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THESIS

A STUDY OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE THAT CONVEYS
CONNOTATION RELATED TO AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES IN
COUNTRY SONGS: THE CASE OF TAYLOR SWIFT



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The main objectives of this study are: 1) to identify common connotations expressing American cultural values through figurative language in Taylor Swift's songs, and 2) to analyze how those American cultural values are conveyed by figures of speech. The frameworks employed in this study are those of figurative language and connotation (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974 and Eco, 1976; Dobrovolskij, and Piirainen, 2005; Burton, 2007; Ray, 2007; 2008; Carroll, 2008; Pence, 2012) and American cultural values suggested by different experts (e.g. Hofstede, 1984; Kernohan, 1998; Nooteboom, 2002; Brewer, 2009; Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel, 2009; Carroll, 2010; Knox and Schacht, 2010). This qualitative study employs the methods of descriptive and interpretive content analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Three common types of figure of speech that express connotations through Taylor Swift's country songs related to American cultural values were found: metaphor, simile, and hyperbole. Four aspects of American cultural values of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism were revealed through four main relevant themes: bond and relationship, independency, honesty, and dignity respectively. These types of figure of speech play different roles in connoting American cultural values. Metaphors and similes were employed in the songs to help convey American cultural values that the lyricist wanted to share by empowering the intended messages with the devices of making indirect and direct comparison between certain entities and intended meanings. The employment of hyperbole was employed to emphasize the intended values by exaggerating the connoted messages. In brief, the three types of figure of speech appear to be powerful tools in Taylor Swift's country songs to express American cultural values. This finding seems to suggest that the power of these literary devices should effectively express intended messages in other genres of literary work and in any culture as well.

Student's signature

Thesis Advisor's signature

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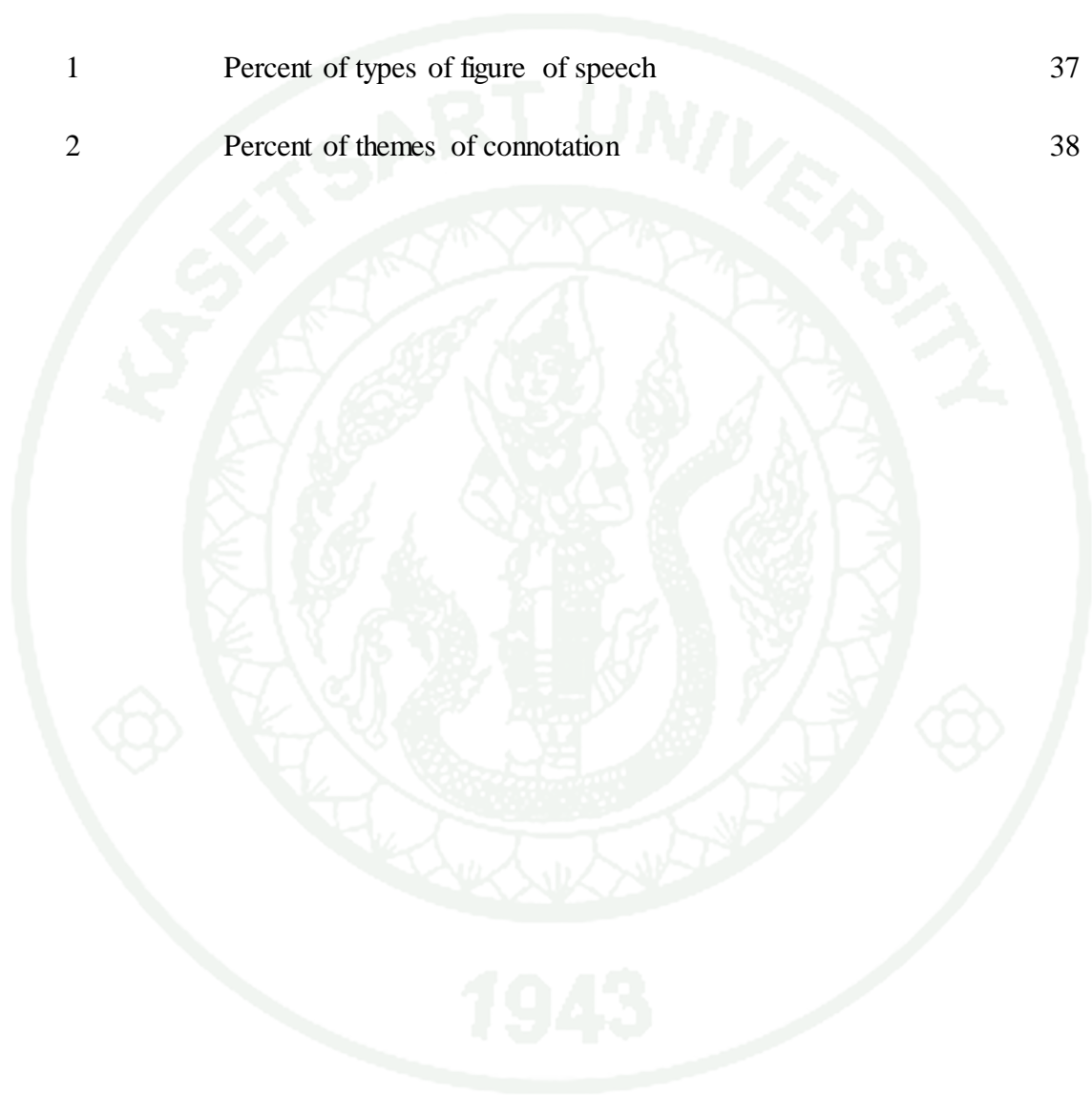
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Songs have been a part of our society for many centuries. They act as messengers that carry a message from a person to a target audience. Since ancient times, songs have been sung on a variety of occasions and for different purposes. For example, soldiers sing songs before war to increase the troopers' morale while lovers use songs to express their feelings toward each other.

As a part of human society, songs reflect cultural values that are popular or well-recognized by people in a specific period of time. For example, in the study of Holloway and Cheney (2001), American songs from 1900-1945 reflected people's attitudes towards white American whose culture was male-dominated that limited female roles in social affairs, such as the right for vote. Thus, songs are good sources of information to learn about cultural aspects at a certain span of time. Not only do songs directly demonstrate people's point of view in society, but they also reflect the songwriter's points of view which come from his or her personal observations of other people's attitude towards the culture in the society at that time (Holloway and Cheney, 2001). When songs are heard by members of society, some are likely to share similar attitudes or points of view while others may not. However, songs generally reflect a lyricist's points of view towards cultures in the society.

Songs reflect various cultural aspects in the society of the lyricists. These aspects range from basic aspects such as daily activities to more complex ones, such as beliefs and ideologies of people in a particular society. For example, lyrical content in Hip Hop generally reflects social problems regarding the restriction of African American's rights in American society (Fernandes, 2007 cited Diawara, 1998). In

contrast, pop songs tend to reflect general cultural phenomena as opposed to the subcultures of certain communities (Frith, Will, and John 2001). Thus, cultural values reflected through songs are varied in different genres of songs.

As the reflections of cultural values vary according to genres of songs, pop songs tend to represent a big picture of cultural aspects in a specific period of a certain community and the changes of those cultural phenomena over time. For example, in 1926, when communism started to spread and the era of WWII was at its beginning, the pop song's shifted to the celebration of victory in skirmishes (Scaruffi, 2003).

In pop songs, many songwriters convey general cultural aspects of daily life of the people in the society, rather than focusing on any specific subcultures. These general cultural values which can be understood or recognized tend to attract people's attention better and, as a result, increase the buying rate and the number of buyers or song admirers (Frith *et al.*, 2001).

More specifically, more subtle genre of song like 'American country songs' focuses on more narrow cultural perspective. The genre popularity rests mostly in American audiences who appreciate in American countryside lifestyle through the perspective of American country song lyricists (Tichi, 1994; Frith, 2004). Generally, simple lifestyle in American countryside is reflected, but often with bitter sensation in life (e.g. agony from love lost, pain from the struggle for better future and loneliness) that occurs in different spans of a person lifetime which the lyricists translate into lyrics.

To demonstrate cultural values in songs to the audience, songwriters tend to use simple aspects of language rather than academic or technical terms. According to Frith *et al.* (2001), songwriters use ordinary language in pop songs to make common or general cultural values become widespread and popular. With the use of simple features of language, anyone can understand the messages the songwriters intend to describe or convey, and thus share the same or similar attitudes towards certain cultural values.

Many lyricists or songwriters have their own style of using language to demonstrate their points of view towards popular culture in their songs. For example, American cultural values of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism which are reflected through different environmental settings of urban and rural areas can be observed in American country songs. One of the most commonly used language aspects is connotation, which is the expression of the non-literal meaning of texts. One of many reasons that connotations are used in songs is to provide openness of interpretation to the audience (Elicker, 1997). In addition, connotations are also useful in songs because they promote the sensitivity of cultural motivation, which enhances the audience's cultural perception and makes them realize the importance of the cultural values within the songs. When the audience shares similar cultural backgrounds with a native songwriter, a mutual understanding can be easily established (Frith *et al.*, 2001). When new songs are introduced into a culture, it is interesting to understand how messages are conveyed by the writers and perceived by the audience in those cultures and how those messages influence the culture of the audience.

One of many country song lyricists and singers who become successful in expanding her musical popularity not only in her nation, but also throughout the world in the 21st century is Taylor Swift, whose popularity started to spread in early 2008 with revenue from global sales of more than 1.5 million dollars (Morris, 2009). With 97 songs sold worldwide and fan pages on various websites, FACEBOOK and TWITTER for example, in many countries across the world, she is considered as one of the most popular singers and lyricists of the century.

Although her songs share thematic similarity to other genres of pop songs and target audience, Taylor Swift tends to have her own style of demonstrating the content of her songs. In her autobiography, Taylor states that if one has ever listened to her songs, it is as if they were reading her diary as her songs are inspired by her romance at a certain period of her life (Spencer, 2010). Because she writes most of the songs on her albums herself, the lyrical content reflects her points of view towards cultural values. When listening to all of her songs, one can see the movement of her love

which varies according to Taylor's attitudes at various different times. Thus, one of the reasons for her song's popularity comes from the special features that portray her lyrical themes which draw attention from her target audience who share similar interesting life experience.

Statement of the Problem

Although some studies reveal various significant aspects of language content in pop songs, including American country songs, few studies have been conducted to explore the use of connotation, the device that convey indirect meanings in different dimensions, emotions, and attitudes in her songs. In particular, there has not been substantial examination of the use of this device, nor has there been much discussion of the phenomenon of cultural values in her pop songs. Hence, it is the interest of this study to explore the American cultural values expressed through connotative or figurative devices in her songs.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify common connotations of American cultural values expressed by figurative language in Taylor Swift's songs.
2. To analyze how common American cultural values are conveyed by the figures of speech in Taylor Swift's songs.

Research Questions

1. What are the common American cultural values connoted by figures of speech in Taylor Swift's songs?
2. How are those common American cultural values conveyed by the figures of speech in Taylor Swift's songs?

Scope of the Study

Taylor Swift's songs can be found in 3 albums, namely Taylor Swift, Fearless, and Speak Now, which were released between 2006 and 2010. They gained a significant level of popularity amongst her audience, which can be seen from the sales of CD records (Morris, 2009). The researcher has investigated 39 songs from the 3 music albums of Taylor Swift. Since the focus of the study is on the role of figurative language in the songs, the interpretation of data was mainly based on textual elements, hence other features such as musical rhythm and musical tones will be excluded from the analysis. More specifically, only connotations expressed in the figures of speech associated with the themes related to American cultural values were investigated and discussed in the research.

Significance of the Study

The result of the study will be beneficial to the following groups:

1. Learners who are interested in the role of figures of speech can have better insight into the power of figures of speech that promote the intended meanings, including the sense of cultural values. In particular, how Taylor Swift has employed figurative language to connote American cultural values can be understood.
2. Audiences and novice songwriters who are interested in American cultural values can gain perception and understanding about the parts of American cultural values through Taylor Swift's views.

Definition of Terms

Connotation is the means of constructing meaning which deviates from the core or literal meaning of a given text (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974, and Eco, 1976).

Figurative language is the language use in which the semantic features of lexicon do not literally relate to the context (Carroll, 2008). To understand connotation requires personal experiences and cultural backgrounds to make an interpretation of the information presented in the context (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974, and Eco, 1976).

Cultural Values refers to the beliefs whose subjectivity is commonly shared by individuals in the same culture (Xu, 2012 cited Young, 2009).

American cultural values are concepts shared and understood among the members of American society. Also, some cultural values that appear universal but are also found prominent in American society are considered as ‘American’ as well.

Country songs in this study, the term refers to a genre of American pop songs which is influenced by the lifestyle of people in rural areas especially those that are known as American South (Frith, 2004).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This part presents the literature related to theories including connotation and figurative language, American cultural values, and pop songs and country songs to construct theoretical frameworks for the data analysis and the discussion of this study.

Prior to presenting the review of each particular aspect, it is important to summarize the connection of the major concepts used in this study. In brief, figurative language is the language that expresses connotation (connotative or indirect meanings). In relation to this, linguistic devices commonly used for such expressions are referred to as figures of speech. To identify and understand the connotations of the lyrics in country songs that express American values, these major concepts will be used to guide the investigation.

