Conceptual Metaphor in Lonestar Song Lyrics "I'm Already There": A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis

Atikah Auni Nasution[1] Desna Uli Matanari[2] Afiqah Fianda[3] Rheina Sasmita[4] Rahmadsyah Rangkuti[5]

[1]Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
atikahauni18@gmail.com
[2]Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
desnauli0123@gmail.com
[3]Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
afiqahfianda26@gmail.com
[4]Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
rheinasasmita8@gmail.com
[5]Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
rangkuti@usu.ac.id

Abstract

Metaphor is one of the most effective strategies for making literary works more evocative, striking, and beautiful. Metaphor's significance goes beyond literature to cognitive stylistics, which studies the cognitive processes that underpin language use and interpretation. This study aims to explain the types of conceptual metaphors found in the Lonestar song lyrics "I'm Already There" using Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual theory. The research method used in this study is a descriptive-qualitative method. The research results show that there are 7 conceptual metaphors found in Lonestar's song lyrics "I'm Already There". The results reveal that it contains all forms of conceptual metaphors. Structural metaphors were the most common (43%). Followed by ontological metaphors were also popular (43%). While orientational was the least (14%). Thus, both structural and orientational metaphors dominated the lyrics of "I'm Already There" by Lonestar. This use of metaphorical language incorporates both abstract and physical components, setting the song's narrative apart from others. Overall, the use of structural and ontological metaphors in Lonestar's "I'm Already There" highlights their significant impact on the song's lyrical composition. The conclusion is that this balanced proportion demonstrates the complexities of using metaphor in specific song lyrics and contributes to a better understanding of the various uses of metaphorical language.

Keywords: cognitive stylistic, conceptual metaphor, Lonestar, song lyrics

1. INTRODUCTION

A metaphor is the use of a word or phrase that contradicts its conventional (literal) meaning, transferring some of its meaning to another semantic area. Metaphors are not restricted to poetic or figurative phrases; they are profoundly ingrained in how people interpret and communicate about the world (Fadhila & Juanda, 2020). Metaphors are linguistic devices employed by individuals to express themselves in different ways. However, they can also be seen as a means of exercising one's freedom to choose the meaning of a word or sentence that arises from constraints on how one can express ideas, objects, and attributes (Maoula et al., 2022). Using metaphor allows readers to understand far more internal meanings with only a few words in a distinct mood and emotion (Thi Vu & Nguyen Thi Hong, 2020). Metaphor has been an important aspect of cognitive stylistics since its conception. In cognitive linguistics, metaphor is not only the textual representation of a rhetorical trope but it is also seen as a fundamentally crucial part of human conceptualization. In cognitive linguistics, metaphors are thus more than just verbal patterns or adornment; they are textual expressions of underlying common, or possibly even universal, qualities of human perception (Jones, 2015). In recent decades, conceptual metaphor has gained interest among Cognitive Linguistics researchers. Metaphors are prominent in everyday communication and are a matter of words or flourished linguistic expressions, thoughts, and actions, making them valuable to research and analyze further (Jannah & Istiqomah, 2021). Metaphors are often found in creative language, such as music or poetry, due to their effectiveness and expressiveness. The author uses various metaphors in the song to express his thoughts and feelings (Rahmadhanti et al., 2022). Song lyrics often employ metaphors in their sentences. Song lyrics are a person's expression of something they have seen, heard, or experienced. Songwriters use language to communicate their experiences, creating distinctive lyrics (Suryadi & Uctuvia, 2023).

Lakoff and Johnson introduced the cognitive-linguistic approach to metaphor in 1980. As most traditional perspectives claim metaphor is a unique, seldom occurring poetic or rhetorical quirk (Steen, 2014). Metaphors exist not only in literary works but also in conceptual systems. A conceptual metaphor describes one area of experience (usually abstract) in another area (usually concrete). This definition captures conceptual metaphors as both processes and products. The cognitive process of understanding the domain is an aspect of the metaphor process, and the resulting conceptual pattern is an aspect of the product (Ummah, 2022). According to Lakoff & Johnson's theory (2003), there are three types of metaphors. Structural metaphors, for instance, "time is money", conceptualize time based on everyday experiences with money, limited resources, and valuables, and are tied to culture and help characterize the system as a whole. In contrast, orientational metaphors, such as "HAPPY IS UP", organize a full system

of concepts and often include spatial orientation, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. Lastly, ontological metaphors use existing metaphors to represent entities, enabling rational decision-making based on experience. For example, "INFLATION IS AN ENTITY" allows us to quantify, recognize aspects, and act logically on them.

