

An Analysis of Metaphors in Coldplay's A Head Full of Dreams Album

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Abstract

This study analyzes metaphors in the song lyrics of Coldplay's album "A Head Full of Dreams," applying the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson. Using a qualitative methodology, the research identifies 37 metaphorical expressions across the album, categorized into structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors. The findings reveal that ontological metaphors dominate (43.25%), followed by structural (35.14%) and orientational metaphors (21.61%). Metaphors in the lyrics are explored for their conceptual meanings and artistic impact, with an emphasis on themes of life and love. The study concludes that metaphors enrich the emotional depth of lyrics, drawing from cultural and experiential influences to bridge abstract and concrete concepts. This research highlights the significance of metaphors in understanding complex ideas through song lyrics and suggests broader applications of conceptual metaphor theory in analyzing other forms of artistic expressions.

Keywords: Linguistics; Metaphor; Song; Coldplay

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis metafora dalam lirik lagu dari album Coldplay "A Head Full of Dreams," dengan menerapkan teori metafora konseptual dari Lakoff dan Johnson. Dengan menggunakan metodologi kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi 37 ekspresi metaforis di seluruh album, yang dikategorikan ke dalam metafora struktural, ontologis, dan orientasional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa metafora ontologis mendominasi (43,25%), diikuti oleh metafora struktural (35,14%) dan metafora orientasional (21,61%). Metafora dalam lirik dieksplorasi untuk mengetahui makna konseptual dan dampak artistiknya, dengan penekanan pada tema kehidupan dan cinta. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa metafora memperkaya kedalaman emosional lirik, yang berasal dari pengaruh budaya dan pengalaman untuk menjembatani konsep abstrak dan konkret. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya metafora dalam memahami ide-ide kompleks melalui lirik lagu dan menyarankan aplikasi yang lebih luas dari teori metafora konseptual dalam menganalisis bentuk-bentuk ekspresi artistik lainnya.

Kata kunci: Linguistik; Metafora; Lagu; Coldplay

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Introduction

Metaphor is regarded as the art of language with diverse diction and a distinctive style; it is one of the fascinating approaches to communicate a certain meaning. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are conceptual (mental) operations reflected in human language that enable speakers to structure and construe abstract areas of knowledge and experience into more concrete experiential items. Metaphors allow writers and speakers to express their abstract ideas more concretely, making complex or unfamiliar concepts

easier to understand. By drawing imaginative parallels, metaphors enrich language, add depth to communication, and invite listeners or readers to see the world in a new light. The significance of metaphors lies in their ability to enhance understanding, communication, and creativity across various fields. Metaphors help individuals grasp abstract or complex ideas by relating them to familiar concepts, thus bridging the gap between the known and the unknown. Metaphors can be found in music, novels, and films.

Music is a method of communication through sound and tone that allows listeners to effectively perceive messages conveyed in various engaging ways. Bernstein believed music to be a universal language capable of expressing emotions and ideas that words alone cannot convey. Music can express a wide range of emotions, including joy, grief, anger, and fear, as well as other profound feelings inspired by people, objects, or situations. Song lyrics are especially noteworthy as they encompass emotions, ideas, and artistic forms. Each song's lyrics convey meaning—whether literal or non-literal. Coldplay, a prominent band, exemplifies this practice, embedding metaphors within their song lyrics.

The British rock group Coldplay was formed at University College London (UCL) in 1996. The band gained worldwide recognition in 2000 with the release of the single *Yellow*. Over their career, Coldplay has received 209 nominations and won 62 awards. In December 2015, they released their seventh album, *A Head Full of Dreams*. Through alternative rock music, they express profound ideas, with their song lyrics containing numerous metaphors that enhance the songs' beauty. The lyrics provide rich material for exploring metaphors, enabling researchers to analyze the meanings and significance embedded within. Furthermore, the album *A Head Full of Dreams* conveys valuable lessons about life and love.

Concerning this research, there are several research on metaphors that have been carried out by researchers written by Zulaika et al. (2023) Nugraheny & Yuwita, (2023) Pardede et al. (2023), Ndraha (2018), Sari (2020), Ummah (2019), Jati (2020), Septiani et al. (2022), Yusuf & Reski Amelia (2018) the study aimed to analyze metaphors in song lyrics, focusing primarily on a single song to uncover their meanings. These studies employed qualitative methods, including semantic analysis and conceptual metaphor theory, to classify metaphor types and interpret their meanings. The results across these studies indicated that metaphors are predominantly used to convey themes of love, life, emotions, and relationships, with the interpretations tied closely to the specific contexts of the songs analyzed.

