

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN FORMING THE EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE IN THE SONG ‘LET YOU BREAK MY HEART AGAIN’ BY LAUFEBY

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Abstrak

Songwriters often use language as a powerful tool to convey emotion, tell stories, and create meaningful connections with listeners. Through creative diction, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language, lyrics can evoke deep emotional responses and reflect inner conflicts. This study explores how language constructs emotional meaning in the song Let You Break My Heart Again by Laufey, particularly in relation to themes of unrequited love and emotional vulnerability.

Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research employs a language and literature analysis approach. Data were collected through document analysis and literature review, focusing on the lyrics' structural divisions which are verses, chorus, bridge, and outro. A section-based lyric and representation analysis was used to classify dominant emotional expressions in each part of the song.

The findings reveal that the song's language strongly conveys emotions such as sadness, longing, confusion, and emotional surrender. Phrases like "falling in love," "break my heart," and "heaven knows I've tried" are not only idiomatic, but serve as vehicles for emotional depth. Each section reflects different stages in the narrator's emotional journey, while the repetition of key lines reinforces the cyclical nature of emotional pain. Ultimately, the song's language shapes a reflective emotional space that resonates with contemporary experiences of quiet, unspoken vulnerability.

Keywords: emotional expression; song lyrics; diction; idiom; section-based analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of communication but also a powerful instrument for expressing complex human emotions. In the realm of artistic expression or particularly music, language works hand in hand with sound to create emotional richness and aesthetic meaning. Song lyrics, as the verbal component of music, often carry messages that go beyond their literal meanings. They utilize connotative meanings, idioms, and figurative language to trigger emotional responses in listeners. As noted by Salam and Ridwan (2021), connotative meaning involves the emotional associations attached to a word, where original meanings are expanded through affective interpretation, often shaped by the listener's experiences and cultural context.

Music, in this regard, becomes a multidimensional form of emotional communication. It combines verbal and non-verbal components, where lyrics serve as verbal language, while melody, harmony, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics function as non-verbal conveyors of feeling. These elements, when combined, construct a deeply affective experience that invites listeners into emotional reflection (Witantina et al., 2020). Music is not merely heard; it is felt, interpreted, and internalized. Through this dual function, music often becomes a channel for personal storytelling, emotional catharsis, or even psychological relief.

Songs, as a literary art form, frequently employ layered and ambiguous language to express nuanced emotional and psychological states. According to Cahyani (2021), the lyricism in songs reflects not just poetic style but also the internal thoughts and experiences of the songwriter. Damayanti et al. (2024) emphasize that lyrics act as a narrative space where artists articulate deeply personal experiences such as heartbreak, longing, hope, and vulnerability. In many cases, the emotional content within lyrics can have a greater impact than instrumental sound alone. Setiawan and Said (2022) argue that music with emotionally expressive lyrics can help reduce anxiety and feelings of isolation, making it a powerful medium for emotional connection and mental well-being.

Beyond personal expression and emotional regulation, music also shapes the listener's mindset, worldview, and self-awareness. It can serve as a reflective medium through which individuals analyze their emotions or situations. This role of music is often referred to as motivational music (Masduki et al., 2020). Emotional engagement with music frequently arises from the listener's ability to connect their own life experiences with the narrative or language of the lyrics. As noted by Hunter, Schellenberg, and Schimmack (2010), listeners' emotional responses to a song are subjective and influenced by individual perception and personal context. Hence, music becomes a collaborative experience between creator and listener, a co-construction of emotional meaning.

A powerful example of emotionally resonant music is *Let You Break My Heart Again*, a single by Icelandic-Chinese singer-songwriter Laufey. Released in 2021, the song features a collaboration with the Philharmonia Orchestra, combining elements of jazz, classical, and pop. Laufey's music has gained international acclaim for its introspective lyrics, subtle instrumentation, and rich emotional undertones. In an interview with *Dork* magazine, Laufey shared, "I just want to encourage people to embrace what they love," reflecting the honesty and sincerity that define her songwriting style (Shutler, 2024).

The song explores universal emotional themes such as unrequited love, self-doubt, and emotional surrender. Laufey's lyrical choices, supported by soft orchestration and jazz-influenced harmony, create a soundscape that is melancholic, gentle, and introspective. The emotional subtlety of the song allows it to speak directly to listeners who have experienced similar feelings, particularly the quiet grief of loving someone who does not love them in return. This emotional connection is what makes the song a rich subject for literary and linguistic exploration.

