International Journal of Linguistics and Discourse Analytics
Vol. 7, No. 2, March 2026
P-ISSN 2721-8899 E-ISSN 2721-8880

Conceptual Metaphor In Song Lyrics Pierce The Veil's Collide With The Sky Album

Putu Ersta Adi Lunga Atmaja[1], I Made Rajeg[2], Made Detriasmita Saientisna[3]
English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia
[1] erstaadil77@gmail.com, [2] made_rajeg@unud.ac.id , [3] detriasmita@unud.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the role of metaphor in song lyrics, a key issue in understanding how abstract emotions and experiences are linguistically and cognitively represented, particularly within contemporary music. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research analyzes twelve selected songs from the *Collide With The Sky* album. The study is grounded in Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) conceptual metaphor theory, which classifies metaphors into structural, orientational, and ontological types. Metaphorical expressions within the lyrics are systematically identified, categorized, and interpreted through their conceptual mappings between source and target domains. The analysis reveals a total of 113 metaphorical expressions, comprising 34 structural metaphors, 11 orientational metaphors, and 68 ontological metaphors. These findings demonstrate that metaphor plays a crucial role in shaping the emotional tone, thematic complexity, and stylistic expression of the lyrics. Furthermore, metaphor functions as a cognitive tool that helps clarify abstract emotions and ideas, enabling the articulation of personal experiences, internal conflicts, and emotional struggles in a poetic and meaningful manner.

Keywords: Pierce The Veil, song lyrics, metaphor, conceptual metaphor.

1. Introduction

Metaphor has long been recognized as a fundamental mechanism in human cognition and language. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphor involves understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another, enabling individuals to comprehend abstract concepts through more concrete domains. This perspective challenges the traditional view of metaphor as merely a linguistic ornament, emphasizing instead its role in shaping thought and action, as illustrated in expressions such as "time is money," where temporal experience is conceptualized in economic terms.

Researching on metaphor in song lyrics is interesting because in song there are certainly meanings that cannot be interpreted clearly a usually use metaphors to enhance the lyrics.

Metaphors in song lyrics require deeper analysis to understand what author means. This can lead the misperceptions from the listeners because the lyrics are difficult to understand but can beautify the song. This research was conducted to identify or analyze the types and meanings of metaphors used in the lyrics of songs on the album Collide With The Sky by Pierce The Veil to prevent misunderstanding of the lyrics on the album. This can make it easier for listeners to enjoy listening to songs from Pierce The Veil especially in the meaning of the lyrics. Several previous studies have proven the phenomenon that contains metaphors in song lyrics such as Yusuf and Amelia (2018) purpose to analyze the meaning and the types of metaphor in the lyrics of the Secondhand Serenade's Fall For You song. Febriansyah (2020) also did almost the same thing, he analyze and describe the conceptual metaphors of anger emotion that Grunge musician used in their song lyrics and to analyze and describe the image schema formed in conceptual metaphor of anger emotion.

Music is a sort of symbolic language, but it does so on a different level. A word is a word to express a mean and also a word, however music does not mean the same, it gives emotional and aesthetic experiences mostly very vague and obscure (Langer, 1953). Figurative language plays a significant role in song lyrics, enhancing their meaning and expressiveness. One of a study have analyzed various types of figurative language in songs, including simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and repetition (Albion & Yuwita, 2022). Metaphor is a part of figurative language that expresses meaning not captured by surface sense representation of words, and is a primary concern of this research.

In artistic discourse, music operates as a symbolic form of communication that conveys emotional and aesthetic meaning rather than fixed, literal interpretations (Langer, 1953). Consequently, figurative language—particularly metaphor—plays a crucial role in enriching song lyrics by adding depth, ambiguity, and expressive nuance (Albion & Yuwita, 2022; Putri & Santosa, 2022). Metaphor enables songwriters to articulate complex emotional states and abstract experiences that may otherwise be difficult to express directly (Zhang & Hu, 2021; Wang & Liu, 2023). However, the use of metaphor in lyrics often results in interpretive challenges, as listeners may derive different meanings depending on their conceptual and cultural frameworks (Tay, 2021).

More recent studies further highlight how conceptual metaphors shape listeners' understanding of emotions and experiences in contemporary music (Zhang & Hu, 2021; Wang & Liu, 2023). Despite these contributions, there remains a need for more focused analyses of metaphor within specific musical works to uncover how conceptual structures operate in context.

n the context of artistic expression, music functions as a symbolic language operating on an emotional and aesthetic level rather than conveying fixed, literal meanings (Langer, 1953). Consequently, figurative language—particularly metaphor—plays a crucial role in song lyrics by enhancing depth, expressiveness, and interpretive richness. Previous studies, such as Albion and

Yuwita (2022), have examined various forms of figurative language in songs, highlighting metaphor as a central device that conveys meanings beyond surface-level interpretation. However, the use of metaphor in song lyrics often leads to ambiguity, requiring deeper analysis to uncover the intended meanings and avoid potential misinterpretations among listeners.