There is also research on metaphor in the lyrics of Sia's *1000 Forms of Fear* album. Written By Siti and Wibowo (2024) the study This research explores the role of metaphor in the lyrics of Sia's *1000 Forms of Fear* album, examining how figurative language enhances the emotional and conceptual effects of the songs. These studies Using a qualitative methodology, this research classifies metaphors into ontological, structural, and orientational categories according to Lakoff and Johnson's framework. The results reveal there are 71% or 39 ontological metaphors found in this album, transform abstract feelings into concrete experiences, allowing listeners to engage deeply with themes of resilience, vulnerability, and mental challenges.

Other previous studies that are still related to metaphors are also found in songs but they don't just look for one song, they look for albums of songs and look for the meaning of each lyric that has a metaphor written by Pambudi et al. (2021), Wulandari (2018), Zalogo (2022) The study aimed to analyze the types of metaphors found in the *Spectrum* album by Westlife and understand the meanings of the lyrics containing metaphors. The researchers conducted a qualitative analysis of the *Spectrum* album by Westlife. They analyzed the lyrics of all the songs in the album to identify and classify metaphors into six types. This included studying the lyrics for their figurative language and contextual meanings. The result of data analysis showed that there are 4 types of metaphor in the

Spectrum album. They are 14 active metaphor, 11 asymmetric metaphor, 2 subjective metaphor, and 5 mimetic metaphor. The 4 types of metaphor found in Westlife songs are talking about love, life, and family. Based on the research finding, it is concluded that from the 6 types of metaphor, only 4 types that are found in Spectrum album and dominant types are active metaphor. So, it is suggested to use the song as media to find the figurative language, especially metaphor.

There is also research that examines metaphors in movie written by Hesy & Hasan n.d, Shafira Ramadian & Chitra Hasan (2021), Chattah (2006) The study aimed to examine the presence and usage of metaphors in movies. These studies employed Qualitative analysis of movie scripts to identify and classify metaphors, focusing on their types and functions. The result of data analysis showed that One "Full Metaphor" was identified in the study. The studies collectively highlight the use of metaphors in cinematic narratives and the similarity between these and other metaphor research lies in their shared focus on analyzing metaphor usage.

Another previous research that is still related to metaphors is also found in the novel written by Kurniawati et al. (2014), Purwati et al. (2018), Damayanti (2019), Ganiwati (2020), Irwan & Pujiono (2019) the study aimed to analyze the metaphors used in novels, particularly in the novel Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata. Content analysis of novel text to identify sentences and expressions containing metaphors. The researchers quantified the occurrence of metaphors. the results of this study focus on looking for metaphors in the novel. the results of the research show that in the novel Laskar Pelangi by Andrea Hirata, 76 sentences containing metaphors were found and 87 metaphors were found in the sentences.

Apart from the examples of previous research, there is also research that is still related to linguistics, namely examining code-mixing in social media written by Wibowo et al. (2024) The study aim to identify and analyze the types and functions of euphemisms used in the captions of the Folkative Instagram account. The researchers conducted Qualitative analysis of Instagram captions from the Folkative account, focusing on instances of code-mixing and euphemisms. The result of this study classified various types and functions of euphemisms found in the captions, showcasing how euphemisms are employed to convey meaning in asocial media context.

From the several reviews of other's research, this research will conduct different and detailed research, not just one or two songs, but one album whose purpose is to find the types and functions of metaphors using Lakoff and Johnson's theory. In addition, this research is also focused and conducted to find the meaning and the function contained in the song lyrics in the album A Head Full of Dream. The song lyrics in the A Head Full of Dream album contain meaning or are presented indirectly. The researcher formulated the research questions are "What types of metaphors are used in the song lyrics?" the research questions will be answered in an analytical description.

Semantic

Semantics (the study of meaning) is the study of communication, and as communication becomes a more important aspect of social structure, the necessity to comprehend it grows. Semantics is also at the heart of research into the human mind. cognitive processes, cognition, and conceptualization are all inextricably linked to how we classify and communicate our experiences of the world through language.