Connotation and Figurative Language

Based on the definitions of different scholars in the earlier days, Partington explained that connotation is the meaning that is added aside from the core or literal meaning of a lexical item. Since the connotative meaning deviates from its literal meaning, the meaning is understood differently among individuals whose background knowledge is different. Thus, connotation has been similarly viewed as interpretive meaning that rests on an individual's justification (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974, Eco, 1976).

In our life, connotation plays an important part in communication because it also conveys senses of emotions and feelings in textual meanings which are shared between the senders and the receivers. Words and phrases can connote either positive or negative meanings when they are used in certain contexts. In addition, the

sensation of connotations depends on cultural values which a person of a society perceives (Partington 1998 cited Leech, 1974).

In songs, as connotation involves cultural values for lexical interpretation, it requires shared knowledge between the lyricists and the audiences. Thus, people who are excluded from one culture may have misunderstanding of the connotative meaning of lexicon in native language context. Only people who share the same social context of the society will understand the connotations (Dobrovolskij, and Piirainen, 2005). In other words, cultural perspective and interpretation have an impact on the understanding of connotations in different individuals.

Using language figuratively is a method of constructing connotative meaning and provides a meaningful message to a certain audience, but needs interpretation. Figurative language is the use of language where the semantic features of the lexicon do not literally relate to the context; thus the audience has to make use of their cultural experience to judge the meaning of the lexicon or utterances within the context (Carroll, 2008).

In figurative language, there are devices of using language to convey connotative meaning in a given context. The devices are called 'figures of speech'. Figures of speech are "forms of expressions used to convey meaning or heighten effect, often comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a connotation familiar to the audience or listener,"(Merriam-Webster, 2012). In other words, they are forms of language that convey a message through the interpretation of non literal meanings and texts.

In sum, figures of speech are tools of figurative language that connote the intended meaning in a context by heightening the intended messages with different methods that link the background knowledge of the target audience to the meaning.

Types of Figure of Speech

There are various types of figure of speech which can be grouped into 2 main categories according to the way the figure connotes the meaning. The first category of figure of speech is called trope. The term refers to the use of words, phrases or images in which their literal meanings are deviated; hence, it is necessary for the audience to interpret the intended message, which is hidden within the words (Dively, Taub, Metzger, and Baer 2001, and Knowles and Moon, 2006).

The second category is called schemes. Knowles and Moon (2006) defines the term as the word reformation which provides connotations whereas Dively *et al.*, (2001) suggest that the term refers to syntactic repetitiveness, such as the reformation of word or phrase structures in a sentence, while still expressing the literal meaning. This contrasts with tropes.

Though there are various figures of speech, some figures are more common than the others in certain genres of literature or text. For instance, McQuarrie and Mick (1996) suggested in their study that 23 types of figure of speech are common in advertising texts. Similarly, 9 types of figure of speech are described in Ray (2007; 2008) as common devices in the genre of literary works. Thus, Ray's list of these devices was employed as the framework of this study. In addition, from the preliminary study of 39 songs of Taylor Swift's albums released between 2006 and 2010 which were used as the data in this study, some other types of figure of speech which are also suggested as common in literary works (Pence, 2012; Burton, 2007) were added to the framework.

The following section presents the definitions and linguistic roles of the 19 common types of figures of speech that will be employed in this study.

I. Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech that represents the conceptual meaning of a word instead of its literal meaning. Unlike metaphor or simile, metonymy associates two concepts together, not comparing one concept to the other. For instance, “the crown” stands for the Queen of England instead of the literal meaning of an object worn by kings or queens.

II. Irony

Irony is defined as the way in which a word or a statement conveys a contrastive meaning to the content. The most common type of irony that appears in our daily life is “verbal irony”. This term refers to a meaning with a contradiction at the word level caused by the context of a topic. For example, when a man sees a girl who is dressed like an old lady and says “You look younger in that dress!” he does not mean that the girl looks younger. In fact, the man is saying the opposite.

III. Metaphor

Metaphor is an expression of the similarities between two unlike entities that have something in common for the purpose of making comparison. In other words, two different objects have some characteristics that relate to one another. For example, the statement “You are a thorn on my side” refers to a person who has become a threat or obstacle to another person, like a thorn that causes pain.

IV. Simile

Simile is close to metaphor. However, this figure of speech connotes meaning using comparison markers such as ‘like’ or ‘as’ to connote a target object that is similar to the source object. For example, the simile ‘like a butterfly’ in the statement “He floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee,” connotes the flexibility of the man’s

movement that is similar to a flying butterfly, and the painful result of his attack, like that of a bee.

V. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech for which a part of an entity connotes the whole object or vice versa. For example, the expression “I’ve got new wheels” connotes the meaning that a person obtains a car using ‘wheels’ to represent the whole automobile. Synecdoche can represent either an abstract or valid part of the whole object; however, it is important to note that the part represented must relate in one way or another to the subject indirectly mentioned.

VI. Rhetorical question

A rhetorical question is a figure of speech in which the question is aimed to trigger people’s emotions, but the person who is asked does not need to answer it. For example, in the clause ‘so why shouldn’t you,’ in the statement “He cares for his family, so why shouldn’t you?” is a rhetorical question that aims to evoke the person’s sense and feeling of responsibility to his family.

VII. Oxymoron

This figure of speech employs a phrase with the coexistence of contrastive lexicon in which the adjective of a phrase contrasts with the head noun. The phrase structure of an oxymoron can begin either with a positive or negative adjective and is followed by a noun. For example, the word ‘bittersweet’ in the sentence “The truth is bittersweet,” connotes the meaning that the truth is good and painful to know at the same time.

VII. Meiosis

The term refers to the use of words in which the lexical item presented is associated with the person. Meiosis may share a similarity with some figures of speech, such as synecdoche and metonymy which are deployed to substitute other entities; however, meiosis is different from both figures of speech because meiosis uses words with a negative connotation to make reference of a person who has been generally regarded or respected by other people. In other words, meiosis is employed whenever a speaker carries negative attitudes towards a respected person. For example, the word 'slasher' is a meiosis that refers to a surgeon.

VIV. Hyperbole

The term hyperbole describes a figure of speech which overstates or exaggerates the reality to stimulate personal emotion or to give a vivid image of the action. For example, the expression "I will love you until the end of time," is a hyperbole which exaggerates the fact that a person will love his or her partner until their time in this world ends.

X. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech where the main verb of a sentence generally collocates with a person's action or other living entities; however, the verb is used to describe and compare inanimate entities placed as the subject of the sentence. The purpose of personification is to give a vivid picture of the entities that perform actions as if they were human. For example, the sentence "Your time is running out" is a personification of time to a person's action because the verb predicates the action of humans to an inanimate subject, time, to give a vivid picture of time flow which is quickly exhausted.

XI. Symbol

The term refers to any entity that represents the whole picture that the entity is associated with. In literature and lyrics, the whole content of a piece of literature is symbolized into one significant entity. For example, a rose is the symbol of love and passion between lovers.

XII. Polyptoton

This figure of speech is a rhetorical repetition of the same sentence with the use of a word in different cases, inflections, or voices or of etymologies that relate words in different parts of speech. In other words, the words with the same root are employed in different parts of a sentence to convey meaningful concepts to the context. For example, the words ‘morality’ and ‘moral’ in the sentence “Morality is moral only when it is voluntary,” are considered as a polyptoton.

XIII. Antithesis

The figure of speech dealing with the juxtaposition of clauses with equal sentence structure is called antithesis. The figure of speech is employed when two clauses are presented in the sentence contrarily or comparatively. In both presentations of ideas, however, conjunctions such as ‘and’, ‘but’ or, ‘or’ can either be employed to connect the clauses together or omitted and replaced with a comma. For example, the sentence “They promised freedom and provided slavery,” is an antithesis that connotes the contradiction between the promise and the actual action.

XIV. Pun

Pun refers to a figure of speech in which a word has two lexical meanings due to the fact that the distinct or similar pronunciation of the same word generates different meanings. The term is not to be confused with antanaclasis in which a lexical item that carries more than two meanings provides two different meanings in

different linguistic contexts. For example, the word ‘ryes’ in the Wigler’s Bakery slogan “Look deep into your ryes” is a pun that play with the sound /ai/ in the word ‘eyes’ and ‘ryes’ to make the slogan sound attractive.

XV. Litotes

In contrast with hyperbole, litotes is deployed to convey either positive or negative connotations to a listener. The method of creating litotes is different from hyperbole because litotes use understatement to connote the message instead of exaggeration. For example, if someone says “You are not wrong,” the message the person tries to convey is that you are correct.

XVI. Allegory

Allegory is a figure of speech in which abstract ideas are represented by characters or events in literature or sometimes the literature itself. For example, ‘The Ugly Duckling’, the name of a western fable, is an allegory which represents a person who does not fit in the society he or she lives in.

XVII. Anaphora

The figure of speech is described as the repetition of the same words or phrases at the beginning of sentences. Anaphora serves the purpose of emphasizing the idea which changes or carries different activities predicated by the verb phrase in the sentence. For example, in the statements “I’m bad and that’s good. I’ll never be good and that’s not bad,”, the subject ‘I’ is repeated to emphasize attributes of a person who considers himself as a bad guy but thinks that it is good.

XVIII. Paradox

The figure of speech is a statement that seemingly contains a contradiction, yet conveys the truth. Paradox can be presented in both contrastive phrases and

clauses. For example, in the teaching of Christ “They have ears but they hear not,” (Biblos, 2003) illustrates how people are capable of listening to his teaching, yet they choose not to do so.

XIV. Allusion

Allusion is a figure of speech where the events or people in reality are referred to by phenomena or a character in a story. For example, the word ‘Scrooge’ in the statement “She is Scrooge when she is running out of money,” is an allusion that refers to a stingy person which resembles a Charles Dickens character who is stingy when it comes to money.

American Cultural Values

This study aims to investigate American cultural values expressed through the lyrics of American country songs from Taylor Swift’s most popular albums. Prior to detailed discussion, concepts of cultural values are presented.

Cultural values

Cultural values are values of acceptance of what is right or wrong, workable or unworkable, etc. regarding the standards held by a community or society. However, some sociologists classify cultural values in different levels. Xu (2012 cited Young, 2009) classifies cultural values on both an individual and a social level. For the individual level, values are differentiated by personal judgment. A higher level of cultural values lay within the standards of a social or national level. Thus, the latter is more general and stable. She also noted that cultural values are not only necessarily influenced by inner influences, such as laws that are enacted from agreements of people in a country, but also from external influences (i.e. international agreements). Samovar *et al.* (2012) also shares a similar view that cultural values are values of acceptance that are viewed as acceptable or not from the judgment of a variety of

groups of people who share common or similar agreements on a specific subject matter within a particular culture.

Due to the fact that this study examines connotations that contain cultural values in American pop songs, the major aspects of investigation are concentrated on the major aspects of cultural values and elements in American society as evidenced in Taylor Swift's songs.

Major Aspects of American Cultural Values

In American culture, there is a great variety of cultural values that represent and guide Americans' ways of life. In this section, the prominent values and how each value shapes American behaviors are presented.

I. Individualism

One aspect of cultural values that has roots and represents the ethical cultural values of American society is individualism. The term individualism refers to "a doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount" (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Another short and more socio-precise definition for individualism is the society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family (Hofstede, 1984).

In America, as a part of people's ideology, individualism gives birth to cultural values in particular ways. It shapes people's thoughts, beliefs, and interactions among people. Evidence that individualism relates to people's way of thinking can be found in the Bible, which embodies the idea that people are born equal in importance, regardless of their origins or social status (Watt, 1989), and thus with good deeds, people can live with God even if they were people from low social status.

In addition to what Watt (1989) suggested, other scholars imply that confidentiality in one's uniqueness, competency, commitment etc. is an ingredient of individualism. As a prominent belief in North American society, individualism has great impact on shaping individual behavior, thought and personality. Americans tend to respect individual rights over duties and obligations; thus each person can carry on with their commitments or goals (Brewer and Hewstone, 2004 cited Oyserman and Markus, 1993, Markus 1998, Triandis, 1995 and Kim, 1994).

As the concept influences other sub-cultural values in American society, individualism influences people's behavior. For example, in the aspect of business status value, being in a higher position or rank provides promising respect from others; thus it results in higher competition among people at any cost. People believe that to reach supremacy in their occupations, they need to achieve that goal by all means necessary, even if the means of eliminating their opponents is essential to the success in business (Anonymous, 2012). Therefore, it is common to see that one company tries to eliminate or rule out other companies in order to be the best in the specific business field (i.e. the competition between Pepsi and Coca Cola). Although the practice of individualism seems cruel, it helps the business sector to develop better products and services to the public in order to survive in a highly competitive world of business.

However, it might be exaggerated to describe the whole as America as individualistic. The belief mainly influences middle-class people whose competition in every aspect of life is higher than lower or higher classes. Hyang-Jin Jung (2007 cited Schneider and Smith, 1978) reported that scholars had noticed that middle-class people's behavior was highly related to self-commitment under individualism whereas lower and higher class people tended to focus on historical relationships within the society that embodied their identities. As a result, what makes us assume that America is a highly individualistic nation comes from a group of people from the middle class that are thriving as the major population in America, thus their cultural values are greater reflected globally than other social classes in America.

