

A Pragmatic Analysis of Hyperbole in the Song Lyrics: A Comparative Study of “I Wanna Be Yours” by Arctic Monkeys and “Annabel Lee” by Stevie Nicks as an Adaptation of Poem

¹Putri Pujiyawati, ²Siti Nopita, ³Tatu Siti Rohbiah

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten

Corresponding author’s email: tatu.siti.rohbiah@uinbanten.ac.id

ARTIKEL INFO

Article history:

Received : 9 November 2025

Accepted: 2 Desember 2025

Published: 28 Januari 2026

Keywords:

adaptation, hyperbole,
pragmatic analysis,
song lyrics

DOI:

[10.33603/deiksis.v9i2.6908](https://doi.org/10.33603/deiksis.v9i2.6908)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of hyperbole in song lyrics from a pragmatic perspective through a comparative analysis of “*I Wanna Be Yours*” by Arctic Monkeys and “*Annabel Lee*” by Stevie Nicks, both adapted from earlier poetic works. The research aims to examine how hyperbolic expressions function pragmatically and how adaptation influences their communicative strategies. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the data were collected through documentation and close reading of the lyrics, followed by systematic identification, coding, categorization, and pragmatic interpretation of hyperbolic expressions. The analysis reveals that both songs employ hyperbole as a pragmatic strategy to intensify emotional meaning and generate implicature through contextual interpretation. However, they differ significantly in communicative orientation. “*I Wanna Be Yours*” predominantly uses concrete and everyday imagery to construct intimacy and relational closeness, while “*Annabel Lee*” utilizes abstract and mythological exaggeration to elevate love into a timeless and transcendental dimension. These findings demonstrate that hyperbole in song adaptation functions not merely as stylistic ornamentation but as a context-dependent communicative tool shaped by genre, cultural framing, and artistic transformation. This study contributes to pragmatic studies of figurative language by highlighting how hyperbole operates across poetic and musical adaptation to shape audience interpretation and emotional engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language in artistic expressions such as poetry and song lyrics often conveys meaning beyond literal interpretation. Within the field of pragmatics, meaning is understood as context-dependent, shaped by speaker intention, shared knowledge, and situational factors. Pragmatics examines how implied meaning, implicature, and contextual interpretation contribute to communication (Putu et al., 2022). In literary and musical texts, this contextual

dimension becomes particularly important because emotional and aesthetic effects frequently rely on figurative language.

One of the most prominent forms of figurative language in poetry and song lyrics is hyperbole. Hyperbole involves deliberate exaggeration to intensify emotion, create vivid imagery, or emphasize particular ideas. (Nur et al., 2024) Its interpretation depends on pragmatic competence: audiences must recognize the exaggeration as intentional and interpret its meaning within cultural and contextual frameworks. In artistic discourse, hyperbole functions not merely as stylistic ornamentation but as a communicative strategy that strengthens emotional engagement and expressive depth.

Previous studies on hyperbole have largely focused on identifying types, functions, or stylistic patterns in isolated poems or song lyrics. However, limited attention has been given to the pragmatic comparison of hyperbole in adapted song lyrics derived from poetic texts. This study addresses that gap by examining how hyperbole operates pragmatically in two musical adaptations: *"I Wanna Be Yours"* by Arctic Monkeys, inspired by John Cooper Clarke's poem, and *"Annabel Lee"* by Stevie Nicks, adapted from Edgar Allan Poe's poem. By comparing these adaptations, this research highlights how hyperbolic expressions are transformed across genres and how contextual reinterpretation influences their implied meanings. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative pragmatic approach to hyperbole in adapted works, rather than analyzing hyperbole as a purely stylistic device within a single text. (Zainal, 2023) This study not only investigates the forms of hyperbole but also explores how exaggeration functions communicatively in different adaptation contexts – considering authorial intention, audience reception, and cultural framing.