According to Djibran (2022) the semantic concept that underlies the discussion in this study is part of a linguistic study that refers to linguistic forms and variations of meaning in different contexts and discourses. Semantics only studies the meaning that is in all systems of symbols and signs. and according to Wulandari (2018) semantics is related with the relationship between experience, the conceptual system, and the semantic structure encoded by language. then there is also according Zulaika et al. (2023) Semantics and

metaphor are linked because metaphor is using words or phrases to extend or diverge from their literal meaning, depending on semantic linkages between words to create new meanings or associations. From the three statements of these experts it can be concluded that semantics is the study of communication that refers to linguistic and semantics is related with the relationship between experience depending on semantic linkages between words to create new meanings or associations.

Figurative language

Figurative language is a way of expressing yourself using figurative words. According to Jati (2020) Figurative language itself is a language that uses expressions or words with entirely different meaning with the literal interpretation. then there is also according to Djibran (2022) Metaphor is a type of figurative language that relies on the idea that objects are similar to one another. and the final statement according to Wulandari (2018) Metaphor is a part of figurative language which is common in everyday life, not only in language but also in action and thought because communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in everyday activity such as thinking and acting. From the three statements of these experts it can be concluded that Figurative language is a way of expressing yourself that uses words with entirely different meaning.

A metaphor is a figure of speech that suggests the similarities and differences between two unrelated things, usually by saying that one is similar to the other. according to Nugraheny & Yuwita (2023) A metaphor is a way of expressing an idea or concept by comparing it with another idea or concept that is easier to understand. And then there is also according to Modjo et al. (2023) stated that Metaphors express the meaning of words according to their literal meaning, nothing more. and the last statement according to Chattah (2006) a metaphor is "an explicit or implicit comparison, which is literally false." From the three statements of these experts, it can be concluded that a metaphor is a figure of speech that expresses an idea or concept by comparing it with another idea.

Type of metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (14-25) classified conceptual metaphor into three kinds:

1. Structural metaphor

Structural metaphor is a concept that is formed metaphorically by using another concept. This metaphor is based on systematic correlation in daily experience. There are two domains in structural metaphor, the source domain and the target domain. The cognitive function of these metaphors is to enable speakers to understand target by employing the structure of source B (Kovecses 37). For example, ARGUMENT IS WAR in the phrase "I finally won the argument". The concept of argument is structured according to war terms.

2. Orientational Metaphor

According to Kovecses (40), orientational metaphor organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another because most of them have to do with spatial orientation, such as up-down, in out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. Upward orientation is often related with positive evaluation, while downward orientation with a negative one. For example, HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN. The concept HAPPY is oriented UP leads to English expression like "I'm feeling up today". Physical basis of this spatial is drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state.

3. Ontological metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (26), an ontological metaphor is a metaphor that views events, activities, emotions, and ideas as entities and substances. For instance, THE MIND

IS A MACHINE in the phrase “My mind just is not operating today”. This metaphor conceptualizes thoughts, experiences, and processes (abstract things) to something that has physical traits. In other words, ontological metaphors consider abstract nouns as concrete nouns.

Method

The method of this research is using qualitative methods. The research questions will be answered in an analytical description. The concept of metaphorical expressions is analyzed by using George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theory.

The primary data source for this research comprises the official song lyrics of Coldplay's album A Head Full of Dreams. Secondary sources include academic references, dictionaries, and theories on metaphor and semantics, including works by Lakoff, Johnson, and Leech. The data collection process utilized the bibliography technique. Song lyrics were retrieved from official sources, and all lyrics containing metaphors were identified. In total, 37 instances of metaphors were collected across the album's tracks.

The analysis involved classifying metaphors into three categories: structural metaphor, ontological metaphor, and orientational metaphor, as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson. Each metaphor was analyzed to determine its conceptual meaning, type, and function. Leech's theory was employed to identify the informational, expressive, directive, phatic, or aesthetic function of each metaphorical expression. The analysis emphasized understanding how metaphors contribute to the overall meaning and artistic impact of the lyrics.

This research uses semantics approach to solve the problem of conceptual metaphors. It uses the qualitative method, which is the research method that uses descriptive data and collects information in verbal form and non-numerical form (Farkhan 2). The result of this research will be described in an analytical description and will be analyzed with theory of conceptual metaphors by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The analysis will explain the conceptual metaphor that lead to find the meaning and the function of its metaphorical expression based on conceptual metaphor theory.