If taking a further look, it is obvious that competition among people of similar society is not only generated from the systems within the particular society, but it is also created from the ideal to attest self-performance from the young adolescent period. According to Smetana (2011 cited Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton, 1985), American teenagers viewed that making self-achievements, commitments and personal agency was a test which fulfilled their desires of personal needs or self-pleasure. The idea influences adolescents to respond or interact with the society to achieve their goals in different ways; some are creative while others are more arrogant.

Although the issue tends to be personal, some scholars argue that individualistic actions cannot always be viewed as the fruit of individualism when environment factors influence adolescent behavior. For example, drunken driving behavior in adolescents, which cost large amounts of government funds to solve the problem because it creates social problems such as public property destruction or road accidents, is viewed as a problem that comes from personal individualism; however, the behavior is also related to the environment in which the adolescents live (Rathus, 2007).

In conclusion, individualism is the belief of self-performance which enables people to be or feel unique. This ideology of self-performance includes the senses such as being self-directed, committed, and competitive, self-achievement and self-pleasure. The idea of individualism is viewed as a prominent belief in American society; however, this point of view comes largely from middle-class Americans who need to create self-identity across the globe. Thus, it is more precise to say that individualism is the main belief of middle-class Americans who are the major population of America. In addition to the creation of self-identity, individualism also urges people to become more competitive because the value influences the sense of self-attestation. However, individualism may not be the only reason that creates self-identity; the environment in which each individual lives can also influence a person to make this uniqueness.

II. Liberalism

The root of liberalism in the Western world can be traced back to democratic practices and rational thinking in ancient Greece. Also this belief stemmed from the Judeo-Christian's philosophy that emphasizes the dignity and freedom of mankind given by God (Perry, Chase, Jacob, Jacob, and Von Laue, 2008).

Liberalism is another fundamental philosophy and value in American society. The ideal focuses on the freedom of people to choose and live their life regardless of the individual's origin. Hence, people are free to act on their own accord regardless of background differences. From this point, liberalism not only helps create individual's characteristics by securing society acknowledgement of personal virtue, but it also helps constructing equality among people in the society (Kernohan, 1998).

The practice in liberalism, especially in America, is reflected from different levels of individual behaviors in different manners. At the national level, according to democratic practices, citizens of America are allowed to vote regardless of their background. If people find that the action of the government goes against the citizens' welfare, it is their right to protest. At an organizational level, all citizens who are capable of working can apply for a job regardless of their background as long as the citizens' qualification matches certain occupational requirements. Even in a family, children can explicitly object to their parents' decisions if the reasons given to the parents are commensurate.

Since America is a big nation with a great mixture of cultural differences, it is essential for individuals to accept diversity. If people fail to accept differences among one another, there will be social objections which are expressed in different manners in which the impact creates conflict among people. For example, in the religious aspect, Ashford and Lecroy (2008) described an issue when a literature about a Muslim with a negative point of view in the book *The Satanic Verses* and evoked unpleasant outcomes for Muslims in America. However, in a smaller society

such as a school, the conflicts among people can occur because they oppose each other's personal backgrounds as mentioned in Taylor Swift's song 'Mean'.

Kernohan (1998) also explains how liberalism should be tolerated by introducing the 'good intention'. He suggests that the term 'good intention' includes two aspects. The first aspect regards laws and regulations applied in the society and the second aspect regards moral standards. That is to say if people are to demonstrate their points of view, they should consider whether their actions go against the laws or the senses of morality. Kernohan's further suggestion is that people are normally well aware of their personal rights; they know what freedom and rights they have, but few realize the limitations of their rights. That is to say, people are well aware that they can act on their own accord, yet they overlook how their actions assault other people's beliefs and values. The consequence of the ignorance gives birth to inequality in society where a group of people with certain values violates those who have different beliefs.

In brief, liberalism in America gives rise to the ideal of respecting others' differences. However, in practice, people tend to accept their own rights to express themselves more than to realize different backgrounds in each individual, and this, to some extent, promotes conflict among people who share different beliefs in the society.

III. Materialism

As competition grows in American society, where the influence of individualism takes action in competitive behavior, the society becomes, more and more materialistic (Garbarino, Lee, and Soutar, 2011). People seek objects, including products and services, to satisfy their needs and make their identity outstanding. The belief is called 'Materialism' (ibid).

Materialism is the belief that materials define a person's value (Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel, 2010). For example, to identify one's love, men may give women

diamonds as a guarantee of their everlasting love. Since the value encourages material ownership, it can influence the transmuting of abstract ideas in people minds; hence, the people have higher demands for objects.

Some scholars studying materialism agree that materialism correlates with individualism (Garbino, Lee and Soutar, 2011 cited Richins and Dawson, 1992). The idea from a scholastic point of view is explained by the behavior of people who use materials to remind themselves of their existence. In American society, the result of the belief seen nowadays is reflected in the amount and quality of objects one can harness (ibid) such as land, property, cars, and the possession and the demonstration of in-trend or fashionable costumes. The reason comes from their thought that fashion is associated with wealth, credibility and sometimes beauty, thus they try to embody the concept with garments. In other words, materialism is associated with people's sense of individualistic presence as materials embody their identity.

In short, materialism is the belief that materials explain abstract ideas, beliefs or values. In addition, it also explains self-identity: the quality and quantity of objects that a person possesses represents the social status of the individual. The belief also relates to individualism because materialism helps construct personal identity through material possession.

IV. Capitalism

In America, many great enterprises and companies, Apple, McDonald, or Wal-Mart for example, started from small businesses. The success of these companies may not only come from their monetary funds or labor, but also from mental capital that stems from the belief in capitalism.

Capitalism is the belief that competition and monetary goal is the key to create a free enterprise (Lamb *et al.*, 2010). The implication of the value is found in the laws that prohibit monolithic control of markets and regulate free trade. This helps traders to manage their trading. When the value becomes more globalized, many countries

around the world pay more attention to investing in the workforce and property to increase the profit for their company.

In American society, the term ‘American capitalism’ refers to the idea that the world is dynamic and its histories are not secret. However, this idea seems to be inactive until the peak of the Cold War when America and its high authorities realized that societies, organizations, and market entrepreneurs are the fuel of power. This leads to the idea that promoting development and investment in the private sector can strengthen the power of governments, and this practice later influenced policy makers to invest in policy that enhances the growth of powerful money institutions such as Wall Street. However, without control or powerful enforcement to regulate investments, capitalism can bring negative impacts as it can be witnessed in the 1990 economic crisis (Lichtenstein, 2006).

V. Honesty and Trust

Nooteboom (2002) explains that ‘honesty’ requires acceptance of expressing undistorted information to other people. In other words, telling the truth is the key to generate honesty in individuals and bending the truth is the start to suspicion.

In American society, the concept of being honest is also mentioned in Funke (1989 cited Kohls, 1988) that most Americans believe in people who speak their mind without using words or language that can cause ambiguity or misunderstanding. In addition to what Funke suggests, Willard (2005) also points out that being honest, to speak from one’s mind, does not include communicative purposes or situations in which negative expressions (e.g. using emotions when both speakers and listeners try to reason with each other) are made. This is because strong emotional expression such as anger and resentment can negatively bend communicated information. This kind of discourse can cause misinterpretation of being honest.

The distortion of truth is viewed as being dishonest. This can be seen in different levels of social communities. They can range from smaller institutional societal levels such as families, schools, and colleges to large institutions such as business organizations or governmental sectors. At the smaller institutional level, schools, for example, students who cheat in their tests can be considered as dishonest. At a larger institutional level such as business organizations like American Seed Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, bending the operational processes of the company to gain benefit was also claimed to be dishonest (Fox, 2005 cited Kelly, 2003). The result of truth bending is related to destroying trust among people. In the worst case, people are dishonest to one another before their bond can be established, Eberly (1998) suggests that trust is hard to form because it needs time as people need to interact with each other and express truth towards one another. However, if a person starts to cheat other people when he or she has gained trust, it will collapse in an instant.

Some scholars point out the reason why people cheat or become dishonest results from their living environments. Albrecht *et al.* (2006) point out the environments with poor integrity, loose accountability, high pressure and low controls are more likely to cause dishonesty in the individuals. For example, when subordinates see their employers cheating, they more or less follow what their employers do. In addition, some scholars see what Albrecht *et al.* (2006) mention in a different way. Whitley and Spiegel (2002) point out that dishonesty can be viewed differently by personal backgrounds which influence the justification of each action which is regarded as dishonest. For example, in academic society, Whitley and Spiegel (2002 cited Cordeiro, 1995) mention an incident when international students from a country called Jaxar were accused of plagiarism by a group of faculty members at a university when they helped each other in fulfilling course materials and pass exams. The students stated that it is normal in their country where they believe that every individual in their society are 'brothers' of one big extended family, to help each other, especially those who are in the utmost need. In brief, the presence of dishonesty in particular societies stems from the cultural background of each individual, including the values and beliefs that shape individual thought, and

environmental backgrounds, and the culture of larger and more complex communities such as academic institutions and workplaces.

Honesty can occur among people and within oneself. For personal honesty, Hamilton (1995: 195) points out that:

Recognizing when we are wrong, admitting our mistakes, making amends, owning up to our self-destructive acts and recognizing our character defects are also painful actions associating with rigorous self-honesty.

This means that ones have to learn from their mistakes and fix them up instead of rejecting it. One example of being honest to oneself is found in Taylor Swift's song 'December' in which she atones for her mistake and tries to make amends for her action.

In summary, belief in honesty is the belief in telling the truth. In American society, the truth is viewed as undistorted realities of personal attitudes or existing phenomena. Honesty is also influenced by the environment like other values. If a person is to live or work in an environment where deception is normal, the person will be more likely to become dishonest.

Aside from being honest by telling the truth, honesty can be achieved by accepting one's defections. The sense of accepting one's defections does not mean that a person has to know or recognize his or her own faults, but they should be able to make amends for the mistakes.

VI. Love and care

In American society, a scholar (Hollander, 2011) explained that the value of love in most of American is a mixture of the traditional European's romanticism, which concerns the idea of passion towards other people, and American cultural orientation of individualism and materialism. In relation to these two values, the sense

of love and care in American belief includes the sense of relating romantic feeling with practical motivation, for example having passion with reasons or love to fulfill one's desirability (Hollander, 2011). Similarly, Knox and Schacht (2010) have classified American love into two types: romantic and realistic love. In American society, romantic love is generally recognized as "love at first sight". This kind of love is normally characterized by passion and excitement which occurs between lovers. The symptoms of people who fall into romantic love include palpitation of heart, extreme change of mood, and obsession towards the partner. With romantic love, this makes American people decide to establish romantic relationship on their own free will rather than considering environmental factors to influence their decision as Asian or some European societies do (Knox and Schacht, 2010). Hence, sometimes Americans can face conflicts in their romantic relationship either influenced by their society or between lovers.

However, romantic love can develop into realistic love after marriage. The characters of realistic love consist of the sense of caring, for the security, comfort, and welfare among the couples (Knox and Schacht, 2010). In Carroll (2010 cited Sternberg, 1985), the sense of realistic love is composed of three elements; intimacy, commitment, and passion. The development of these elements is reckoned by the length of time the couples spend together; the longer they carry on with their relationship, the more these elements develop.

Although love can be established either by an individual's passion or by social influences, it can also have an end. Many lovers have experienced the situation which is called love "love loss" (Carroll, 2010). This phenomenon is generally conveyed by expressions in pop songs since the songs are largely of interested to adolescents and young adults whose romantic relationships are still developing. People who experience a broken relationship generally face depression which results in physiological changes, skipping of the heartbeat, or, in the worst cases, suicide or homicide (Carroll, 2010 cited Moore *et al.*, 2010, and Knox and Schacht, 2011 cited Fisher *et al.*, 2010). In addition, the behaviors of the people are also expressions of their mental status. Many people would blame themselves, lose self-esteem, or have

the declination of trust in other people (Carroll, 2010 cited Locker *et al.*, 2010; Timmreck, 1990).

Beside love and care between lovers, American people also share love and care among family members (Knox and Schacht, 2010). This kind of love tends to be longer than romantic relationship since parents share the duty to look after their newborn.

VII. Patriotism

A value that influences the commitment of American people to act on behalf of their country's prosperity is patriotism. In a general sense, patriotism is the sense of love and devotion that people have towards their country. In America, the sense of patriotism is exceptionally strong and it is a drive of globalization where American culture and influence play a role in the lives of the global population (Brewer, 2009).

Brewer (2009) explains what makes patriotism a strong belief in American society is the success of the nation in WWII. The victory in the war gave America an opportunity to reign supreme as a new global power. Nonetheless, the scar from failing skirmishes in Vietnam and rivalry against Russian power made America remained unstable as a new power in global position. Hence, to secure its identity and position in the world, America makes use of encouraging the value of patriotism in its people.

Because of the value of patriotism, most Americans believe that America is the one and exceptional nation that brings help to itself and other countries to maintain global peace, liberty, independency, and democracy (Brewer, 2009). This belief can be seen in media such as movies and cartoons where heroes do their jobs, for example, to save the world from threats, and terrorism.