This study aims to identify and analyze the types and meanings of metaphors in the lyrics of songs from *Collide With The Sky* by Pierce The Veil. By applying conceptual metaphor theory, this research seeks to clarify how metaphorical expressions function within the lyrics, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the songs and enhancing listeners' appreciation. Building on prior research, including studies by Yusuf and Amelia (2018) and Febriansyah (2020), which explored metaphor in song lyrics and emotional expression, this study further investigates how metaphor structures meaning and conveys complex emotional experiences in contemporary music.

2. Methods

In this study, the primary data were collected from Pierce the Veil's Collide with the Sky album (2012). This album was selected as the data source because it is widely recognized as one of the band's most notable works, characterized by strong musical composition and extensive use of metaphorical language to convey emotional content. The high frequency of metaphors in the lyrics provides sufficient data to support the objectives of the study. The analysis focuses on 12 songs from the album, namely May These Noises Startle You in Your Sleep Tonight, Hell Above, A Match into Water, King for a Day (feat. Kellin Quinn), Bulls in the Bronx, Props & Mayhem, Tangled in the Great Escape (feat. Jason Aalon Butler), I'm Low on Gas and You Need a Jacket, The First Punch, One Hundred Sleepless Nights, Stained Glass Eyes and Colorful Tears, and Hold On Till May (feat. Lindsey Stamey).

To collect the data, this study employed documentation and note-taking strategies to obtain relevant data from the lyrics of Pierce the Veil's Collide with the Sky album. The procedure began by accessing the songs and their official lyrics, followed by listening to each track while simultaneously reading the lyrics to ensure accuracy. Subsequently, the lyrics were examined carefully, and relevant data were systematically recorded.

For data analysis, this study employed a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on understanding phenomena through the systematic collection and analysis of non-numerical data.. Rather than measuring statistical patterns, this method emphasizes the in-depth examination of behaviors, experiences, attitudes, and social contexts. The analysis began by listening to all songs in the album while simultaneously reading the lyrics. The next step involved categorizing the types of metaphors by identifying their target and source domains based on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) theory, followed by interpreting the meanings and underlying conceptual metaphors in each expression. Subsequently, the analyzed data were reviewed to ensure accuracy

and consistency. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on a comprehensive examination of the identified metaphors and their meanings.

Instead of using formal techniques like symbols, graphs, or tables, the data presentation in this research used informal methods, which included analyzing and presenting findings through words, explanations, and descriptions. This research uses informal method in this data to present the analysis through a non-verbal explanations and descriptions. The process of presenting analysis followed several key steps. First, this research involved collecting metaphorical expressions from the song lyrics in Pierce The Veil's Collide With The Sky album. Second, each word or phrase containing metaphorical meaning was identified and analyzed to reveal both the target and source domains. Finally, the analysis aimed to deepen the understanding of metaphorical meanings in the selected lyrics by interpreting them through a relevant theoretical framework. This approach was intended to avoid confusion or misinterpretation, as the data includes metaphorical language that carries complex emotional and conceptual meanings.

3. Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of metaphorical expressions found in the song lyrics of *Collide With The Sky* by Pierce The Veil. The analysis is grounded in Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) conceptual metaphor theory, which is introduced at the outset as the primary analytical framework. Metaphors are categorized into structural, orientational, and ontological types, and the discussion is organized into two main components: the identification of metaphor types along with their respective source and target domains, and the interpretation of their contextual meanings through conceptual mapping. To ensure analytical clarity, metaphorical expressions are systematically marked, with the target domain (abstract concept) presented in italics and the source domain (concrete concept) in bold, highlighting the cognitive relationship between them.

A. Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphors are those in which one concept is understood and organized in terms of another, typically more concrete and familiar domain. The analysis identified 34 instances of structural metaphors within the dataset. Rather than reiterating the theoretical definition in each case, the following discussion focuses on how these metaphors function to construct meaning and convey emotional intensity.

Data 1: "And another kiss like a fire on pavement" – *Hell Above*

The expression "a *kiss* like a **fire** on pavement" exemplifies a structural metaphor in which the abstract experience of intimacy (*kiss*) is conceptualized through the concrete and sensory domain of **fire**. This mapping transfers qualities commonly associated with fire—heat, intensity, volatility, and potential for destruction—onto the notion of a kiss. As a result, intimacy

is not represented as gentle or affectionate, but as something forceful, consuming, and potentially harmful.

From an analytical perspective, this metaphor reveals a reconfiguration of romantic experience. The comparison suggests that emotional closeness is intertwined with pain and instability, thereby framing love as an intense but destructive force. The imagery of fire on pavement further reinforces this interpretation, as it evokes a sense of abrupt ignition and harsh impact, implying that the emotional experience is both immediate and damaging.