The objective of this study is to analyze the pragmatic functions of hyperbole in the selected song adaptations and to compare how exaggerated expressions contribute to meaning construction in each work. Through this analysis, the research aims to deepen scholarly understanding of hyperbole as a context-driven communicative strategy and to contribute to broader discussions on the relationship between poetry and music in contemporary artistic expression. (Niki & Nicole, 2025) Academically, this study contributes to pragmatic and literary studies by integrating figurative language analysis with adaptation theory, demonstrating how implied meaning evolves when poetic texts are transformed into musical performances. This perspective enriches the study of hyperbole not only as a rhetorical device but also as a dynamic interpretative process shaped by genre, medium, and audience.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a comparative pragmatic approach. The qualitative design is selected because the purpose of this research is to interpret the implicit meanings and communicative functions of hyperbole in artistic language rather than to quantify its frequency. The focus of the study is on how hyperbolic expressions operate pragmatically within adapted song lyrics. The data consist of the official lyrics of *"I Wanna Be Yours"* by Arctic Monkeys and *"Annabel Lee"* by Stevie Nicks, which are musical adaptations of poems by John Cooper Clarke and Edgar Allan Poe. The units of analysis are words, phrases, and sentences identified as containing hyperbolic expressions.

The data were collected using documentation techniques. The official lyrics were retrieved from reliable and authorized sources to ensure textual authenticity, then compiled into a unified textual corpus (Arif Hidayat, Sahril Mujani, 2025). The researcher conducted repeated close readings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the thematic context, emotional tone, and narrative perspective of each song. During this process, potential hyperbolic expressions were identified and marked based on theoretical criteria of exaggeration, particularly expressions that exceed literal truth, involve gradable intensity, and require contextual knowledge for interpretation (Abdulwahid & Afkar, 2023). Each identified expression was coded systematically to facilitate organized analysis.

The data analysis was conducted through several interconnected stages. First, all identified hyperbolic expressions were coded and classified. Second, each expression was examined using a pragmatic analytical framework grounded in implicature theory and contextual interpretation (Diana Rizki Putri, Zuindra, 2023). The analysis aimed to determine the relationship between literal meaning and implied meaning, to uncover the speaker's communicative intention, and to examine how contextual elements such as adaptation, genre transformation, and audience expectations influence interpretation. Rather than merely categorizing stylistic forms, the analysis focused on identifying the pragmatic functions of hyperbole, such as emotional intensification, expression of devotion or longing, dramatic emphasis, and aesthetic imagery construction.

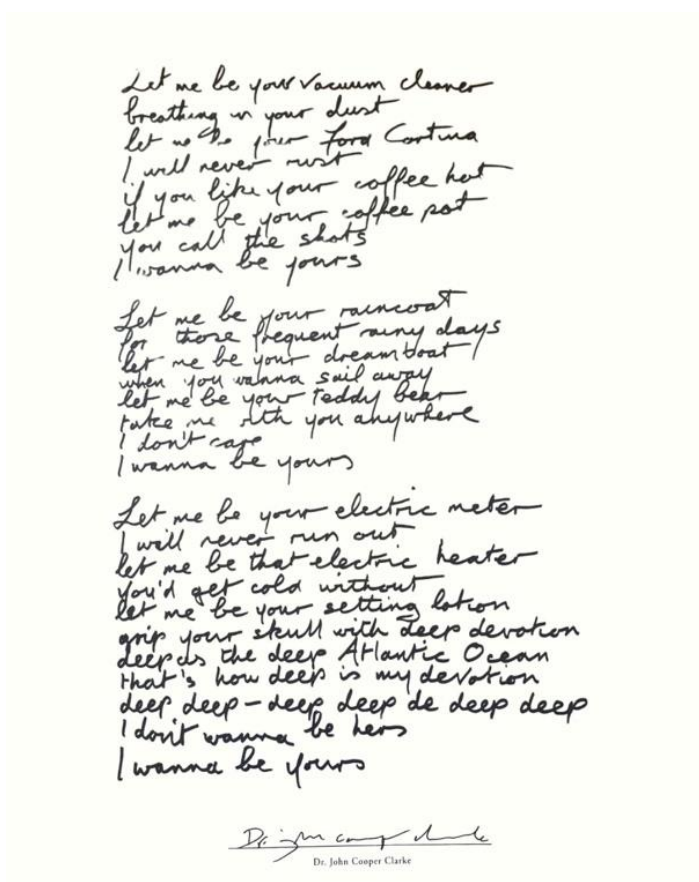
Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences in the pragmatic functions of hyperbole between the two adapted songs. This comparison highlights how exaggerated language is reinterpreted when poetic texts are transformed into musical compositions. The findings are presented narratively, supported by textual evidence