American country life

What makes rural American culture outstanding, particularly those aspects generally witnessed in the south (Malone and Stricklin, 2003), are the cultural values that stem from religious belief (Ownby, 1990; Harkins, 2004). To clarify why religion became an important factor that shaped American South cultural values, Mathews (1977) explained the influence of religion in the American South which can be traced back to the early 1600s in Virginia. At that time, the American South was shattered by the English newcomers who clashed with the natives and the earlier white American settlers. Furthermore, the lifestyles of southern people which had not seriously been associated with religion began to change with the influence of Christianity which was promoted by Governor Thomas West, who was known as Lord De La Warre to gather people together to enhance solidarity in the community (Mathews, 1977). The rise of Christian adherence and serious practice in the religion's teaching eventually resulted in the integration of American cultural values of honesty and trust (e.g. the practice of sin confession to the church) and the value of love and care in some of the Americans who lived in rural southern areas. However, there were also some southern Americans who did not adhere to religious teaching, thus they did not follow the values.

Ownby (1990) points out that the southern Americans in those days adhered or were bound to Christianity and this adherence gave birth to social norms and recreations that answered the belief in the teaching of Christ. The southern, particularly white Americans who strictly adhered to Christianity see the other people who held different religions, such as the black Americans, as sinners. On the other hand, some other white Americans who appreciated a fun-loving lifestyle cared less about religion and exhibited behaviors that negated religious teaching (e.g. binge drinking, fighting, etc.). However, from the 1800s, many southern Americans were bound to religious teaching more than their ancestors since the protestant doctrine became the prominent moral discipline in the south. This emphasized, and in some cases, devalued everyday life activities. For example, some southern Americans who were generally strict about religious teaching made use of the teaching to encourage their routine activities as the acts that brought the protestant practitioners closer to

God whereas those who did not appreciate the doctrine saw the teaching as a punishment for the sinners (Ownby, 1990).

In addition to the history of influence of Christianity in the American South, the reliance on agriculture to sustain a living (Gray and Robinson, 2004) was also a remarkable attribute. The lifestyle of the people was simple. However, this way of life began to shift with the development of industrial business which expanded from the big cities in America. In addition, other social phenomena that can be clearly observed as results from the Great Depression in the 1930s and the outcome of World War II were migration of the American South working class people and the rise of the female workforce (Schäfer, 2012). These social phenomena forced people in rural areas to travel to urban areas and seek work opportunities to sustain their living (Brown and Swanson, 2003) which consequently resulted in cultural clashes between local, rural and urban cultures (e.g. local ways of life versus city life, and the hardship of working in industrial manufactures (e.g. cotton mills, and the boom of the automobile industry) (Harkins, 2004).

In particular, in the late twentieth century (Grantham, 1994) due to the industrial boom in urban and rural areas and the rising power of women after the end of WWII, many working class people who moved from the rural to urban areas still suffered more from adaptation to urban society, and this led to emotional depression (e.g. agony, homesickness), unpleasant behaviors (e.g. binge drinking, violence), or, in some cases, religious resolution (Tichi, 1994; Frith, 2004; Schäfer, 2012). These sensations and behaviors of these rural immigrants seem to reflect that urban values influenced American rural immigrants' ways of life. For example, individualism (e.g. struggling to live in big cities to be successful in their life), and liberalism (e.g. fighting) can be observed among these immigrants.

Pop Songs and Country Songs

This section will lead the main discussion on the linguistic aspects in pop songs, especially those presented in the “country song” which is considered as a sub

type of “pop song”. Consequently, the section will largely focus on lyrical aspects and the origin or creation of pop songs and country songs rather than providing details on musical and instrumental elements.

The term “pop song” has been given different definitions. From a linguistics point of view, however, a pop song refers to any piece of lyrical content that relates to one’s daily life written using simple language which is easy to understand (Frith *et al.*, 2001). Due to the features of its simplicity, pop songs are easy to write, and many people who are fascinated by songs start to join the community of the music industry and distribute their own songs. With the great variety of people, hence, pop songs are comprised of a great variety of sub genres whose content is presented in different ways.

Among many others, one interesting genre of pop songs is country songs. Pence (2012) pointed out that the linguistic style and lyrical content of the song is similar to poetry since the lyrics of country songs originate from poetry, like ballads, a kind of poetic verse that is generally used in music (Bold, 1979). Thus, when one listens to country songs, one may feel that one is listening to a ballad.

One remarkable linguistic aspect in pop songs is the use of figurative language (Frith *et al.*, 2001). The purpose of figurative language in pop songs is not only to entertain the audience, but also to connote cultural values which particular groups of audience are familiar with. Normally, the conception of cultural values expressed through figurative language in pop songs mostly relies on both the lyricist’s and the audience’s experiences and perceptions of cultural values. In other words, the cultural values in pop songs are shared by the lyricists and their listeners.

In the aspect of lyrical content, country lyrics describe the reality of American people’s lives, generally the ‘white’ Americans, who live in rural areas with low income. In other words, the songs generally reflect the life of lower class white Americans. For the lives of people mentioned in country pop, most songs involve the themes of love, cheating, and poverty (Ellison, 1995).

As American country songs focus on American countryside lifestyle through the perspective of American country song lyricists (Tichi, 1994; Frith, 2004), their popularity is generally appreciated by American audiences. This is due to the fact that some aspects of simple lifestyle in the American countryside (e.g. nature admiration, migration into urban areas, agony from love lost, etc.) capture the audience attention that occurs in different spans of a person's lifetime which the lyricists express in lyrics.

American country songs can be categorized into two different sub-genres: one which is known as 'hard-core' and another is 'soft-shell'. The term 'hard-core' in lyric dimension refers to the lyrics which narrate personal life experiences in the countryside. The experiences can vary from the senses of the heart-breaking sensation from love and painful life in the countryside to the admiration of countryside life (Frith, 2004) and reflections of religious belief. The senses of heart-break and painful life were well-recognized as the main sensations in American country songs due to the suffering of American working class people who sought work opportunities in urban areas (Schäfer, 2012). The theme of religion was largely influenced by black Americans whose ways of life were oppressed physically and mentally by the white Americans (Malone and Stricklin, 2003).

On the other hand, 'soft-shell' country songs tend to have more sophisticated lyrics, that is, the lyrical styles use more complicated language, including connotations, and include common pop song themes, such as the theme of love (Frith, 2004). Frith (2004) pointed out that the development and interchange between the two country song styles rest on the people's lifestyle in American society which became more urbanized. For example, from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, hard core American country songs became popular to urban audiences because they provided the nostalgic sensation of the countryside, such as the tranquil scenery and the easy-going lifestyle for which many urban dwellers yearn (Tichi, 1994).

The reviewed literature of American country songs suggests that Taylor Swift's songs used in this study can be considered as country songs since they narrate the artist's life in which they describe different experiences at different spans of time.

Previous Research Related to this Study

To guide the investigation of this study, related previous studies were also reviewed. The following section presents the summaries of previous research works and their discussions.

Regarding research that has inquired about people's social or cultural values, Moore and Moore (2004) studied 15 different Arabic national anthems from 22 Arab League nations and 15 European national anthems translated into English using the content analysis method to identify the themes of each anthem. The purpose of the study was to identify the prominent themes of each anthem and compare the themes between the Arabic national anthems and the European national anthems. In his study, 7 themes expressing different social values were found. These included aggression, pain, liberty, glory, pride, and honor and other abstract ideas such as nature, cheer, and religion.

The result revealed that among these 7 themes, it seemed to suggest that Arab national anthems significantly referred to the themes of cheer, and liberty less than the theme of pain which was in contrast to the European anthems. With regard to other lesser prominent themes of social or cultural ideals, the Arab anthems revealed more references to glory and peace than unity, which were presented more frequently in the European anthems. According to Moore, Arabian histories recorded significant loss in wars with other nations; hence, the theme of pain in these national anthems is meant to remind people of the negative impacts from wars. In conclusion, Moore suggested that the anthems reveal the values and thoughts of people of different societies; because of different historical experiences dealing with wars, the people of Arab League nations seem to feel that war is more threatening to their lives than the Europeans do.

Another study with the topic of cultural values in relation to the roles of language devices was conducted by Chaihiranwattana (2008). In the study, she explored the roles of figurative language in Central Thai folk songs with the major aim to explain how it connoted Thai cultural values. The source of data in her study consisted of 154 songs from between 1975 and 1997. She based her investigation on descriptive and interpretive methods of content analysis employing the framework suggested by the experts (Chaihiranwattana, 2008 cited Corbett, 1975; Leech 1975). In her findings, Chaihiranwattana suggested that tropes such as metaphor, simile and personification played major roles in Central Thai folk songs in connoting the cultural values of Thai people. In sum, she concluded that some major Thai cultural values such as Buddhism, and male dominated society were obviously expressed through the connotations of figurative language. Overall, her findings supported the explanation regarding the power of linguistic features in translating meanings and the role of language that plays a part in human culture as a sign system that acts as a tool to convey beliefs of a certain group of people towards the world (Chaihiranwattana, 2008 cited Duranti 1997). In musical or poetic works, figurative language, as one of these language devices, has a prominent influence in conveying national cultures from the lyricist's perspective.

Pinichka (2005) studied the purposes of using figurative language in Sir Cliff Richard's top ten songs from the 1950s to the 2000s. Various purposes were identified from the employment of figurative language in this artist's musical works. First, they are used as ornaments for the songs to impress the audience. For example, Pinichka points out that the figurative language use in the song "Move It", is to encourage people to take an impression in Rock n' Roll, Jazz and Country music. Secondly, different types of figurative language help convey cultural senses that are demonstrated by the lyricist. For example, in the song "Mistletoe and Wine", the use of metaphor in the statement "The child is a king," is meant to compare the child with Jesus since he was born in the night which is now known as Christmas and has become the religious leader in Christianity since then.

Dhepanont (2005) studied the English language used in Catholic hymns. The selected Catholic hymns for his study were from the book of Christian songs used by the Redeemer Church in Bangkok. Content analysis was employed in the study. Ten types of figure of speech including metaphor, simile, synecdoche, personification, symbol, allusion, apostrophe, alliteration, hyperbaton, and repetition were found. Dhepanont explained that these figures of speech found in the Catholic hymns in her study were also presented in the teaching of Jesus in the Bible. With this connection, Dhepanont suggests that the use of figurative language in the Bible and in the hymns is to emphasize the key concepts of spiritual truth which Jesus was trying to transmit to his disciples.

Chaktirit's study (2008) entitled 'Figurative Language and Influences of American Country Songs on Thai Audiences' also showed the effectiveness of figures of speech in connoting intended messages. The researcher aimed to identify the predominant figures of speech used in American country songs from the 1960s to the 2000s that influence the messages of American country songs for a Thai audience. The result revealed that simile, metaphor, hyperbole and personification were prominent figures of speech used in the American country songs that influenced and whose sound stimulated emotions in Thai audiences. Interestingly, the researcher also reported that the Thai audience perceived that the American country songs influenced their life in that they promoted clearer understanding of the American rural life-style. Nevertheless, specific themes relating to American cultural values were not reported.

In the study of Figures of Speech in the S.E.A. Write Award Literature Depicting Thai Politics (Narudom, 2007), the researcher investigated the frequently used figures of speech that connoted Thai politics in 1973, 1976, and 1992 in five pieces of award-winning S.E.A. written literature in 1980, 1981, 1983, 1989, and 1993 by Nawarat Phongpaibul, Assiri Thamchod, Khomtuan Kannu, Jiranan Phitprecha, and Vin Riaowarin respectively. The research employed a qualitative data method of description and interpretation, and the method of content analysis to create statistical data. The result revealed nine most frequently used figures of speech namely personification, rhetorical question, paradox, simile, synecdoche, symbol,

metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole. The researcher suggested that each type of figure of speech reflected and portrayed vivid political ideals and changes in the Thai political climate in different periods (e.g. the political reformation of Thailand in 1932, the political revolutions in 1973, 1976, and 1992).