There are some previous researches that analyze conceptual metaphors in songs. Ummah (2022) conducted research on conceptual metaphors and image schemes in Billie's song lyrics, highlighting the songwriter's use of idioms and implicit language. The researcher identified three categories of conceptual metaphors; structural, orientational, and ontological. The most prevalent category discovered was structural metaphor. The researcher also employed visual schema to create meaning. The analysis revealed various sorts of schemas, including space (up-down), force (compulsion, enablement, and blockage), unity/multiplicity (part-whole), identity (matching and superimposition), and existence (process). This study mostly utilized the unity/multiplicity concept. Hotmauli (2021) conducted research about the types of conceptual metaphors found in the lyrics of Judika songs and outlined the most often occurring metaphors. This study discovered 41 conceptual metaphors in Judika's song lyrics by applying qualitative research techniques and the conceptual metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson. With 24 data (58.5%), ontological metaphors dominated, followed by structural metaphors (14 data; 34.2%) and directed metaphors (3.3%). Ramadhika Vajara, (2022) examined the types of metaphors contained in Adele's song lyrics and interpreted the meaning of these metaphors using the theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). The research results show that structural metaphors are more dominant than ontological metaphors in Adele's song lyrics.

Lestari (2020) conducted research on the metaphors employed in Selena Gomez's song lyrics. Using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) metaphor theory, this study explores nine songs to discover and comprehend the existing metaphors. The research findings indicate that Selena Gomez's song lyrics contain three sorts of metaphors: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. There are seven structure metaphors (23%), three orientational metaphors (10%), and twenty ontological metaphors (67%). The second aspect is the type of meaning. The study revealed three types of meanings. There are 11 conceptual meanings (37%), 18 connotative meanings (60%), and one collocative meaning (3%). Winoto (2022) conducted research on Metaphor Analysis in British Pop and Rock Song Lyrics. This research attempts to explain the function and types of metaphors in the selected songs. This study distinguished three primary categories of metaphor—structural, ontological, and orientational—by examining the lyrics of eight different songs. The most prevalent one among them was discovered to be structural metaphors. Lastly, Pramudita & Hanidar (2020) conducted research on Conceptual Metaphors

in Paramore's After Laughter Album. The researchers used Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory to conduct their analysis. 47 out of 11 songs were found to contain conceptual metaphors. Overall, the data consists primarily of orientational metaphors.

This research covers the same topic, namely conceptual metaphors. However, the difference between this research and the previous one is the data source differs by examining the song lyrics "I'm Already There" by Lonestar using Lakoff and Johnson's theory. While previous studies have also explored the image scheme of the lyrics, there are gaps that have not been resolved by previous research namely this study focuses specifically on the types of conceptual metaphors found in "I'm Already There," written by Richie McDonald, Gary Baker, and Frank Myers, and published in 2001. Since its release, the song has had a profound impact on many lives, becoming an anthem for military families and raising funds for military charities such as the USO. This unique context attracted researchers to analyze its metaphorical content. Unlike previous research, which frequently indicated a dominant use of a particular type of metaphor, this study demonstrates a balanced distribution of structural and ontological metaphors in the song. This balanced presence brings a new approach to song analysis, incorporating artistic and interpretative elements that allow for deeper and more diverse interpretations of the song's meaning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method because Lonestar's song lyrics "I'm Already There" were analyzed using non-numerical data. The primary data source was the lyrics of the song "I'm Already There" by Lonestar, released in 2001. Secondary data sources included articles, theses, and internet sites that contained information that supported and related to this research. The data used in this study were sentences containing metaphors from the song "I'm Already There" by Lonestar. The researcher used a documentation technique to collect data by looking for any lyrics that contained metaphors and grouping the lyrics into each type of conceptual metaphor. The data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. The procedures in data analysis included reading and understanding song lyrics, accumulating or categorizing the types of conceptual metaphors, and drawing conclusions from the analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that that there were 7 metaphors in Lonestar's song lyrics "I'm Already There." The types of metaphor that appeared in Lonestar's song lyrics were: orientational (1), ontological (3), and structural (3). The types of metaphors in Lonestar's song lyrics "I'm Already There" can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The percentage of the occurrence types of metaphor used by Lonestar's song lyrics "I'm Already There"