Results and Discussion

The technique for collecting data in this research is using bibliography technique. The term "bibliography technique" typically refers to the methods or approaches used in compiling and organizing a list of sources (bibliography) for academic, professional, or research purposes. The data are collected by written source from the song lyrics of Coldplay's "A Head Full of Dream" album. There are 37 data found in the song lyrics which contain metaphors. All of the data will be analyzed in this chapter. The analysis will apply the theory of conceptual metaphor from Lakoff and Johnson and the function of metaphorical expression will be analyzed by using Leech theory which consists of five functions of metaphorical expression. Metaphorical expression, Conceptual Metaphor, and Meaning from Coldplay's album "A Head Full of Dream"

No	Types of Metaphor	Amount	Percentage
1	Structural metaphor	13	35,14%
2	Ontological metaphor	16	43,25%
3	Orientalional metaphor	8	21,61%
	Amount	37	100%

After classifying the metaphor, the researcher found there are 37 data metaphors in A Head Full of Dream album by Coldplay. From the data before the researcher concluded that 3 types of metaphors are found in Coldplay lyrics songs. However, based on the percentage before the researcher found that the ontological metaphor is the most

dominant type of metaphor that is often found in Coldplay lyrics songs with 16 data (43,25%), structural metaphor with 13 data (35,14%), orientational metaphor with 8 data (21,61%). So, the total number of types was 37 data of metaphors, and the total percentage was 100%.

Data analysis

Oriental Metaphor

Ontological metaphor is a metaphor that views events, activities, emotions, and ideas as entities and substances

1. Data: OM/1/AHFD

The song A Head Full of Dream consists of seven stanzas. The stanza that analyzed is stanza 3.

Stanza 3

- (1) Saying it's true, It's not what it seems
- (2) Leave your broken windows open
- (3) And in the light just streams
- (4) And you get a head, a head full of dreams
- (5) You can see the changes you wanted
- (6) Be what you want to be

Based on the context of the stanza above, the word light in line 4 shows how good things can come from the bad things that have happened. Based on its literal meaning, light is defined as radiation that stimulates the sense of sight and makes things visible (Oxford). In this stanza, the songwriter uses the word light refers to the good things can come after experiencing the bad moments in the past (the broken windows). Moreover, the songwriter continues to describe the light by imagining a lot of dreams about a new life and he can be what he wants to be. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor is LIGHT IS GOOD. The type of metaphor is ontological. metaphor, the LIGHT is the target domain and GOOD is the source domain.

2. Data: OM/2/BS

The song Birds consists of seven parts. The stanza that analyzed is stanza 2

Stanza 2

- (1) It's a fools gold thunder
- (2) It's just a warning rain
- (3) Don't let the fears just start
- (4) "What if I won't to see you again?"
- (5) Around here you never want to sleep
- (6) So, start falling in love, start the riot

The context of this stanza is about temporary fear which is shown by word thunder in line 1. Thunder in the Oxford dictionary is defined as the loud noise that is heard with lightning. Besides, the phrase fool's gold is an idiom that means something deceptively attractive and promising in appearance (Fool's Gold). Sometimes, thunder with lightning looks attractive but anyone who hears the thunder will feel shocked or scared. However, people do not have to worry because the thunder is just a sign that the rain will fall. The conceptual metaphor is LIFE IS BAD WEATHER, where the songwriter wants to give advice to the listeners that people have no need to worry about the problem they faced. Do not let the fears overwhelm themselves. With togetherness, they can face the problem. They can share stories with the people who closest to them, especially their loved ones. The word thunder belongs to the categories of ontological metaphor, because it refers to the concrete entity of fear feelings.

Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor is a concept that is formed metaphorically by using another concept. This metaphor is based on systematic correlation in daily experience. There are two domains in structural metaphor, the source domain and the target domain.

1) Data: SM/4/EGW

The song Everglow consists of seven stanzas. The stanzas that analyzed are Stanza 2
Stanza 2

- (1) Like a lion you ran, a goddess you rolled
- (2) Like an eagle you circled in perfect purple
- (3) So how come things move on? How come cars don't slow?
- (4) When it feels like the end of my world
- (5) When I should, but I can't let you go

The context of line 3 is how fast the life changes. It is marked by the words move on and slow. Slow in the Oxford dictionary is defined as not quick; taking more time than is usual. The songwriter cannot accept that time passes so quickly when he still wants to enjoy moments with his lover. He wants things to slow down and does not have to go with life changes. He could not accept the fact that he had broken up with his lover. It feels like the end of the world. Hence, the conceptual metaphor of this expression is TIME IS MOTION. It shows case of structural metaphor since people can understand TIME by means of the structure of MOTION.