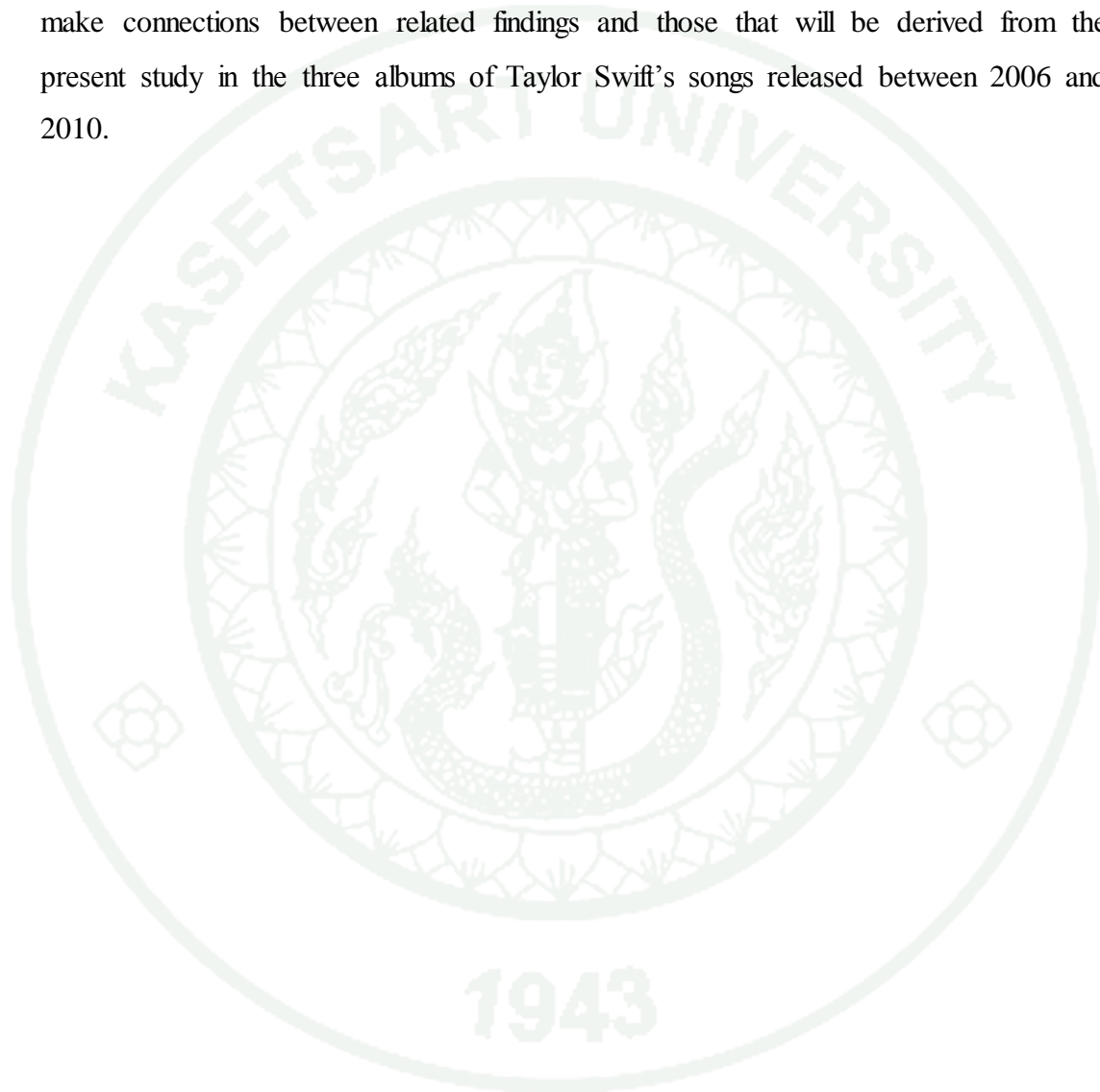
In the study of *An Analysis of Figurative Language in Cosmetic Advertisements in Women Magazine* (Chumsri, 2009), the research aimed to investigate the types of figure of speech used in cosmetics advertisements in one hundred women's magazines and how frequently they were used. The researcher employed a qualitative research approach to analyze the figures of speech and their frequency. The researcher reported twelve figures of speech used in the magazines. The most common figures of speech were pun, repetition, metaphor, and rhetorical question. The researcher also suggested that each type of the most frequently found figures of speech had different methods to draw consumer attention to the product. For example, the use of pun attracted consumers by creating relaxation towards the products while metaphor compared the products to other things which convinced consumers to believe that using the products would be beneficial to them.

In *An Investigation on Figurative Language Employed in English Advertisements in In-Flight Magazines* (Pathumratathan, 2012), the researcher aimed to identify types of figurative language employed in English advertisements in seventeen issues of in-flight magazines and to analyze the roles played by different types of figurative language in certain categories of English advertisement found in the magazines. One hundred and seventy two advertisements were analyzed using content analysis with descriptive and interpretive methods. The findings revealed five common types of figurative device namely alliteration, metaphor, parison, personification, and rhetorical question. In addition, the researcher suggested that figurative devices have impacts on the success of advertisement goals.

From these previous studies, it is obvious that figurative language plays important roles to convey intended meanings in different genres of writings. As for its particular roles in literary works such as songs and literature, figurative language

reflects some cultures that influence or inspire the lyricists or singers, and, possibly, the target audience who also share similar background knowledge of the certain cultures.

The summary of the previous studies will be beneficial for the researcher to make connections between related findings and those that will be derived from the present study in the three albums of Taylor Swift's songs released between 2006 and 2010.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following discussions regard the research design, methods and procedures of data collection (i.e. sampling, participants, and instrument), and the data analysis. The verification of the analysis is also included.

Research Approach

To address the research questions in this present study, exploratory methods in a qualitative approach were employed for the investigation of the songs' content in Taylor Swift's pop song collection. The descriptive and interpretive methods in this study were mainly based on the frameworks of content analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), and Strauss and Corbin (1998). The theoretical concepts that guide the investigation of this study include the conceptual framework of figurative language concept (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974 and Eco 1976; Dobrovolskij, and Piirainen, 2005; Carroll, 2008) the types of figure of speech (Burton, 2007; Ray, 2007, 2008; Pence, 2012; Pence, 2012) and American cultural values: individualism, (Hofstede, 1984) liberalism, (Kernohan, 1998) materialism, (Lamb, Hair, and Mcdaniel, 2009) capitalism (Lamb *et al.*, 2009) and honesty and trust (Nooteboom, 2002), love and care (Carroll, 2010; Knox and Schacht, 2010), and patriotism (Brewer, 2009). The study explored the connotations which convey American cultural values found within the songs. The methods and procedures of data collection and data analysis are described as follows:

Sampling Method and Data Collection

Sources of Data

The sampling in this study was purposive. The sampling consisted of all of the lyrics in **39 songs** from 3 music albums by Taylor Swift from 2006 to 2010 which are Taylor Swift, Fearless, and Speak Now. The reasons why the researcher purposively selected the samples in this study was based on the audiences' interest in Taylor Swift's popularity as a world country pop singer whose most popular songs were released between 2006 and 2010. In addition, after the down fall of country songs in the mid-1900s, there were attempts to bring back the popularity of this musical genre by some senior lyricists in the early years of the 21st century. The bloom of her songs in this period has helped increase the popularity of the genre (Wikipedia, 2009).

Some of Taylor Swift's songs may not be listed on the American Billboard chart, yet they still clearly reflect American cultural values. Thus, the analysis of every song in the every album would provide a broader picture of American cultural values. All selected lyrics are retrieved from the internet website 'letssingit.com', which is the most recommended source of lyrics by viewers.

Procedures of Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to investigate the connotations connoting American cultural values which are expressed by figures of speech in the American country songs of Taylor Swift, and how these cultural values are conveyed by the devices of figurative language.

To address the first and the second research questions, both interpretive and descriptive methods will be employed. The procedures of the analysis of this study are summarized as follows:

1. Identify lyrics with figures of speech expressing connotations that connote cultural values.
2. Identify and describe the types of figure of speech (Ray, 2007: 2008, bellevuecollege.edu, retrieved on April 4, 2012 and Pence, 2012) regarding the concept of figurative language (Partington, 1998 cited Leech, 1974; Dobrovolskij, and Piirainen, 2005; Carroll, 2008) and by the process of labeling and coding.
3. Identify the themes of connotations that are expressed through figures of speech by the process of labeling and coding in each unit of analysis (i.e. one verse).
4. To ensure the reliability of the analysis in this study, 30 percent of the preliminary identification investigated by the researcher was validated by experts. That is the researcher and the experts identified and discussed the identifications and descriptions of different types of figure of speech and the interpretation of themes of connotations conveyed by the figurative devices to gain agreement for further analysis (see Appendix A). After gaining 80 percent agreement (Miles and Huberman, 1994), the researcher continued work on the identification and description of the remaining data (see Appendix B for the use of figures of speech and C for American cultural values and themes of connotation).
5. Derive the common broader themes of the connotations using the framework of the common American cultural values presented in Chapter 2.
6. Make connection between these derived themes of American social values and the use of figures of speech.
7. Develop theoretical concepts derived from the overall findings to provide a common picture of this phenomenon.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in this section address the research question 1: “What are the common American cultural values connoted by figures of speech in Taylor Swift’s songs?” and the research question 2: “How are those common American cultural values conveyed by the figures of speech in Taylor Swift’s songs?”.

To address research question 1, the common themes of connotation of American cultural values as well as the common types of figures of speech employed will be firstly reported. To address research question 2, discussion on how figurative language was applied to connote those American cultural values is presented.

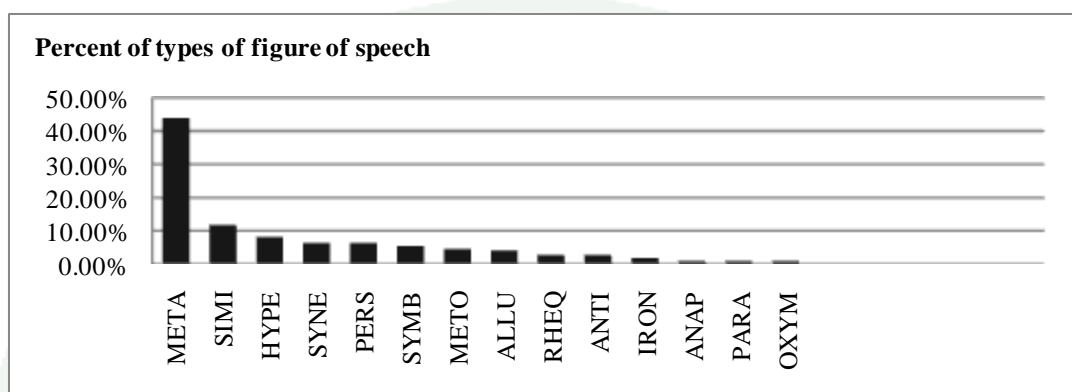
Prior to the discussion of the themes of connotation of American cultural values and how they are conveyed by the figures of speech in Taylor Swift songs, primary findings regarding the occurrences of figures of speech employed are described.

Types of figure of speech

The results revealed that 3 types of figure of speech occurred more frequently than 8 percent of the overall occurrences of figures of speech found (totaling approximately 63.79 percent of the overall findings). These included metaphor (43.89%), simile (11.76%), and hyperbole (8.14%), which were considered as common devices in this present study. The frequencies of the remaining 11 types of figure of speech (totaling approximately 36.14 percent of all data) were between 0.45-6.33 percent. These figures of speech included symbols, metonymy, synecdoche, allusion, personification, antithesis, rhetorical questions, irony, paradox, anaphora,

and oxymoron. To provide clearer understanding of how frequently these figures of speech occurred across the analyzed data, the data was presented in figure 1.

Figure 1 Percent of types of figure of speech



Note: META= Metaphor

SIMI=Simile

HYPE=hyperbole

SYNE=Synecdoche

PERS=Personification

SYMB=Symbol

METO=Metonymy

ALLU=Allusion

RHEQ=Rhetorical question

ANTI=Antithesis

IRON=Irony

ANAP=Anaphora

PARA=Paradox

OXYM=Oxymoron

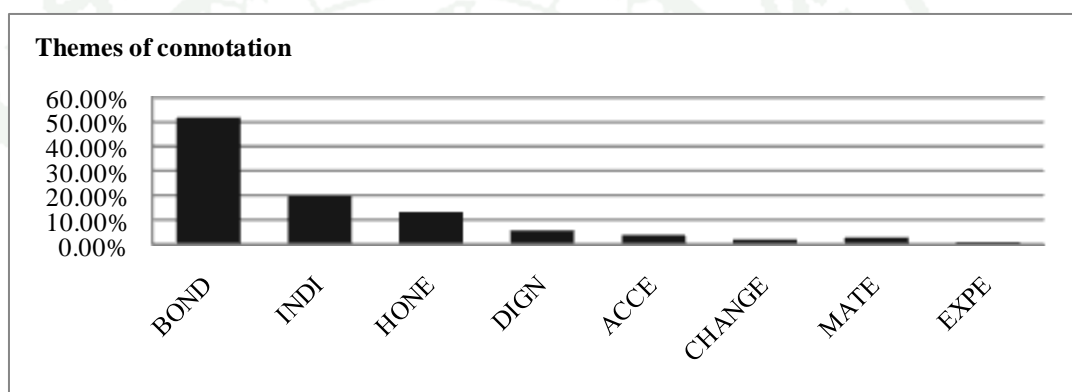
Connotations expressing American cultural values

Among the themes of connotation with higher occurrences of figures of speech as reported above, the results of the present study showed four prominent American cultural values relevant to the major attitudes and traits of American people as suggested by different experts. These four values were love and care (Knox and Schacht, 2012; Carroll, 2012), (Hofstede, 1984), honesty and trust (Nooteboom, 2002), and liberalism (Kernohan, 1998; Ashford, and Lukes, 1991) cited.in Lecroy, (2008) To note, prior to the final conceptualization of these four aspects of values, the researcher identified the data and derived relevant primary themes of the analyzed

expressions. The themes related to these values include bond and relationship (51.88%), independency (19.81%), honesty (13.2%), and dignity (5.66%). Although some other miscellaneous themes of connotation were found in this study, they are not discussed.