Conceptually, this metaphor can be understood as an instantiation of the broader mapping LOVE IS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. This underlying structure reflects a recurring thematic pattern in the lyrics, where emotional attachment is portrayed as both compelling and hazardous. Thus, the metaphor does not merely embellish the lyric but functions as a cognitive tool that shapes how love and intimacy are perceived, emphasizing their dual capacity for passion and emotional harm. The metaphorical mapping of *LOVE IS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE* can be described as follows:

Source domain (Destructive Force)	**Target domain (Love)**
Fire	Passionate kiss
Burning energy	Emotional intensity
Uncontrollable flames	Uncontrollable feelings

The mapping above demonstrates how elements of a destructive force, particularly fire, are projected onto the concept of love. In the lyric “And another kiss like a fire on pavement”, the metaphor frames love as something intense, consuming, and potentially harmful. The kiss, a symbol of affection, is compared to fire implying that love can ignite powerful emotional reactions, much like fire burns and spread uncontrollably. The heat and destructive nature of fire help illustrate the emotional turmoil and pain that love may cause.

A. Orientational Metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), orientational metaphors is another kind of metaphorical thought that is unstructured but determines the relationships between the concepts in the system, as most of them involve spatial orientation such as up-down, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. This study found 11 data of orientational metaphors. Here are some analyses of orientational found in the song lyrics Pierce The Veil’s Collide With The Sky album.

Data 2 “No, no more eyes to see the **sun**” – I’m Low on Gas and You Need a Jacket

The lyric “No, no more eyes to see the sun” is a clear example of orientational metaphor, as it relies on vertical direction to represent the emotional state. Based on Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) theory, orientational metaphor allow abstract concept to be understood through physical

experiences such as up-down, forward-backward, in-out. In this lyric, the word "sun" serves as source domain, referring to a visible and physical object located up in space. The sun is commonly associated with brightness, clarity, warmth, and emotional positivity. The target domain in this lyric is the songwriter's internal emotional state, specifically a sense of hopelessness or numbness.

In this context, the metaphor suggests that the songwriter's no longer has the emotional capacity to recognize or feel happiness, even though it is symbolically present in the form of the sun. The phrase "eyes to see the sun" suggests a loss of emotional clarity indicating an inability to perceive the positivity or hope that was once present. By using spatial contrasts such as up and down, light and dark, the metaphor conveys a sense of emotional distance from joy, reflecting a deep internal disconnection through physical imagery.

The conceptual metaphor that best represents this lyric is *HAPPINESS IS UP, SADNESS IS DOWN*. The "sun", located in the sky above, is linked to positive emotions and higher emotional states. The inability to see it metaphorically places the songwriter in a lower and darker emotional position. This spatial orientation conveys that the songwriter has metaphorically fallen, or been pushed down, into a state of despair. Therefore, the metaphor enables the audience to interpret the emotional experience through the use of vertical imagery, making the abstract concept of emotional loss more tangible and relatable. The explanation of the conceptual metaphor mapping is explained below:

Source domain (Vertical Direction)	**Target domain (Emotional State)**
Sun (located above)	Happiness and warmth
Seeing the sun	Aware of positivity
No eyes to see	Inability to feel hope

This metaphor builds on the idea that positive emotions are associated with upward direction and light, especially the sun. In the lyric "No, no more eyes to see the sun", the sun symbolizes joy, warmth, and clarity, which are placed "up" in conceptual space. The songwriter's inability to "see the sun" metaphorically illustrates an emotional state of sadness, loss, or numbness, even though the source of happiness still present, but no longer accessible. Through the conceptual metaphor *HAPPINESS IS UP, SADNESS IS DOWN*, the lyric suggests that the songwriter has become disconnected from emotional positivity, unable to feel or perceive joy. The spatial and visual elements such as sun and eyes emphasize the intensity of sadness by illustrating the songwriter's emotional distance from anything associated with elevation or positivity.

B. Ontological Metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), ontological metaphors are the experiences with the physical bodies that reflect ways of viewing things like events, activities, emotions, and thoughts as beings and substances. This study found 68 data of ontological metaphors. Here are some analyses of orientational found in the song lyrics Pierce The Veil's Collide With The Sky album.

Data 3 "Celebrate the way **the night** hides *scars*" – Props & Mayhem

The lyric "Celebrate the way the night hides scars" presents an ontological metaphor, where abstract emotional conditions are treated as physical object that can be acted upon. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) theory, ontological metaphors allow people to understand nonphysical experiences by conceptualizing them as entities or substances. In this lyric, the word "scars" is used metaphorically to represent emotional or psychological trauma, regarded as the target domain. Meanwhile, "the night" is described as having the ability to conceal those scars, which makes it the source domain.