Let You Break My Heart Again also demonstrates how emotionally expressive language in music can serve as a mirror for cultural and relational realities. In a modern world where emotional vulnerability is often masked by irony or avoidance, Laufey's lyrics offer an alternative, honesty, simplicity, and emotional transparency. Emotional impact remains one of the strongest reasons why audiences engage with music (Eerola & Vuoskoski, 2012), and this is supported by research from Juslin & Laukka (2004) and Sloboda & O'Neill (2001), who found that emotional expression is a core motivator for musical preference and consumption.

Given the emotional and linguistic richness of Let You Break My Heart Again, this study aims to analyze the role of language in shaping its emotional landscape. The focus lies on how diction, idiomatic expressions, figurative language, and repetition contribute to the emotional tone of the song. Using a section-based analytical method, this research investigates how each structural part of the song which are verses, chorus, bridge, and outro that reflects different stages of emotional development. Through this analysis, the study seeks to offer insight into the ways language functions not only as a tool for storytelling but also as a mechanism for emotional expression in contemporary songwriting.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions through descriptive analysis using words and language. The goal is to describe and interpret data systematically based on its natural context (Moleong, 2006).

The approach used in this study is based on language and literary analysis, which allows researchers to examine the relationship between linguistic elements and emotional meaning. This approach enables a deeper understanding of texts by interpreting them through both linguistic structure and literary perspective (Rahmani, 2021). In this case, the song Let You Break My Heart Again by Laufey is treated as a literary object, analyzed for its emotional tone and language features.

The data were collected through literature study and document analysis, involving close reading of the lyrics and supporting references. The analysis was conducted using Section-Based Lyric and Representation Analysis, where the lyrics were divided into structural part verse, chorus, bridge, and outro that examined for diction, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language. This approach is intended to classify emotional expressions and interpret how language constructs the song's emotional atmosphere.

FINDING AND RESULT

The emotional analysis of Let You Break My Heart Again reveals a clear progression of emotional intensity throughout the song. By examining each section which are verses, chorus, bridge, and outro. The study identifies how language is used to express different phases of the narrator's inner experience. Through careful attention to diction, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language, the lyrics illustrate a gradual emotional descent: beginning with exhaustion and uncertainty, then moving into confusion, longing, and ultimately, deep vulnerability and

emotional surrender. Each part of the song is marked by specific expressions that shape a nuanced emotional journey.

Table 1. Emotional Representation in Each Section of the Lyrics

Feeling kind of sick tonight All I've had is coffee and leftover pie It's no wonder why	This verse expresses <u>emotional exhaustion</u> caused by unrequited love. The word “sick” doesn’t just refer to physical illness, it suggests emotional tiredness or even heartbreak. The mention of “coffee and leftover pie” adds a touch of daily realism that enhances the melancholic mood.
Ooh, still you take up all my mind I don't even think that you care like I do I should stop, heaven knows I've tried	Here, the <u>emotional imbalance</u> in the relationship becomes clear. The phrase “you take up all my mind” is idiomatic, showing how the person completely occupies the singer’s thoughts. There also the idiom “heaven knows I've tried” means the singer has made great efforts, though it might not be obvious to others. It emphasizes frustration and silent struggle.
One day, I will stop falling in love with you Some day, someone will like me like I like you Until then, I'll drink my coffee, eat my pie Pretend that we are more than friends Then, of course, I'll let you break my heart again	This is the emotional core of the song. The idioms “falling in love” and “break my heart” highlight themes of helpless affection and repeated <u>emotional pain</u> . The phrase “pretend that we are more than friends” reflects self-deception, revealing how the narrator holds on to something that isn’t real. The mention of ordinary things like coffee and pie creates a contrast between daily routine and deep emotional struggle.
I'm just tryna understand what I am to you More than songs, we've exchanged Midnight calls, sunset views	This verse points to <u>emotional confusion</u> . Despite moments of closeness, like sharing music, late-night calls, and beautiful scenes, the narrator still doesn’t know where they stand. It reflects the conflict between meaningful experiences and unclear intentions.
Promise I don't mean to cry But I get overwhelmed and confused If only you knew what I felt like	This section shows <u>emotional vulnerability</u> . Words like “overwhelmed” and “confused” describe the inner chaos the narrator feels. There may not be an idiom here, but the emotional weight is clear and powerful, contributing to the

	song’s reflective tone.
One day, I will stop falling in love with you Some day, someone will like me like I like you Until then, I'll drink my coffee, eat my pie Pretend that we are more than friends Then, of course, I'll let you break my heart again	The repetition of the chorus at the end emphasizes the emotional core of the song. While the lyrics remain the same, the meaning deepens due to the emotional journey that precedes it. It reflects a sense of resignation and reinforces the recurring pain of loving someone who doesn't feel the same way.
Some day, one day, I will stop falling in love with you Until I do, I'll be thinking of you Let you break my heart again	The outro wraps up the cycle of <u>emotional pain and longing</u> . The repetition of “let you break my heart again” strengthens the sense of emotional surrender. The idiom helps to capture the sadness of knowingly allowing oneself to be hurt out of love.

