



An Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor of Love Found in Olivia Rodrigo's Song Lyrics from the Album Sour

Aprilia Fitriani¹, Jismulatif², Supriusman³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Riau, Indonesia

E-mail: apriliaftrn11@gmail.com, jismulatif@lecturer.ac.id, supriusman@lecturer.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2025-06-10 Revised: 2025-07-20 Published: 2025-08-08 Keywords: <i>Conceptual Metaphor; Metaphor; Semantic; Song Lyrics.</i>	This research aims to examine the types and meaning of conceptual metaphor of love that appear in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics on the SOUR album. Conceptual metaphor describes abstract concepts using more concrete terms. This study uses Lakoff and Johnson theory, which classifies conceptual metaphor into three types: orientational metaphor, structural metaphor, and ontological metaphor. This research uses qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data was obtained through documentation method, by analyzing the lyrics of each song in Sour album used Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson to find the metaphors. The result show that there 59 conceptual metaphors of love, consisting of 4 orientational metaphor, 23 structural metaphor, and 32 ontological metaphors. This conceptual metaphor is used to represent various experiences of love, such as emotional journey, heartbreak, and struggles with self-identity. The use of conceptual metaphor in these song lyrics aims to emphasize the expression of feelings and convey messages more creatively and deeply.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2025-06-10 Direvisi: 2025-07-20 Dipublikasi: 2025-08-08 Kata kunci: <i>Metafora Konseptual; Metafora; Semantik; Lirik Lagu.</i>	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis dan makna conceptual metafora tentang cinta yang muncul dalam lirik lagu Olivia Rodrigo pada album <i>SOUR</i> . Metafora konseptual adalah Gambaran konsep yang abstrak dengan menggunakan istilah-istilah yang lebih konkret. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Lakoff and Johnson yang mengklasifikasikan metafora konseptual menjadi 3 jenis, yaitu metafora orientasional, metafora structural, dan metafora ontologis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui metode dokumentasi, dengan menganalisis lirik setiap lagu dalam album Sour menggunakan teori metafora konseptual (CMT) dari Lakoff and Johnson untuk menemukan metafora-metafora tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 59 metafora konseptual tentang cinta, yang terdiri dari 4 metafora orientasional, 23 metafora struktural, dan 32 metafora ontologis. Metafora konseptual ini digunakan untuk merepresentasikan berbagai pengalaman cinta, seperti perjalanan emosional, patah hati, dan konflik batin. Penggunaan metafora konseptual dalam lirik lagu ini bertujuan untuk mempertegas ekspresi perasaan dan menyampaikan pesan secara lebih kreatif dan mendalam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is the important thing in human lives because language is the essence of human communication (Rezeki & Sagala, 2019.) Language as communication system use in daily life, language make people can express their experiences, feeling, and thoughts. All humans are unique between one and others, because all humans are not the same, they have different characteristics. There are two ways of communicating likes verbal and non-verbal.

Linguistics is concerned with what people say not with what they should or think. In other words, linguistics and language will be inseparable because linguistics is a part of language, there is a closer connection between them. Linguistics is a science of language whose model includes morphology, syntax, phonetics,

phonology, semantics, and pragmatics (Aprianti & Parmawati, 2020.) Semantic is one of part of linguistics that deals with meaning. The study of meaning in language is considered semantic. Grammatical work or expressions of linguistic manifestations are not important or do not serious research. Semantic has evolved into a valuable study.

Figurative language is a linguistics expression that is often used in literary works. Song lyrics that look like poems are one such literary work. The descriptive words of figurative language have meanings that go beyond the literal meaning (Fatikha & Masykuroh, 2022.)

However, figurative language must be able to recognize and apply in daily conversation., books, newspapers, poetry, and song lyrics. Therefore, the language style is used in this song means of

expressing feelings and emotions by the song writer. Almost of the song in this world uses figurative language for making creative, and beautiful in their literary work, applied in poems, song's lyrics, short story, etc. In the world of education, language style is very useful to help students to improve their comprehension ability. Especially in High school and university students.

Metaphors are used in lyrics for aesthetic purposes, to make the song beautiful, and pleasing to the ear. Generally, metaphors are not easy to understand literally, but in song lyrics, metaphors are often used by composers to communicate about social issues, because it is considered easier to understand. According to (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) Conceptual metaphor is divided into three types, orientational metaphor, structural metaphor, and ontological metaphor. Orientational metaphor relates to the use of spatial orientation cues such as up and down, in and out, front and back, etc. Structural metaphor is the process of combining two-word forms (different in meaning) to produce a new meaning. Ontological metaphor is conceptualizing experiences in terms of physical objects such events, activities, emotions, and ideas.

In song lyrics, metaphors are used to express emotions and convey a deeper meaning by comparing it to something else. Metaphors in song lyric can provide powerful and compelling imagery that triggers the listener's imagination and evokes various emotions. For example, in Olivia Rodrigo's song "cutting her down will make you miss my wretched heart" is used to describe the feeling of jealous. This metaphor shows a person who is comparing emotional jealousy to physically cutting something down.

Love is an important in the history and survival of humanity. So, the understanding of love is increasingly developing in modern times, many works in the form of songs, poems, and novels contain expressions of love. The theme of love in songs is the most popular theme in all circles. There are countless songs humming poems about love, from the sadness and happiness of love.

Metaphors in song lyric can provide powerful and compelling imagery that triggers the listener's imagination and evokes various emotions. Therefore, the author conducted discusses the lyrics of the song lyrics on Olivia Rodrigo's album *sour* to find out the types and the meaning of conceptual metaphor and can provide information about the metaphor in the

lyric of the songs, which means that further researchers can continue further research.

II. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method to describe the song lyrics in this research. Due the characteristics of the data this research can be classifies as qualitative research with descriptive approach (Sugiyono, 2023) The researcher also belonged library research. Library research is defined as a structured form of inquiry with specific rules, tools, and techniques (Synder, 2019.) The library research process is conducted by reviewing literature and analyzing relevant topics that are integrated.

The data for this study is based on Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics from her album *Sour*. For collected data from Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics, the researcher used a documentation technique. The researcher then typed out the selected words and phrases that contained metaphorical language. These expressions were grouped based on their conceptual metaphor categories. The researcher used George Lakoff & Johnson Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to find the metaphors (2003)

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

Based on the result of the analysis, there three types of conceptual metaphor from the category of conceptual metaphors consist of orientational metaphor, structural metaphor, and ontological metaphor. The research found that there are 59 conceptual metaphor datum collected. The conceptual metaphors were categorized into there type. Detailed information on data result can be seen in table as follows.

Tabel 1. Result conceptual metaphor

Types of conceptual metaphor	Total
Orientalional Metaphor	4
Structural Metaphor	23
Ontological Metaphor	32

Orientalional metaphor were the least common, such as "one step forward, three steps back", which reflected spation orientation to describe relationship dynamics (*love is movement*).

Structural metaphor shaped emotional experiences through familiar frameworks such as *love is war*, *love is journey*, or *love is game*. These metaphors described heartbream, or betrayal. For instance, in the lyric "Now I *drive alone* past your street", the

metaphor *love is journey* conveys emotional after a breakup.

Ontological metaphor was the most frequently found, reflecting the tendency to conceptualize emotions, relationships, and internal experiences as concrete objects or physical entities. Examples include expressions such “*I’ve lost my mind*” (*love is madness*) and “*I just want myself back*” (*self is possession*).

B. Discussion

The findings of this research that conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in expressing love related experiences in Olivia Rodrigo’s *SOUR* album. Ontological metaphor is the high number with 32 out of 59 indicates a strong tendency to represent abstract emotions like heartbreak, and jealousy as tangible objects or entities. for instance, lyrics such as “*I’ve lost my mind*” shows that emotional states are framed as object that can be lost, possessed, or recovered. This reflects how individuals’ cognitively emotional pain through familiar physical concepts, making abstract feelings more understandable and relatable.

Structural metaphor with 23 instances were also significantly present. These metaphors map one domain onto another to help listeners conceptualize love in more structured terms, such *love is war*, *love is journey*, or *love is game*. Lyrics like “*Now I drive alone past your stress*” portray emotional conflict and heartbreak through familiar frameworks like battle or travel. This metaphor not only convey the pain of lost love but also highlight the unpredictable, often combative nature of romantic relationships.

Oriental metaphor though least frequent with 4 instances, effectively use spatial direction to convey emotional taste. Phrase such as “*one forward, three steps back*” or “*back and forth*” depict instability in relationships using spatial movement. Such metaphor demonstrate how physical orientation can mirror psychological experiences.

Therefore, the use of metaphor in Olivia Rodrigo’s song lyrics the idea in Lakoff & Johnson (2003) theory. Metaphor is not merely decorative but is fundamental to how humans conceptualize emotions and abstract experiences. The widespread use of metaphor about love in *SOUR* supports the view that figurative language helps listeners navigate

complex feelings by grounding them in familiar imagery. Additionally, this study confirms that popular music particularly lyrics targeted at your serves as rich source of cognitive linguistic expression, bridging emotion, creativity and communication.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This research concludes that Olivia Rodrigo’s *SOUR* album contains a rich use of conceptual metaphors of love. A total of 59 metaphorical expressions were identified across 11 songs, comparing 4 orientational metaphors, 23 structural metaphors, and 32 ontological metaphors. These metaphors reflect how love is conceptualized as war, a journey, a transaction, a game, a performance, and even as a form of emotional possession or pain.

The frequent use of ontological metaphor highlight the human tendency to understand abstract feelings through physical and concrete terms, such as viewing emotional pain as a physical wound or love as a possession that can be lost. Structural metaphor allows listeners to comprehend complex emotions by relating them to structured experiences like battle or movement. Meanwhile, orientational use spatial references to convey relational instability or progression.

This study supports Lakoff & Johnson (2003) theory that metaphor is a fundamental cognitive mechanism. Olivia Rodrigo’s lyrics exemplify how metaphor enables deeper emotional engagement and meaning construction in popular music.

B. Suggestion

Future researcher may explore conceptual metaphors in other musical genres or compare the use of metaphors across different cultures to gain broader insight into how emotions are linguistically constructed. Additionally, educators can utilize song lyrics as engaging material in teaching semantics, metaphor, figurative language in English language learning. Finally, this research can help listeners become more aware of how language shapes their emotional understanding, especially in media they frequently consume such as music.

REFERENCES

- Aprianti, I. N., & Parmawati, A. (2020). Devirational and Inflectional Morpheme Analysis in the Song of
- Fatikha, A. R., & Masykuroh, Q. (2022). Figurative Language In Selected Songs of "RED" by Taylor Swift. *Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*.
- Lady Gaga "A Star Is Born" Album. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. London: The university of Chicago press.
- Rezeki, T. I., & Sagala, R. W. (2019). Language Acquisition Pada Anak Periode Linguistik. *Jurnal Serunai Ilmu Pendidikan*.
- Sugiyono. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta Bandung.
- Synder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 333-339.