To provide a clearer picture of the frequency of the themes of connotation occurred across the analyzed data, their percentage was presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 Percent of themes of connotation



Note: BOND=Bond and relationship

INDI=Individualism

HONE=Honesty

DIGN=Dignity

ACCE=Acceptance

CHANGE=Change

MATE=Materialism

EXPE=Expectation

In addition, the connection of the common themes of connotation and the common figures of speech in each theme are presented in table 1.

Table 1 Percentage of common figures of speech in each common theme

Common Themes Figures of speech	Bond and relationship (51.88%)	Independency (19.81%)	Honesty (13.2%)	Dignity (5.66%)
Metaphor	39.81%	47.5%	41.93%	36.36%
Simile	13.88%	15%	0	18.18%
Hyperbole	10.18%	10%	12.9%	0
Symbol	0	0	12.9%	0
Irony	0	0	0	18.18%

The following section discussed how each theme of American cultural values found in this study was expressed by those figures of speech. For clarity, it should be noted that due to the different total number of items of the identified data, the percentage of each type of figure of speech in each theme may be different from that contributing to the overall picture. Also, although some miscellaneous devices appear to have a high percentage in specific themes, their frequencies of occurrence overall do not exceed 8 percent.

The first theme of **bond and relationship** was found to show the relationship between lovers or family members. The theme includes several sub-themes namely **making an impression, establishing a relationship, maintaining a relationship, breaking up a relationship, the aftermath of a broken relationship, and practical love**. In relation to this theme, American cultural values of **love and care** were expressed in the songs. As this theme was frequently presented, it seemed to complement the popular culture of love (Frith *et al.*, 2001) which is one of the dominant features of pop songs. The most common figures of speech that connoted this theme are metaphor (39.81%), simile (13.88%), and hyperbole (10.18%). Other miscellaneous devices occurring in this theme include allusion (8.33%), synecdoche (7.4%), personification (5.55%), metonymy (3.7%), rhetorical questions (2.77%),

symbols (1.85%), paradox (1.85%), antithesis (1.85%), anaphora (0.92%), irony (0.92%), and oxymoron (0.92%).

For example, in the song *Mine*, the **metaphor** that connoted this theme was found in the expression “*You are the best thing that’s ever been mine*”. The metaphor in this expression compared the person whom the speaker was talking about to the best object she had ever had; hence, the connotative message resulted from using the device of indirect comparison. This comparison is related to the common sense of a romantic relationship in which most lovers optimistically view their partner. Thus the message connoted by the device which indirectly compared the beloved person to something of the best quality should effectively enhance the audience’s perception of the positive elements of love and care, which are normally valued by Americans.

In the song *The Story of Us*, the expression “*And the story of us looks a lot like a tragedy now*” in the song *The Story of Us*, a device of **simile** (e.g. like) was employed. The simile makes a direct comparison between the breaking up of a romantic relationship or the unfulfilled love of the speaker and her boyfriend to a tragedy. As commonly perceived in any culture, the perspective of unfulfilled love bringing about sadness appears to be an understanding of a negative aspect of love and care in American pop songs. Thus, it can be said that the high frequency of this theme in American pop songs reflects the fact that this is also a common sentiment or cultural value of American people.

The use of **hyperbole** that connoted the theme was found in the song *The Story of Us* in which a part of a verse said “*And we’re not speaking, and I’m dying to know, is it killing you like it’s killing me*”. The expression connoted the message of the speaker’s suffering from being unable to know the feelings of her lover by exaggerating the fact that she would die if she does not understand her boyfriend. Both the hyperbole “*dying to know*” and “*is it killing you*” which emphasize the suffering from the unfulfilled love, seem to suggest that it is commonly practiced and perceived in any culture. This way of expressing feeling should effectively convey the negative impact of unfulfilled love that can hurt people’s feelings.

In addition to the 3 common types of figure of speech illustrated as aforementioned, some other miscellaneous devices are also presented here to exemplify the value of **bond and relationship**, which is commonly seen in American society.

In the song *Long Live*, the application of **allusion** by using the word *God* was seen in the verse “*And you take a moment. Promise me this that you'll stand by me forever. But if God forbids, fate should step in*”. With religious belief, God is described to hold almighty power over the human world. The intended message connoted from this allusion is that the speaker believes that she and her boyfriend should not be together if God does not accept their relationship. Interestingly, the employment of **personification** is also found in the expression. The lyricist personified the word fate by collocating it with the verb to step in. The connotation of the personification is that the speaker believes that aside from God’s authority to take control over a human life, fate also plays a part. Since the belief in God’s authority and fate strongly influences western cultures like in American society, the device referring to this almighty power should effectively convey that love can be controlled by this power.

The application of **metonymy** by using the word *one horse town* was seen in the verse “*So, baby, drive slow 'til we run out of road in this one horse town, I wanna stay right here. In this passenger seat, you put your eyes on me. In this moment, now capture it, remember it.*” The metonym *one horse town* referred to solitude and tranquility since “one horse town” refers to a small town that is normally situated in the American countryside. This connoted the sense of a place where lovers can spend their time developing their intimacy and romantic relationship. In other words, the use of the image of a one horse town was intended to create a dream place where the speaker wished to have a date with her boyfriend. Due to the fact that dating is a common practice to develop romantic relationships in American culture (Knox and Schacht, 2012), this device of making connections should effectively evoke the sense of increasing intimacy among lovers in to the audience’s perception.

The second theme of **independency** includes the sub-themes namely **self-esteem, self-realization, self-confidence, self-commitment, achievement, and pride** which are related to the value of **individualism**. The prominent figures of speech that are employed in connoting the theme are metaphor (47.5%), simile (15%), and hyperbole (10%). Other miscellaneous devices include metonymy (7.5%), synecdoche (5%), rhetorical questions (5%), symbols (5%), personification (2.5%), and anaphora (2.5%).

For example, **metaphors** that connote the theme were found in the song *Long Live*. In the expression “*We were the kings and the queens,*” the metaphors *the kings* and *the queens* which compare the speaker and the person to whom she refers with kings and the queens implies a sense of being an individual with high quality, for instance, because of their success, pride, and self-confidence. This sense appears to be commonly shared among members of any society, and it commonly occurs in the songs of Taylor Swift; hence, it seems to reflect that the American cultural value of individualism is well-perceived among her audiences.

On the other hand, when a person lacks some social beliefs such as pride and confidence, it seems that he or she will be regarded as inferior members of American society. This sense can be observed in the expression “*The way you move is like a full on rainstorm, and I’m a house of cards*” In the song *Sparks Fly*. The metaphor *a house of cards* implied the common sense of instability of the speaker. Since the house of cards represented an unstable structure which many people can perceive; thus, the metaphor strengthens the sense of instability of the character.

In the song *Speak Now*, the use of **simile** that connoted the theme was found in the expression of “*She floats down the aisle like a pageant queen*”. The simile was signified by the use of the word ‘*like*’ to compare the movement of the girl to the elegant movement of a pageant queen. It is common background knowledge that people in any society are aware of. More interestingly, this concept originated in America where pageant queens are women who have high **self-confidence** (Browne

and Browne, 2001). Thus, the device of making this kind of comparison should present a vivid perception of the social value of individualism to the audience.

In the song *Long Live*, The use of **hyperbole** that connoted the theme of independency was found in the expression “*I had the time of my life fighting dragons with you*”. The phrase *fighting dragons* was a hyperbole that exaggerated the intended meaning of overcoming challenging obstacles. To convey the meaning, the lyricist used the word ‘*dragons*’ which is a **symbol** that represents hardship and obstacles since the creatures are commonly understood as a vicious part of a challenging task or quest of heroes in fantasies. With the impact of employing these devices, the intended message that one should fight for his own achievement, which is regarded as a common American value, should be easily perceived by the audience. Since the intended message of the devices connoting the message of overcoming obstacles seems to be related to the sub-theme of **achievement**, the audience should realize what the lyricist tried to express through the exaggerated expression.

In addition to the 3 common types of figure of speech illustrated as aforementioned, some other miscellaneous devices, though less frequently occurring, are also presented here to exemplify some pictures that clearly demonstrate the American value of **individualism**.

In the song *Mine*, the use of **metonym** that connotes the theme of independency was found in the phrase *waiting table* in the expression “*You were in college working part time waiting tables*”. The phrase is used as a metonym to represent the concept of restaurant sideline work in which provides little money for one to earn his life. Due to the fact that many Americans, especially adolescents, may experience this kind of work to earn money to support themselves, the device of representation by specifically using a name of one thing to refer to another should help the audience to understand the intended message conveying the concept of self-reliance which is a part of American cultural value of individualism.

The third theme of **honesty** includes the sub-themes of **telling the truth**, **showing signs of betrayal or dishonesty**, and **atonement** which are related to the

American value of **honesty and trust** suggested by different experts. The prominent figures of speech that connote the theme are metaphor (41.93%) and hyperbole (12.9%). To note, in addition to the 2 common devices, in this particular theme, the use of symbols (12.9%) also appears quite frequently. Other miscellaneous themes are synecdoche (9.67%), hyperbole (6.45%), personification (6.45%), irony (3.22%), rhetorical questions (3.22%), and litotes (3.22%).

For example, in the song *Better than Revenge*, the use of the **metaphor** *actress* to connote the meaning of being a dishonest person was found in the verse “*She’s not a saint, she’s not what you think. She’s an actress, whoa! She’s better known for the things that she does on the mattress, whoa!*” As commonly understood, an actress is a person who can pretend to do any action to appeal to her audience. This seems to underline the opposite aspect of the sub-theme **telling the truth** because the girl mentioned by the speaker was not sincere in her actions. The way the character is portrayed as an actress, along with the expression conveying the sense of disdain, seems to suggest that Americans commonly do not accept dishonesty and distrust. Since the device of indirectly comparing the concept of dishonesty to the character of an actress is possibly a general understanding in any human society, the employment of metaphor empowering the intended message should be clearly perceived.

The next figure of speech used to convey the theme of **honesty** was **hyperbole**. For example, a hyperbole was found in the expression “*I’d go back to December turn around and make it alright*,” in the song *Back to December*. It exaggerates the fact that the speaker tried to make an attempt to turn back time to make amendment of her fault. This seems to reflect her belief that realizing and accepting her mistake is an important practice to show her honesty as Hamilton (1995) suggested. Thus, the employment of hyperbole can be regarded as a successful device to convey this common perception and cognition of the American cultural value of honesty and trust. In addition, the word ‘December’ in the statement was a metonym that connoted events in past, possibly in December, when romantic relationship of the speaker and her boyfriend broke up. In addition, the word ‘December’ which was a metonymy referring to painful events in the past between the

speaker and her boyfriend seems to enhance the connotation conveyed by the hyperbole.

In the song *Cold as You*, the application of **symbol** is also found in the word *gray* in the expression “*You put up walls and paint them all a shade of gray*”. The connotation of the color of gray is ambiguity and doubt since the color is a mixture of black and white which is generally viewed as non-clear cut shade of color in the perception of the westerners. Thus, the connotation of the expression was that the person whom the speaker spoke of was hard to trust.

The final theme of **dignity** includes the sub-themes of **maintaining one’s pride, respecting people’s rights, and regarding the differences of others**. In particular, the last two sub-themes are related to what Ashford and Lecroy (2008 cited Luke, 1991) described as “tolerant liberalism” which is a part of **liberalism**. With this principle, Americans believe that the society needs to respect one’s rights or decisions. On the other hand, an act that violates this principle is considered as abuse and harassment, which is considered as indignity. The common figures of speech found in this theme are metaphor (36.36%) and simile (18.18%). To note, in addition to the 2 common devices, in this particular theme, the use of irony (18.18%) also appears quite frequently. Other miscellaneous themes are metonymy (9.09%), hyperbole (9.09%), and synecdoche (9.09%).

In the song *Speak Now*, the use of **metaphor** was found in the word *barging* in the expression “*I am not the kind of girl who should be rudely barging in on a white veil occasion, but you are not the kind of boy who should be marrying the wrong girl*”. The word does not use to convey literal meaning of the movement of the boat. In fact, the word indicates that the movement of the girl is as fast as the boat that barges quickly. The figure of speech compared the girl (the speaker) who rushed into a wedding ceremony in the song to a boat or a ship that hurled against an object. The lyricist employed the word *barging* in the song to build up the sense that the character in the song chooses to be rude because of her love. With this strong emotion, she appears to forget the social value in respecting other people’s rights i.e. her boyfriend

and his new lover. Consequently, she breaks the doctrine of tolerant liberalism and her own dignity.

In the song *Mean*, the use of **simile** that connoted the theme was found in the expression “*words like knives and swords and weapons*” in the line “*You, with your words like knives and swords and weapons that you use against me*”. The device compares the words of the person mentioned by the speaker to weaponry with the word *like* to create resemblance between two different concepts and generate the connotation of the offensive expressions of the person. Hence, the device of making direct comparisons between the two concepts should create a clear perception in the audience of how disdainful the action was since this kind of action is a concern in American society.