Both "night" and "scars" are explicitly mentioned in the lyric, but they carry deeper metaphorical meanings beyond their literal forms. The night is conceptualized as an agent capable of performing an action, which is hiding, while the scars are understood not only as physical marks on the skin, but as the symbolic of inner pain or emotional wounds. This metaphor transforms the abstract idea of emotional suffering into something concrete that can be covered or temporarily relieved by the protective and concealing quality of night. Through this framing, the lyric captures how people may find comfort or escape from emotional pain in darkness or loneliness.

The conceptual metaphor that the best for this lyric is *MIND IS A CONTAINER*. This metaphor allows emotions and psychological experiences to be understood as object that exist within a mental space. By describing emotional scars as something that can be hidden by the night, the lyric implies that the mind stores pain in a way that can be accessed, concealed, or even protected. Night, in this metaphorical structure, functions as a layer that temporarily covers the contents of that inner container. This allows the audience to understand emotional distress as not only real and immediate, but also as something that can be managed by choosing when and how to express it. Conceptual metaphor mapping can be illustrated below:

Source domain (Container)	**Target domain (Mind)**
Scars hidden inside	Emotional pain stored in the mind
Night hiding the contents	External condition concealing internal pain
Container keeping things inside	The mind holding emotional wounds

This metaphor conceptualizes the mind or emotional self as a container that holds hidden pain. In the lyric "Celebrate the way the night hides scars", the scars represent emotional wounds or past trauma that are stored internally, while the night acts as a cover that conceals these contents. This aligns with the conceptual metaphor *MIND IS A CONTAINER*, where the mind is understood as a bounded space that holds thoughts, memories, or feelings inside. By celebrating how the night "hides" these scars, the songwriter shows that the comfort found in concealing pain, rather than confronting it. The metaphor illustrates how individuals often choose to close off or suppress emotional hurt, keeping it contained and unseen, especially when external circumstances, like darkness or silence, allow for escape or avoidance.

4. Conclusion

The following points are presented as conclusion based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter. The use of metaphor examined in this research is taken from the song lyrics in Collide With The Sky album by Pierce The Veil. This research analysed the types and meanings of metaphors found in the lyrics of Collide With The Sky by Pierce The Veil, using the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). A total of 113 metaphorical expressions were identified from twelve songs, consisting of 34 structural metaphors, 11 orientational metaphors, and 68 ontological metaphors. Structural metaphors were used to express abstract concepts such as love or pain through more physical or relatable images. Orientational metaphors appeared through spatial references like up-down or in-out to describe emotional states. Ontological metaphors were the most dominant, showing how thoughts emotions, and life experiences were described as concrete object.

The interpretation of each metaphor showed that figurative language in the lyrics serves to reflect personal feelings, emotional struggles, and the desire for change. Some interpretations were supported by explanations from the songwriter, Vic Fuentes, which helped clarify the emotional background behind certain lyrics. The metaphors found throughout the album highlight consistent themes such as heartbreak, trauma, healing, hope, and emotional growth. Through the use of metaphorical expressions, the songwriter conveys complex emotional experiences in a way that is more relatable and meaningful.

Furthermore, the second part of the analysis further explored the mapping of each conceptual metaphor, by identifying the relationship between the source and the target domain. This process illustrated how abstract ideas like love, emotion, life, or pain are conceptualized through more concrete images such as fire, animals, journeys, containers, or vertical space. The mapping supported this process by showing how each metaphor builds meaning through familiar concept, which helps to strengthen the emotional messages expressed in the lyrics.

.

5. References

Gibbs, R.W., (2011). Evaluating Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Discourse Processes 48, 529–562. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2011.606103

Kövecses, Z., (2002). Metaphor: a practical introduction. Oxford University Press, New York.

Lakoff, G., (1988). Cognitive Semantics.

Lakoff, G., Johnson, M., (2003). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Leech, G.N., (1981). Semantics: The Study of Meaning. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Putri, D. A., & Santosa, R. (2022). Figurative language in modern song lyrics: A cognitive semantic approach. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 12*(1), 67–78.

Randolph, J.J., n.d, (2009). A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review. Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 14(13).

Wang, S., & Liu, M. (2023). Cognitive metaphor and emotional meaning in contemporary music discourse. *Discourse & Communication, 17*(2), 215–230.

Tay, D. (2021). Metaphor in discourse: A critical review of recent developments. *Annual Review of Linguistics, 7*, 1–20.

Yusuf, Y. Q., & Amelia, R. (2018). A metaphor analysis of selected song lyrics. *Studies in English Language and Education, 5*(1), 1–12.

Zhang, Y., & Hu, G. (2021). Conceptual metaphor and emotion representation in song lyrics. *Journal of Pragmatics, 178*, 1–12.