and interpretative explanation, in order to ensure systematic and academically rigorous presentation of results (Malikussaleh & Edisti, 2024). By integrating hyperbole theory with pragmatic analysis, this methodological approach enables a deeper understanding of hyperbole not only as a stylistic device but also as a context-dependent communicative strategy in artistic adaptation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section elaborates on the results of the analysis in the study. The following picture is a poem of these songs "I Wanna Be Yours" and "Annabel Lee". And the Table presents the results of the hyperbolic analysis found in the lyrics of "I Wanna Be Yours" and "Annabel Lee". The analysis includes lyric quotes, identification of hyperbolic expressions, and their pragmatic meanings.

Picture.1 "I Wanna Be Yours" Poem by John Cooper Clarke

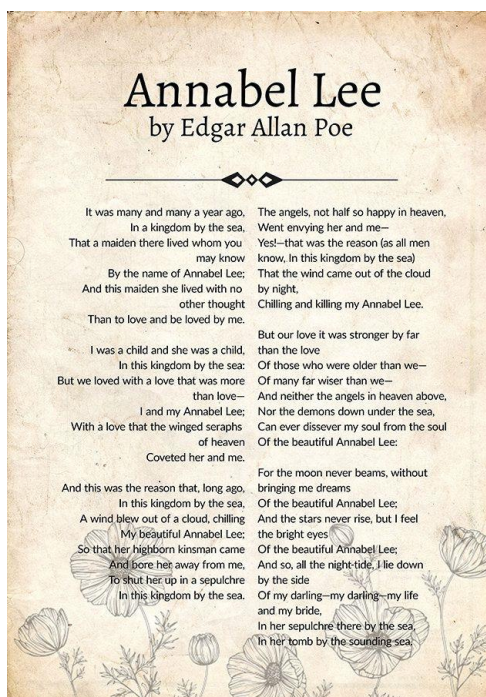


Source : store.johncooperclarke.com

Table.1 Hyperbolic Analysis of "I Wanna Be Yours" Song Lyrics

No	Lyric Quotes	Hyperbolic Analysis	Pragmatic Analysis
1	"I wanna be your vacuum cleaner, breathing in your dust"	Describes the desire to always be close, even in small and trivial things.	Expressing the desire to always be there, accepting all the shortcomings and advantages of their partner.
2	"I wanna be your Ford Cortina, I will never rust"	Comparing like a car that never rusts.	Implies a desire to be a loyal and ever-present couple.
3	"Let me be your portable heater, that will warm you"	Wanting to be a tool that always gives warmth.	Describes the desire to always provide comfort, warmth, and affection.
4	"I wanna be your raincoat, for those frequent rainy days"	Being protective in all situations.	Desire to protect and be there when your partner is facing problems or sadness.
5	"I wanna be your dreamboat, when you want to sail away"	Be a dream ship ready to take your partner anywhere.	Implies readiness to accompany your partner wherever you go, in good times and sorrows.
6	"Let me be your teddy bear, take me with you anywhere"	Being a teddy bear that is always carried everywhere.	Conveying the desire to always be close and a source of comfort for the couple.
7	"I wanna be your electric meter, I will not run out"	Being a never-ending source of energy.	Describing a love that always flows and never goes out.
8	"I wanna be the electric heater, you'll get cold without"	Being a very important heater.	Describe the desire to be the main need of the partner.
9	"I wanna be your setting lotion, hold your hair in deep devotion"	Become a devoted hair care product.	Describe loyalty and full devotion to the spouse.
10	"Deep as the deep Atlantic ocean, that's how deep is my devotion"	Describes the magnitude of love and devotion, likened to the depths of the Atlantic ocean.	Describes the magnitude of love and very deep loyalty to the partner.