2) Data: SM/5/AOAL

The song Adventure of a Lifetime consists of seven stanzas. The stanzas that analyzed are Stanza 1
Stanza 1

- (1) Turn your magic on, Umi she'd say
- (2) Everything you want's a dream away
- (3) And we are legends every day
- (4) That's what she told me

The context of this stanza is about making new memories every day. It is shown by metaphor legends in line 3. Legend is defined as an old story handed down from the past, which may or may not be true (Oxford). People make stories every day. In the next day, the story will become a history that someday they can tell to others, or to their descendants. People can take lessons in each story, so they do not repeat the same mistakes. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor of this expression is LIFE IS A STORY. This is case case of structural metaphor.

Oriental Metaphor

Oriental metaphor organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another because most of them have to do with spatial orientation, such as up-down, in out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral.

1)Data: ORT/6/FN

The song Fun consists of nine stanzas. The stanzas that analyzed are stanza 3
Stanza 3

- (1) From the top of the world, top of the waves
- (2) We said forever, forever always
- (3) We could have been lost, we would have been saved
- (4) Now we're stopping the world, stopping its spin
- (5) Oh, come on, don't give up, don't see me give in
- (6) Don't say it's over, don't say we're done

(7) Oh, didn't we have fun?

This stanza tells about remembering the happy moments that they spent together. It is shown by metaphor top in line 1. Top is defined as highest (Oxford). The expression "From the top of the world" means when they are in the top of the relationship, they could feel the happiness in every moment they spent together. Then, they promised to stay together forever. While, there is a wise word from Ali bin Abi Talib, "Never make a decision in anger. Never make a promise in happiness" (Quotefancy). Basically, the promise is an easy thing to say but difficult to implement. The conceptual metaphor for this expression is HAPPY IS UP. This is the type of orientational metaphor, since word top shows an upward spatial which related to positive nuance.

2). Data: ORT/11/UP

The song Up and Up consists of twelve stanzas. The stanzas that analyzed are Stanza 1
Stanza 1

- (1) Fixing up a car to drive in it again
- (2) Searching for the water, hoping for the rain
- (3) Up and up
- (4) Up and up

There is metaphor car in line 1. The context of this expression is fixing the mistakes in the past and trying to move on. In Oxford dictionary, car is defined as a motor car / a carriage. The songwriter has a failure experience in his life but he tries to move on. He wants to fix the mistakes and continue the mission that had stopped. The conceptual metaphor of this expression is LIFE IS VEHICLE. It shows case of ontological metaphor, LIFE is conceptualized by VEHICLE terms such as car.

In line 3, there is metaphor up. In Oxford dictionary, up is defined as to or in a higher place or position or level. The context of this expression is about rise from adversity. Someone usually experiences success and failure in life but the songwriter tells people who fails to do not give up and try another effort to achieve success. Hence, the conceptual metaphor of this expression is SUCCESS IS UP. This is the type of orientational metaphor, word up shows an upward spatial which related to positive nuance.

Conclusion

The analysis's conclusion demonstrates how frequently conceptual metaphors are employed in daily life and how they can also appear in song lyrics. The structure of word choice in song lyrics is influenced by culture, prior knowledge, and daily experiences. The mapping processes illustrates the relationship between the source and destination domains so that human readers may understand the words or sentences with easily.

The conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson is used to analysed all of the metaphors in Coldplay's album A Head Full of Dream. There are 16 ontological metaphors, 8 orientational metaphors, and 13 structural metaphors. The songwriter's most common usage of metaphor in the lyrics of this song is the ontological one. The lyricists borrowed extensively from Greek mythology, Obama's speech texts, and the poetry of well-known individuals like Rumi and Shakes pears. Numerous interpretations of life and love are demonstrated by the analysis process that reveals the significance of the metaphor. Most people thought of LOVE as a fight, a quest, a voyage, a fire, a weapon, and light. Life, on the other hand, was seen as a journey, story, water, and addiction.

Suggestion

This study employs metaphor as a tool to examine the phenomenon of language, with a focus on Coldplay song lyrics to identify the kind, significance, and purpose of conceptual metaphors related to words of love and life. It is advised to use additional data for a more

thorough and comprehensive research by studying conceptual metaphors in speech or poetry texts. Thus, this proposal might present another chance to apply conceptual metaphor theory to the analysis of more extensive studies.

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