In the song *Better than Revenge*, the use of **irony** was found in the expression “*let’s hear the applause,*” in the verse “*The story started when it was hot and it was summer, and I had it all I had him where I wanted him. She came along got him alone, and let’s hear the applause. She took him faster than you can say sabotage*”. The device connotes the meaning that contradicts the context by making a mockery of the statement which is normally and literally used to signify positive acceptance. As a result, its connotation is that the girl mentioned by the speaker lacked the sense of dignity since she cannot find a rightful way to have her own boyfriend; thus, she had to steal him from another girl. This kind of action seems to be commonly perceived as an unacceptable practice in any society. That is, improperly taking somebody or somebody belonging to someone is regarded as breaking moral practice as well as breaking his or her basic ownership or violating his or her right (Perry *et al.*, 2008). Taylor Swift frequently portrays this negative aspect of liberalism in many songs of hers. The device of contrasting the intended meaning to the literal meaning of the context should promote a vivid perception in the audience’s mind of how a vicious person could ruin someone’s right.

Overall, the results seem to reveal that the themes of bond and relationship, independency, honesty, and dignity are prominent as presented in the songs of Taylor

Swift are parts of American cultures, particularly in the cultures that relate to American country lifestyle. Considering these perspectives within the bigger framework of American cultural values, it appears to portray the values of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism respectively.

In sum, the illustrations of the excerpts analyzed above should provide more insight into the way in which figurative language embodies the intended message that the lyricist wishes to express. In brief, different figures of speech help to create vivid images or concepts of American cultural values in different styles which can eventually build up the audience's perception.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings in response to the first and the second research questions accordingly. The discussions and implications of the study mainly aim to develop relevant theoretical concepts regarding American values revealed from the findings as related to the framework of this study. In addition, the art of how connotations are used by Taylor Swift, a popular American icon of contemporary pop songs, to express those American cultural values is described and discussed theoretically. As a consequence, readers can perceive and develop their intellectual and professional insight into the way connotations can be crafted (by figures of speech) to make expressions of social values.

Conclusion of the Results of the Present Study

This study firstly aimed to identify common themes of connotations expressing American cultural values in 39 songs of 3 Taylor Swift albums released between 2006 and 2010. It should be noted that the sense of the identified American values (as defined in chapter one) include not only those that are American, but also those that are universally perceived but are also found to be prominent in American culture.

The concepts of American cultural values are generally applied to capture the audience's attention in many of Taylor Swift's songs. The results revealed that the 4 most common values that appeared in her songs including love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism.

Among the variety of figures of speech applied in the lyrics of Taylor Swift's pop songs, 3 common figures of speech were found. These figures of speech were metaphor, simile, and hyperbole. Aside from the common figures of speech, some

other types of figure of speech occur with a low frequency, yet they prominently express some common practices in culture (e.g. dating to influence intimacy in a romantic relationship and part time working in adolescence). In sum, the connotations of the American cultural values as aforementioned were expressed in various ways.

Interestingly, some other American cultural values such as materialism, capitalism, and patriotism in the framework presented in chapter 2 were not found in this study. To note, these values are more related to urban ways of life (Talen, 2005). This suggests that American cultural values found in the American country songs of Taylor Swift seem to project only the values that tend to be well-perceived by American people who are accustomed to the culture of the American countryside. In addition, the study reflected the perspectives of cultural values only through an American artist, thus it only represents the cultural values of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism as components of American cultural values.

As the results of the study show that various American cultural values were expressed through the use of common figures of speech in various songs, a possible explanation for these figures of speech is that they appear to communicate those connotations to create common perceptions and cognition in the audience about the intended meanings or messages effectively (Dobrovolskij, and Piirainen, 2005). To illustrate, the use of figures of speech makes connection between common entities and background knowledge regarding American country people beliefs, ways of life, and attitudes that are commonly shared between lyricists and the audience. It can be observed that the three main patterns of making connection between entities and the intended meanings are 1) by making indirect comparison between an entity and an intended meaning using shared background knowledge between the sender and the receiver of the message 2) by making direct comparison between an entity and an intended meaning using shared background knowledge between the sender and the receiver, and 3) by exaggerating facts (e.g. actual events or incidents, phenomena) to emphasize and make sense of the intended concept (Ray, 2007; 2008, and Pence, 2012).

As evidenced in this study, the most commonly found figures of speech namely metaphor, simile, and hyperbole appear to be highly effective tools that convey key messages to the audience in different fashions. To illustrate, the three common devices make the intended meanings more vivid and concrete, which finally results in creating perception and cognition in the audience's mind. For example, the metaphor 'the kings and the queens' helps create a perception and a cognition of the intended meaning that successful people are appreciated in the American cultural value of individualism. In short, the power of metaphor solidifies the key message.

Similarly, simile helps create perception and cognition, for instance, in this study of American cultural values, by making direct comparison between an abstract idea and a concrete object known by the sender and the receiver of a message. For example, the concept of sadness caused by the breaking up of romantic relationship is compared to a tragedy.

Aside from the devices of making both indirect and direct comparison as aforementioned, the device of exaggerating facts using hyperbole appears to have a strong influence in shaping perception and cognition of the intended meaning by the audience. For example, in this study, the lyricist used hyperbole to generate perception and cognition in the audience's mind that realizing one's fault is a way to express honesty in American culture.

As aforementioned, in addition to the powerful three common figures of speech, some other miscellaneous devices were also employed to express cultural values that were found prominent in American society. Among a few devices, metonymy was used to create perception and cognition in the audience by using an entity of something about which the lyricist and a certain group of audience shared common knowledge to represent a part of the whole concepts of a certain value. For example, the metonym of 'a one horse town' represents a peaceful atmosphere where people commonly use for dating to promote a romantic relationship. Due to the fact that the concept of dating in a peaceful place generates intimacy which many Americans may experience, the metonymy should effectively create cognition and perception of the cultural value of love and care.

In addition to the fact that figures of speech were effective tools to connote cultural values in American pop songs as revealed and presented in this study, other study's findings seem to suggest that figures of speech are also effective linguistic devices employed to convey cultural senses in different settings and genres of literature.

For example, the cultural values such as Thai simple ways of life (e.g. the ways of farmers), religious belief (particularly Buddhism), political belief (e.g. male dominant society) in Thai society were expressed by the methods of indirect comparison (metaphor), direct comparison (simile), exaggerating facts (hyperbole), personifying figures (personification), and representation of a part for the whole concept (metonymy) in the study of Figures of Speech in Central Thai Folk Songs (Chaihiranwattana, 2008). Also, in the study of Figures of Speech in the S.E.A. Write Award Literature Depicting Thai Politics (Narudom, 2007), the researcher found that the writers used figures of speech that were associated with figures or characteristics of those involved in Thai political phenomena in different incidents (e.g. the incident in B.E. 2516) to connote the events of the phenomena. In addition, the study of Figurative Language Used in Sir Cliff Richard's Songs of (Pinichka, 2005) also revealed that the tools of figurative language or figures of speech played an important part in the expression of cultural values regarding the cultural background of the lyricists.

Implications of the study

In conclusion, as discussed in this chapter, the evidence seems to suggest that the author of any literary work can effectively express intended messages or meanings through the employment of the devices of figurative language like Taylor Swift expresses common American cultural values that exist in common ways of life to her audience in her pop songs. In particular, the methods of making indirect and direct comparisons and exaggerating facts to emphasize concepts appear to effectively deliver and create perception and cognition of the intended message (as evidenced in the songs of Taylor Swift). Hence, this study should help create insight for writers

who are interested in using figures of speech to frame their key messages and effectively communicate them to express their perspective and cognition of cultural values or any other concepts similarly to the way Taylor Swift employs the devices. In addition, receivers of messages (i.e. listeners and readers) can also perceive the power of figurative language in constructing meanings when they consume any form of message.

Limitation of the Study

Some other American cultural values such as materialism, capitalism, and patriotism in the framework presented in chapter 2 were not found in this study. To note, these values are more related to urban ways of life (Talen, 2005). This suggests that American cultural values found in the American country songs of Taylor Swift seem to project only the values that tend to be well-perceived by American people who are accustomed to the culture of the American countryside. In addition, the study reflected the perspectives of cultural values only through an American artist, thus it only partially represented the cultural values of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism as parts of the whole picture of American cultural values.

Recommendation for Further Research

Aside from major American cultural values such as the value of love and care, individualism, honesty and trust, and liberalism that the researcher found in this present study, it appears that some cultural values are overlapping and reinforce one another. For example, the American cultural value of love and care seems to frequently occur with the value of honesty and trust while the cultural value of individualism occasionally occurs with the value of liberalism. Hence, the suggestion for further study is to investigate the relationships between different cultural values to conceptualize what senses of culture lyricists try to reflect or express to his or her audiences and how the combination of different cultural values reinforce one another.

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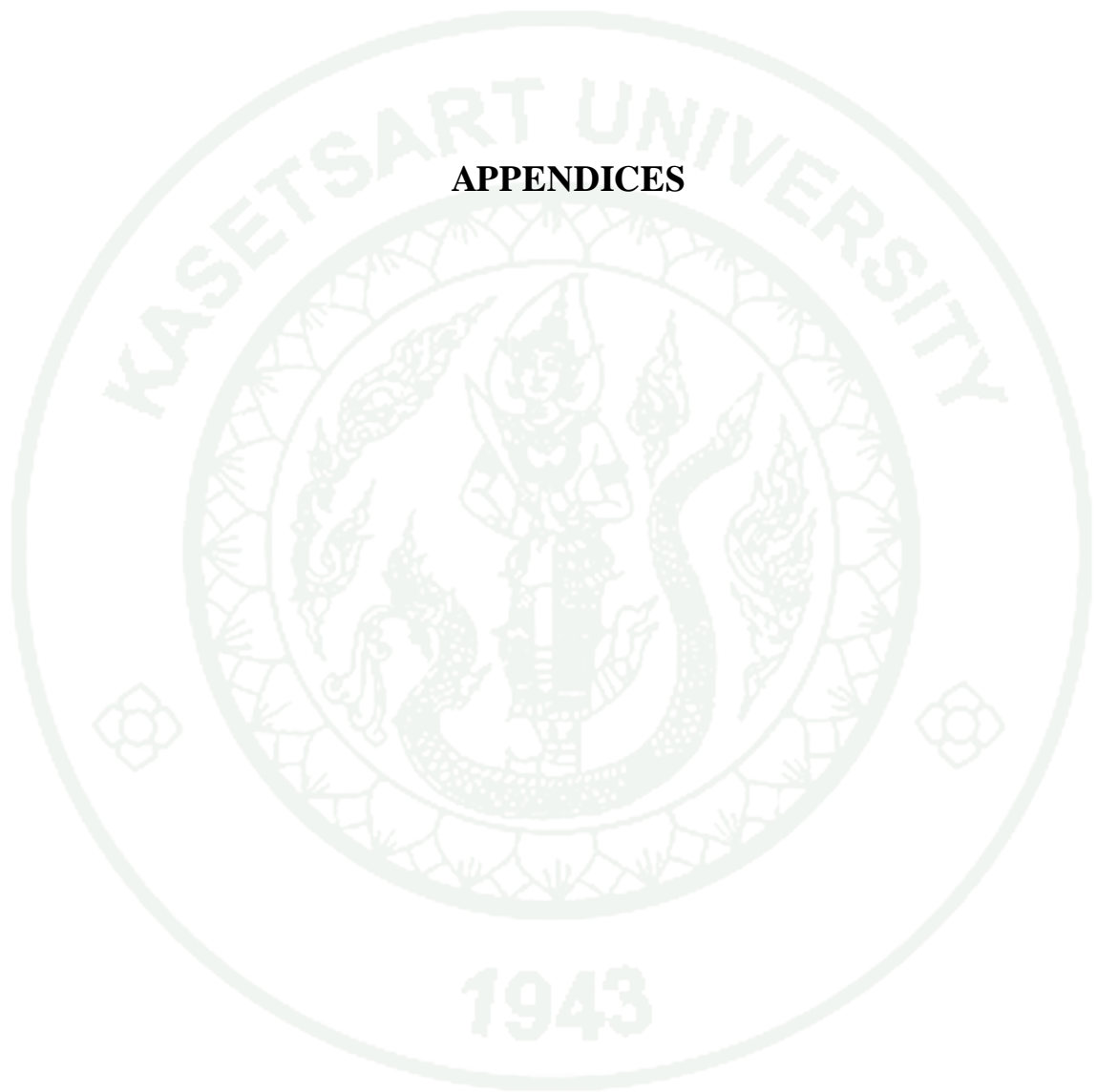
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APPENDICES



The logo of Kasetsart University is a large, light green circular emblem. It features a central figure of a woman holding a staff, surrounded by a decorative border. The text "KASSETSART UNIVERSITY" is written in a semi-circle at the top, and "1943" is at the bottom. Two small floral symbols are positioned on the left and right sides of the emblem.