Picture.1 "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe



Source : English Literature on Facebook

Table.2 Hyperbolic Analysis of "Annabel Lee" Song Lyrics

No	Lyric Quotes	Hyperbolic Analysis	Pragmatic Analysis
1	"But we loved with a love that was more than love"	Their love is portrayed as more than love itself, greatly exaggerated.	Emphasizing how deep and extraordinary their love is, so that their love feels timeless and incomparable.
2	"The angels, not half so happy in Heaven, went envying her and me"	The angels in Heaven are envious of their love, although angels are described as holy beings without envy.	Describing their love so deeply that even heavenly beings felt amazed and admired the peculiarity of their relationship.
3	"Neither the angels in Heaven above, nor the demons down under the sea, can ever dissever my soul from the soul of the beautiful Annabel Lee"	No creature in heaven or hell can separate their souls.	Conveying the power of love that is eternal and unshaken by anything, even supernatural powers.
4	"For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams of the beautiful Annabel Lee"	Every moonlight always brings a dream about Annabel Lee.	Showing that Annabel Lee's memories and love are always present in every moment, endlessly.
5	"And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes of the beautiful Annabel Lee"	Every star appearing is accompanied by feeling Annabel Lee's gaze.	Signifying Annabel Lee's enduring presence in his heart, as if her gaze watches him from another realm.

The analysis identified ten hyperbolic expressions in "I Wanna Be Yours" and five in "Annabel Lee." Rather than merely listing them, this section discusses how hyperbole functions pragmatically in each song and how adaptation influences its communicative strategy.

In *"I Wanna Be Yours,"* hyperbole predominantly takes the form of concrete, everyday objects (e.g., vacuum cleaner, Ford Cortina, portable heater, raincoat, teddy bear, electric meter). These exaggerated comparisons do not aim to be interpreted literally; instead, they generate implicature through contextual contrast (Michael McCarthy, 1994). When the speaker states, *"I wanna be your vacuum cleaner, breathing in your dust,"* the literal impossibility triggers recognition of exaggeration. Pragmatically, this produces an implicature of total devotion and unconditional acceptance. The exaggeration works through domesticated imagery, positioning love as service, presence, and functional usefulness.

This pattern reflects what (Claridge, 2011) describes as gradable exaggeration grounded in shared knowledge. The audience recognizes the absurdity of becoming an object, yet interprets the utterance as a metaphorical intensification of commitment. The communicative function of hyperbole here is relational and interpersonal: it reduces emotional distance and frames love as tangible and accessible. The pragmatic force lies in its intimacy. Hyperbole becomes a strategy to express loyalty, constancy, and everyday devotion in a way that is humorous yet sincere.

In contrast, *"Annabel Lee"* employs hyperbole that is abstract, cosmic, and mythological. Expressions such as *"we loved with a love that was more than love"* or references to angels and demons who cannot separate the lovers move beyond domestic imagery toward metaphysical amplification. Here, hyperbole does not merely intensify emotion but elevates it to a transcendental level. The exaggeration generates implicature of eternal and undefeatable love, surpassing human limitation.