The emotional patterns identified in the previous section show that each part of the song contributes to a continuous narrative of emotional decline and quiet surrender. The progression moves from emotional exhaustion and uncertainty toward deeper vulnerability and repeated emotional submission. Each section of the lyrics contains specific expressions that mark distinct stages in the narrator’s emotional journey.

This emotional development is further supported by the language choices throughout the song. Let You Break My Heart Again reflects a deeply personal and emotionally resonant narrative, especially for listeners who have experienced unrequited love. While the theme of heartbreak is universal, the song’s diction and idiomatic expressions emphasize emotional vulnerability in a quiet, modern context. Laufey constructs a delicate emotional landscape through simple yet poignant language, allowing the listener to experience an ongoing inner conflict that feels both intimate and relatable.

The language used in Let You Break My Heart Again reflects a deeply personal and emotional narrative that resonates with listeners experiencing unrequited love. While the central theme of heartache is universal, the song’s linguistic choices highlight emotional vulnerability in a modern, introspective context. Laufey crafts a delicate emotional landscape through simple yet poignant diction, inviting the listener into a quiet, ongoing inner conflict.

The song uses emotionally charged language such as “falling in love”, “break my heart”, and “overwhelmed” to express a cyclical experience of longing and disappointment. These phrases carry both literal and metaphorical weight, demonstrating how language can mirror the inner turmoil of someone stuck in a pattern of one-sided affection. The repetition of “let you break my heart again” not only reinforces the pain the speaker feels but also suggests a resigned acceptance which is an emotional habit of allowing oneself to be hurt.

A key way the song shapes its emotional tone is through the use of idiomatic expressions. Idioms like “fall in love”, “break my heart”, “take up all my mind”, and “heaven knows I’ve tried” go beyond their surface meanings. For instance, “heaven knows” communicates the speaker’s sincere effort and desperation, while “take up all my mind” emphasizes mental and emotional occupation by someone who may not reciprocate those feelings. These idioms help listeners feel the emotional heaviness the speaker carries, despite the song’s calm, melancholic tone.

The language used in the song reflects broader cultural and emotional themes. In today’s relationship culture, vulnerability is often hidden behind casual words or ironic detachment, but Laufey’s lyrics break through that, offering raw, unfiltered emotional honesty. The speaker’s admission of pretending (“pretend that we are more than friends”) speaks to the longing many feel when caught in unclear or undefined relationships, a common theme in today’s social and romantic dynamics.

From a semantic perspective, the word “again” in the phrase “let you break my heart again” carries powerful connotative meaning. It doesn’t just signify repetition; it suggests a cycle of emotional dependency, quiet hope, and inevitable disappointment. This single word captures the complexity of choosing emotional vulnerability despite knowing the outcome as a choice rooted in love, habit, or both.

Finally, the song subtly challenges romantic ideals often reinforced in culture and media, that love is supposed to be mutual and fulfilling. Instead, Laufey presents a reality where love is not always returned, and yet people still cling to it. The song validates the emotional confusion and sadness that often go unspoken, offering comfort through quiet understanding rather than resolution. It reminds the listener that unreciprocated feelings are part of the emotional spectrum, and it’s okay to sit with that sadness, even if it hurts.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated how language plays a central role in shaping the emotional landscape of the song *Let You Break My Heart Again* by Laufey. Through a section-based analysis of the lyrics, the research identified how diction, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language collectively construct emotional meaning. Each structural part of the song, which are verse, chorus, bridge, and outro that reveals distinct emotional stages experienced by the narrator, ranging from emotional exhaustion and confusion to longing and quiet resignation.

The use of idioms such as “falling in love,” “break my heart,” and “heaven knows I’ve tried” highlights the way language carries both literal and metaphorical significance, allowing listeners to experience the emotional depth and complexity of unrequited love. The repetition of key lines reinforces the cyclical nature of emotional pain, suggesting an ongoing internal struggle that many listeners may find relatable.

Laufey's lyrical choices reflect a broader cultural context in which vulnerability is often understated, yet deeply felt. By examining the emotional impact embedded in the song's language, this study contributes to the understanding of how emotionally expressive language functions in contemporary music. It also affirms the value of literary and linguistic analysis in uncovering the emotional narratives embedded in popular song lyrics.

Future research may consider comparative studies with other emotionally expressive songs or explore how different audiences interpret emotional language in music based on personal or cultural background.

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