are analyzed using the concerned theory.

### Data

Arikunto (2006:118) states that data is a result from registration research in the form of fact or number. As a qualitative analysis, the data collected in this research are in the form of words, phrases or clauses which contain the hyperbolic expressions in the song lyrics.

### Source of Data

The data collected for the research are taken from *One Direction’s* love song lyrics that have been downloaded from [www.jooxmusic.com](http://www.jooxmusic.com). The lyrics used as the data source are taken from the songs which entitled:

No.	Title	Album
1.	<i>What Makes You Beautiful</i>	<i>Take Me Home</i> (2012)
2.	<i>One Thing</i>	<i>Take Me Home</i> (2012)
3.	<i>Steal My Girl</i>	<i>Tour</i> (2014)
4.	<i>Kiss You</i>	<i>Tour</i> (2014)
5.	<i>History</i>	<i>Made in the A.M</i> (2015)
6.	<i>Love You Goodbye</i>	<i>Made in the A.M</i> (2015)



This research chooses the song lyrics from different album because those are the most popular songs in One Direction Albums.

### Technique of Collecting Data

The first step to collect the data is by reading the lyrics which have been chosen before carefully from the internet. After reading the data, the words, phrases, or clauses with exaggerate meanings are marked in order to identify that those selected data are those with hyperbolic expressions. The next step is rewriting the part of the lyrics which are indicates as hyperbole and classifying them in the form of words, phrases or clauses.

### Technique of Analyzing Data

Moleong (2010: 112) states that analyzing the data is an effort to identify the related data and to classify the data based on the topic.

The data which have been collected will then be analyzed systematically and detailed, so that the researcher will get the objective lyrics about the hyperbolic expressions appear in several lyrics.

The steps used by researcher to analyze the collecting data are as follows:

- a. Classifying the data which have been collected from each song as the hyperbole using concerned theory.
- b. Analyzing the data that have been determined as a whole.
- c. Making the conclusion from all the analyzed data.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The identified data show that the hyperbolic expressions in One Direction love song lyrics can be seen from three characteristics, out of five, mentioned by Claridge (2011), those are from the gradability and intensification, from the context, and from the problem of literal meaning.

### 1. Gradability and intensification

The data below shows the hyperbolic expression in the song lyric is given through its gradability and intensification.

Data 4

“We could be **the greatest thing** that the world has ever seen”

(Title of the song: *History*. Album: *Made in the A.M 2015*)

According to Claridge (2011:43) hyperbole is always more of something. Claridge also contends that hyperbole is something over. The lyric above tells about the expression of pride from the singers who can reach so much achievement that can make whole the world know them. From this data, the expression ‘the greatest thing’ is a kind of superlative adjective which is included as the gradability. The word *greatest* is a superlative adjective from *great-greater-greatest*. The word *greatest* become exaggerate because it describes that there is no other singer who can be more than



them and there is no singer who can be their rival.

## 2. Context

A hyperbolic statement is somehow given in an opposite way from the real situation and can be affected much by the context of the situation reflected at that time. The following data show the hyperbolic expressions which are characterized by the context.

### Data 1

“She’s been **my queen** since we were sixteen”

(Title of the song: *Steal my girl*. Album: *Tour 2014*)

This lyric tells a man who really loves a woman whom he describes as a *queen*. According to *Oxford Dictionary* (2008:360), *queen* is female ruler of an independent state that has a royal family. From that meaning, it can be concluded that a queen is a special woman. The context of *queen* in this lyric describes how much a man loves a woman and how special a woman for a man. The word *queen* becomes exaggerate because it is impossible to happen that the woman can become a *queen* because a man is not a king already.

### Data 5

“But is there something that can be **negotiated**”

(Title of the song: *Love You Goodbye*. Album: *Made in the A.M 2015*)

This lyric tells about someone who wants to improve his relationship with a woman. Based on the context, the word *negotiated* is a hyperbolic expression, because according to *Oxford Dictionary* (2008: 293) *negotiated* is to reach an agreement by formal discussion. The context of love should not be talked seriously; it must be romantically. The word *negotiated* also describes the seriousness of a man.

### Data 6

“You get it **kind a rush**”

(Title of the song: *Kiss you*. Album: *Tour 2014*)

This lyric tells the feeling of a man when he met a woman whom he loves. The word *it* refers to *heart*. Based on the context, this lyric talks about love and feeling and the word *rush* becomes exaggerate here because it is usually used for something which is moving with a great speed. Hence, the word *rush* in this lyric is used to describe how fast the heart beats of a man when he sees a woman

### Data 11

“Cause you **make my heart race**”

(Title of the song: *One Thing*. Album: *Take Me Home 2012*)

This lyric still tells about the feeling of a man when he saw a woman whom he loved. The context of this lyric talks about the feeling. The word *race* becomes exaggerate





here because the word *race* relates to a speed usually used in such an activity like running. In other words, the word *race* emphasizes the human's heart beating.