From a pragmatic perspective, these hyperboles operate through what (Thomas, 1995) identifies as context-dependent interpretation. The references to supernatural beings rely on shared cultural knowledge about heaven, angels, and eternal souls. The audience interprets the impossibility not as absurdity but as symbolic reinforcement of timeless devotion. Unlike the personal and service-oriented hyperbole in *"I Wanna Be Yours,"* the hyperbole in *"Annabel Lee"* constructs grandeur, tragedy, and permanence. The communicative intention is not to domesticate love but to immortalize it.

The comparison reveals a significant functional distinction. In *"I Wanna Be Yours,"* hyperbole functions as concrete-personal exaggeration, grounded in everyday objects and interpersonal proximity (C. Levinson, 1983). Its pragmatic strategy is intimacy through service

and presence. In *"Annabel Lee,"* hyperbole functions as abstract-mythological exaggeration, elevating love into a cosmic and eternal dimension. Its pragmatic strategy is transcendence and timelessness.

This distinction supports previous findings that hyperbole adapts to genre and discourse context (Claridge, 2011), yet this study extends those findings by showing how adaptation from poetry to music reshapes pragmatic emphasis. While prior studies on hyperbole in song lyrics often categorize types or frequencies, they rarely examine how adaptation transforms the communicative force of exaggeration. In the present analysis, hyperbole in *"I Wanna Be Yours"* becomes domesticated and performative within indie rock culture, whereas in *"Annabel Lee,"* it retains the tragic-romantic intensity of Poe's poetic tradition, reinforced through musical reinterpretation

The pragmatic consequences of these different hyperbolic strategies are reflected in emotional impact. In *"I Wanna Be Yours,"* exaggeration produces warmth, familiarity, and accessibility. The listener perceives love as achievable and embodied in daily life. In contrast, *"Annabel Lee"* evokes admiration and solemnity; hyperbole amplifies loss and eternal attachment, positioning love beyond mortality.

From a communicative standpoint, the first song uses hyperbole as a strategy of relational closeness, while the second employs it as a strategy of narrative elevation. Thus, hyperbole is not merely stylistic ornamentation but a pragmatic tool shaped by genre, adaptation, and cultural framing.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the pragmatic analysis of hyperbole in the song lyrics *"I Wanna Be Yours"* by Arctic Monkeys and *"Annabel Lee"* by Stevie Nicks, it can be concluded that both works utilize hyperbole as a powerful communicative tool to express deep emotions and intensify the meaning of love conveyed in the lyrics. In *"I Wanna Be Yours,"* hyperbolic expressions are grounded in everyday objects and scenarios, creating a sense of warmth, intimacy, and devotion that is relatable to listeners. The hyperboles serve to highlight the speaker's willingness to serve, protect, and be ever-present for their partner in all aspects of life. In contrast, *"Annabel Lee"* employs hyperbole in a more abstract and grandiose manner, drawing on mythological and supernatural imagery to elevate the love story to a legendary and eternal scale. Here, hyperbole functions to dramatize the depth and tragedy of love,

suggesting that it transcends even the boundaries of life and death. Pragmatically, the use of hyperbole in both songs not only enhances the aesthetic and emotional impact of the lyrics but also invites listeners to interpret and connect with the underlying sentiments in a meaningful way. Thus, the analysis demonstrates that hyperbole, when used effectively and contextually, enriches the communicative power of artistic language in both poetry and song lyrics.

For future research, it is suggested that similar pragmatic analyses be conducted on a wider range of song lyrics and poetic adaptations from various genres and cultural backgrounds to further explore the universality and diversity of hyperbolic expression in artistic language. Additionally, educators and curriculum developers may consider incorporating pragmatic and stylistic analysis of song lyrics into language and literature courses, as this approach can foster critical thinking, cultural awareness, and a deeper appreciation for figurative language among students.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article was prepared by Putri Pujiyawati, and Siti Nopita from English Education Departement The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to all Friends who provided support, guidance, and assistance throughout the research and writing process. And also to express deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Tatu Siti Rohbiah, M. Hum. For invaluable guidance and encouragement.

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