Appendix A

Examples of Validated Data Regarding Types of Figures of Speech, Themes of
Connotation and American Cultural Values in Taylor Swift's Songs

Appendix A: Examples of validation chart regarding types of figures of speech, themes of connotation, and themes of American cultural values in Taylor Swift's songs

Appendix Table 1 Figures of speech, themes of connotation, and themes of American cultural values in the song 'Mine'

Lyrics with figures of speech connoting cultural values	Figures of Speech Identification	Validator's Agreement		Comments	Researcher's Connotation and Cultural Theme Interpretation		Validator's Agreement		Comments
		Agree	Disagree		Connotation	Cultural Value	Agree	Disagree	
<u>You were in college</u> <u>working part time</u> <u>waiting tables</u> Left a small town, never looked back	METO	/			A part time service waiter in a restaurant	INDI (A person is looking after himself by working.)	/		

Appendix Table 2 Figures of speech, themes of connotation, and themes of American cultural values in the song 'Dear John'

Lyrics with figures of speech connoting cultural values	Figures of Speech Identification	Validator's Agreement		Comments	Researcher's Connotation and Cultural Theme Interpretation		Validator's Agreement		Comments
		Agree	Disagree		Connotation	Cultural Value	Agree	Disagree	
<u>Well, maybe it's just</u> <u>me and my blind</u> <u>optimism to blame</u> Or maybe it's you and your sick need	PERS	/			The speaker thinks optimistically towards the man she spoke of	L&C (A person who only sees good)	/		

Appendix Table 2 (Continued)

to give love then take it away And you'll add my name to your long list of traitors who don't understand And I'll look back and regret how I ignored when they said run as fast as you can					without noticing his bad side. (The value of love and care is not fully reviewed, but the connotation may relate to the value.)	side of another person without considering his bad side is falling in love.)			
Dear John, I see it all now it was wrong <u>Don't you think nineteen's too young to be played with?</u> Your dark twisted games when I loved you so I should've known	RHEQ	/			To remind that the speaker at the age of 19 is not too young to be tricked	HONE (The man whom the speaker spoke of has tricked her to fall for him)	/		

Appendix Table 3 Figures of speech, themes of connotation, and themes of American cultural values in the song ‘Mean’

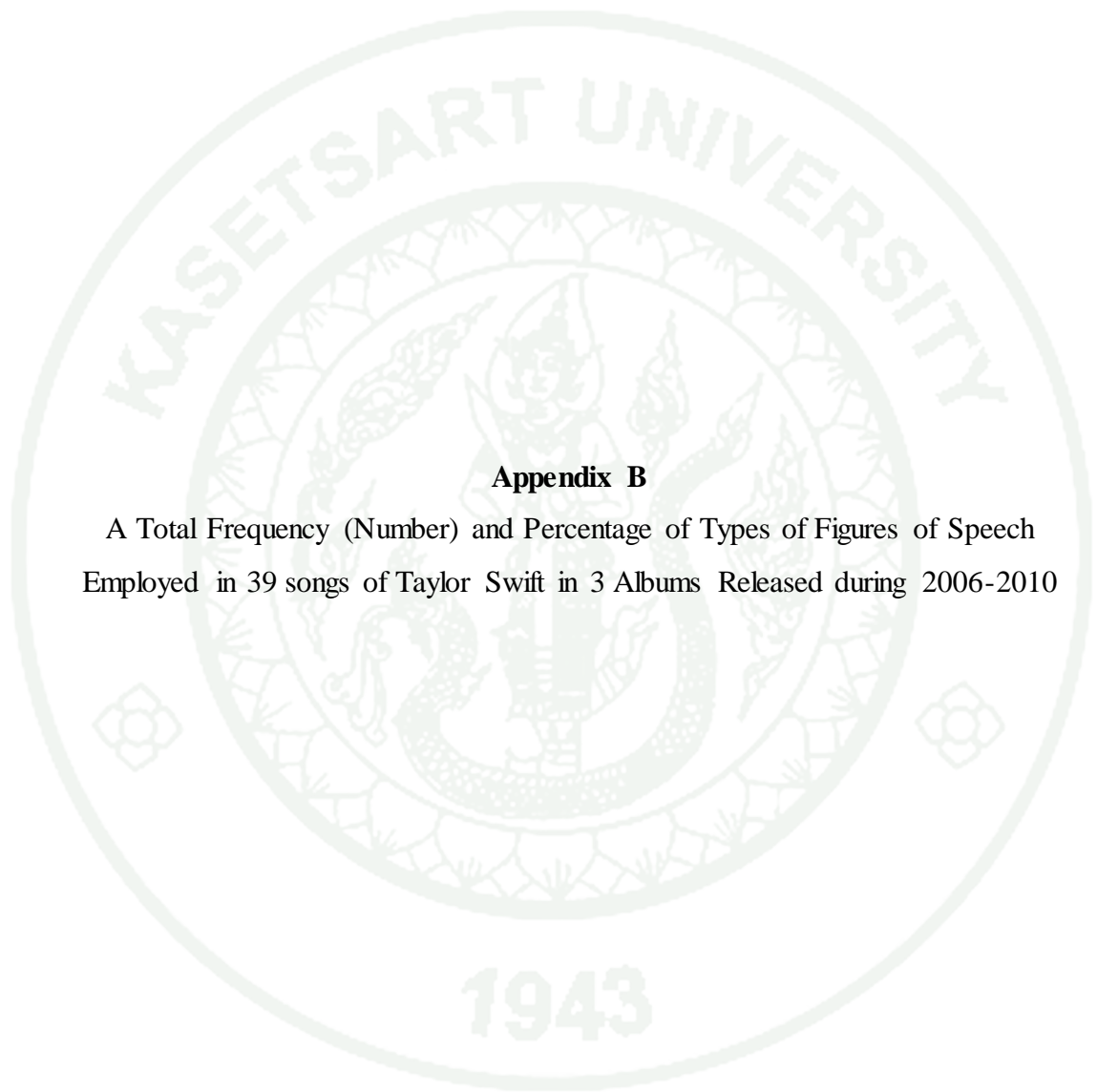
Lyrics with figures of speech connoting cultural values	Figures of Speech Identification	Validator's Agreement		Comments	Researcher's Connotation and Cultural Theme Interpretation		Validator's Agreement		Comments
		Agree	Disagree		Connotation	Cultural Value	Agree	Disagree	
<p><u>I'll bet you got pushed around,</u> <u>somebody made you cold</u> <u>But the cycle ends right now 'cause you can't lead me down that road</u> And you don't know what you don't know</p>	<p>META METO</p>	/	/	<p>Somebody makes the person whom the speaker spoke mean</p> <p>The cycle in which a person bullies another person and make the latter person a bully</p>	<p>LIBE (The person whom the speaker spoke of has his identity violated) LIBE (The cycle of creating a bully is rooted from personal identity violation)</p>	/	/		

Appendix Table 4 Figures of speech, themes of connotation, and themes of American cultural values in the song ‘The Story of Us’

Lyrics with figures of speech connoting cultural values	Figures of Speech Identification	Validator's Agreement		Comments	Researcher's Connotation and Cultural Theme Interpretation		Validator's Agreement		Comments
		Agree	Disagree		Connotation	Cultural Value	Agree	Disagree	
I used to know my spot was next to you									

Appendix Table 4 (Continued)

Lyrics with figures of speech connoting cultural values	Figures of Speech Identification	Validator's Agreement		Comments	Researcher's Connotation and Cultural Theme Interpretation		Validator's Agreement		Comments
		Agree	Disagree		Connotation	Cultural Value	Agree	Disagree	
Now I'm searching the room for an empty seat <u>'Cause lately I don't even know what page you're on</u>	SYNE	/			he speaker's boyfriend personal status or condition is unknown as if the speaker is unable to find which page her boyfriend is on	HONE (The speaker's boyfriend is not being truthful to the speaker.)	/		
<u>Now I'm standing alone in a crowded room</u> And we're not speaking And I'm dying to know, is it killing you Like it's killing me	PARA	/			The speaker feels lonely because her boyfriend does not care of her anymore. (The value of love and care is not fully reviewed, but the connotation may relate to the value.)	L&C	/		

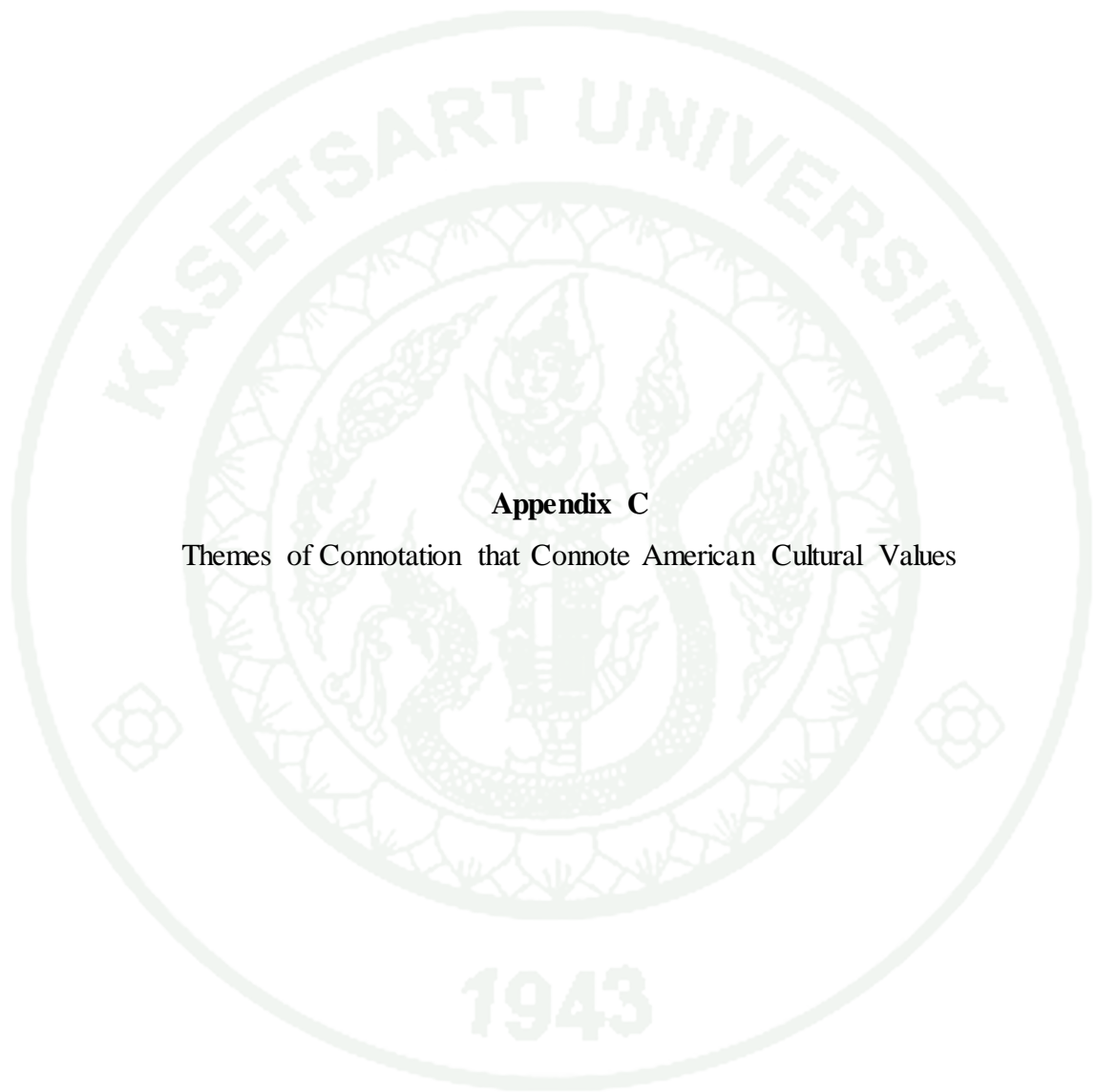


Appendix B

A Total Frequency (Number) and Percentage of Types of Figures of Speech
Employed in 39 songs of Taylor Swift in 3 Albums Released during 2006-2010

Appendix Table 5 A total frequency (number) and percentage of types of figures of speech employed in 39 songs of Taylor Swift in 3 albums released during 2006-2010

No.	Types of Figures of speech	Codes	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Metaphor	META	97	43.89
2.	Simile	SIMI	26	11.76
3.	Hyperbole	HYPE	18	8.14
4.	Synecdoche	SYNE	14	6.33
5.	Personification	PERS	14	6.33
6.	Symbol	SYMB	12	5.42
7.	Metonymy	METO	10	4.52
8.	Allusion	ALLU	9	4.07
9.	Rhetorical Question	RHEQ	6	2.71
10.	Antithesis	ANTI	6	2.71
11.	Irony	IRON	4	1.8
12.	Anaphora	ANAP	2	0.9
13.	Paradox	PARA	2	0.9
14.	Oxymoron	OXYM	2	0.9
15.	Allegory	ALLE	0	0
16.	Litotes	LITO	0	0
17.	Meiosis	MEIO	0	0
18.	Polyptoton	POLY	0	0
19.	Pun	PUN	0	0
Total			222	100



Appendix C

Themes of Connotation that Connote American Cultural Values

Appendix Table 6 Themes of connotation that connote American cultural values

No.	Themes of connotation	Codes	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Bond and relationship	L&C	110	51.88
2.	Independency	INDI	42	19.81
3.	Honesty	H&T	28	13.2
4.	Dignity	LIBE	12	5.66
5.	Acceptance	ACCE	8	3.77
6.	Change	CHANGE	4	1.88
7.	Materialism	MATE	6	2.83
8.	Expectation	EXPE	2	0.94
Total			212	100

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