This data also shows a metaphor since, according to Leech (2003:146), hyperbole is not only the rhetoric depiction form which represents people's heart but hyperbole resembles metaphor which is a general feature of daily language usage.

#### Data 10

"You'll understand why I want you **so desperately**"

(Title of the song: *What Makes You Beautiful*. Album: *Take Me Home 2012*)

The context of this lyric is about someone's effort for getting something. The phrase *so desperately* is a hyperbolic expression because it exaggerates the struggle itself. 'So desperately' describes a man's feeling when he has done anything for making a woman knows about his feeling until there is nothing to do anymore.

#### Data 3

" I don't exist if I don't have her. **The sun doesn't shine. The world doesn't turn**"

(Title of the song: *Steal My Girl*. Album: *Tour 2014*)

This lyric tells about a man who makes a woman as part of his life. The context of this lyric shows his feeling. The clause *the sun doesn't shine and the world doesn't*

*turn* shows the hyperbolic expression because it exaggerates the reality which sounds impossible to happen. It is impossible for an ordinary human to make the sun doesn't shine and the world doesn't turn.

### 3. The Problem of Literal Meaning

A hyperbolic expression can also be identified if people represent it by a literal meaning. A literal meaning is usually given out of the context. The following data show how the problem of literal meaning characterizes the hyperbolic expression found in the lyrics.

#### Data 2

"And every **jaw drops** when she's in those jeans"

(Title of the song: *Steal My Girl*. Album: *Tour 2014*)

Hyperbole is always more of something (Claridge, 2011:43). The word *drop*, according to Oxford Dictionary (2008:138), is the falling of small round mass of liquid. The situation in this lyric describes how the people impressed when they looked at a woman in jeans. The word *drops* is a hyperbolic expression because it exaggerates the people's expression when they open their mouth. If the listener try to translate this lyric literally, this lyric becomes a hyperbole because it is impossible to happen that the jaw can drop because actually jaw is not a liquid.



Data 7

“ Making them **drool on their chiny chin chins**”

(Title of the song: *Kiss You*. Album: *Tour:2014*)

This lyric tells about the expression of the people when they look at a woman. The lyric contains a hyperbolic expression because when the phrase *drool on their chiny chin chins* is meant literally, it exaggerates the people’s expression. However, looked from the context, the phrase *drool on their chiny chin chins* means envy.

Data 8

“Baby you **light up** my world like nobody else”

(Title of the song: *What Makes You Beautiful*. Album: *Take Me Home 2012*)

This lyric tells a man who makes a woman a part of his life. The lyric describes how much a man needs a woman in his life. The phrase *light up* becomes a hyperbolic expression in its literal sense since it is impossible for a person to light something up without any lighter tools like lamp or flashlight. The word *light up* describes how cheerful the life of a man was when he was with a woman. The phrase *light up* here refers to the cheerful feeling of the man in this context. The word *light up* also shows that there is no other person that can make a man happy except the woman.

Data 9

“Cause I’m **dying** just to know your name”

(Title of the song: *One Thing*. Album: *Take Me Home 2012*)

This lyric tells about the effort of a man for knowing the name of a woman. The lyric describes the hard effort of a man. The word *dying* becomes a hyperbolic expression because literally this word means the condition of someone who is near to die. Contextually, in this lyric, the man does not really die, he only feels tired for doing anything only for knowing the name of a woman.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this research, the hyperbolic expressions are shown from three characteristics of hyperbole. The most common way of showing the hyperbolic expression is seen from the context. The context of every song lyric makes the interpretation of the expression becomes more exaggerate and therefore clearly show that those expressions are included in hyperbole. The context of love song lyrics is about love or about expressing love to someone. The hyperbolic expression is usually used to express the love. Someone exactly will choose an exaggerate word for making it more poetic and dramatic. The use of exaggerate words also can make a lyric more meaningful than the use of ordinary or literal words.

The second way of showing the hyperbole is from the problem of



literal meaning. Some expressions of hyperbole will be more exaggerated if meant literally. That is why, hyperbole is included as one figure of speech with non literal meaning.

The less use of hyperbole is given through its gradability and intensification. The expressions shown with this way is not many since it is used to give the gradual words and given to show the intensity or emphasis of the statement.

After analyzing each the hyperbolic expressions the researcher can get more understanding about the hyperbolic expression used in love songs lyrics and the researcher realized that the lyrics become more interesting because of hyperbole use.

However, many limitations are presentend in this research, and therefore, in regard to the study, there are some suggestions that might be helpful for those who are interested in conducting a future research of this study.

First of all, the study of hyperbole must be widely analyzed not only in literary works but also in many other real situation or way of communication happens in our society.

Characteristics and forms of hyperbole are small parts of the way to analyze the hyperbole, but these can be a way to open a further research to add the characteristics of hyperbole in different object.

Finally, this research conducted in a very limited data. The

more data will give more variable to analyze and more findings to discuss.

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