No	Types	Number	Persentage (%)
1	Structural	3	43%
2	Orientational	1	14%
3	Ontological	3	43%
Total		7	100%

Based on Table 1. There are all types of metaphors according to the Conceptual theory that was first introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics. The results of data for this research are there are 3 (three) ontological metaphors and a percentage of their appearance is 43%, also the structural metaphors are the same as the ontological metaphors, whereas there are 3 (three) structural metaphors found in the Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics with a percentage of its appearance is 43%. On the other hand, there is only 1 (one) orientational metaphor exists in Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics with a percentage of its appearance is 14%. From the data above, the ontological metaphor and the structural metaphor are the most dominant metaphor with the percentage of its appearance is 43%, whereas the orientational metaphor is rarely used in Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics with the percentage of its appearance is 14%.

3.1 Structural Metaphor

The structural metaphors that are found in the song lyrics of the Lonestar's "I'm Already There" are 3 (three) with a percentage of its appearance is 43%. 3 (three) Structural metaphors that existed in the song lyrics of Lonestar's "I'm Already There" are demonstrated below.

3.1.1   I'm the sunshine in your hair

The sentence belongs to a structural metaphor because there is an abstract concept I as a target domain compared with the concrete concept of **the sunshine in your hair**. The metaphor **"I'm the sunshine in your hair"** represents a man or a father who loves his children and acts like a hero for his children's lives. This metaphor expresses the love, joy, warmth, and cheerfulness of a father to his children.

3.1.2   I'm the shadow on the ground

The sentence above expresses a structural metaphor because there is an abstract concept **I** as a target domain compared with the concrete concept of **the shadow on the ground.** This line demonstrates a man or father is a guard for his children that follows children wherever children go and always takes care of his children like **the shadow on the ground.** Whereas the shadow always follows someone who has the shadow, and the same as a father who is always beside his children.

3.1.3   I'm the moonlight shining down

The expression in the sentence above defines the structural metaphor because there is an abstract concept of **I** as a target domain compared with the concrete concept **of the moonlight shining down.** This line expresses light, brightness, and light color. It means that a man or a father is a source of light that shines when darkness comes for children. A father who gives radiance to his children to cover a night like **the moonlight shining down**.

3.2 Orientational Metaphor

In Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics, there is only 1 (one) orientational metaphor with the percentage of its appearance being 14% that can be found. Following the sentence, the orientational metaphor that appears in the song lyrics of Lonestar's "I'm Already There" is explained below.

3.2.1   I'm the moonlight shining down

The sentence above belongs to an orientational metaphor because that sentence shows a word whose concept is spatially situated, whereas the sentence involves the word **"down"** after the word shining. The word **"down"** here does not express sadness, depression, unhappiness, or sorrow. However, the word **"down"** is attached to the word shining and has a complete meaning as an expression of brightness and glow. In this song, Lonestar said that there was a man who left his family such as his wife and his children, so one day his children asked him when he came home and he said that physically he was far from his home but his heart always stayed in his home. So this sentence relates to this man, whereas the man likened himself to the moonlight in his children's hair. It means that this man is a light or sun for his children, and he always stays in his children's minds.

3.3 Ontological Metaphor

Researchers found that there are 3 (three) ontological metaphors with a percentage of appearance is 43% that can be found in Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics. The ontological metaphor that existed in the song lyrics of Lonestar's "I'm Already There" can be described in examples below.

3.3.1   I'm the whisper in the wind

This metaphor belongs to the ontological metaphor because there is something concrete is projected onto something abstract. In this sentence, **I** is something concrete that is projected into **the whisper in the wind,** which is something abstract, whereas **the whisper in the wind** cannot be seen, cannot be touched, but we can feel it. The part of the lyrics **"I'm the whisper in the wind"** expresses a man who does not stay with his children and his family, also he is far from his home. So, his children cannot see and cannot touch him, but his children can feel the existence of him at their home like **the whisper in the wind.**

3.3.2   I'm your imaginary friend

This metaphor is included in the ontological metaphor because there is something concrete is projected onto something abstract. In this sentence, **I** is a concrete concept that is projected onto **your imaginary friend** which is an abstract concept. For this reason, imaginary friends cannot be seen, or touched, but we can sense it. The part of the lyrics **"I'm your imaginary friend"** tells a man who physically does not live with his children dan he cannot play with his children at their home, but his children feel that he is next to them, and the man always stays whenever his children need him same as an **imaginary friend** that actually does not exist however children always feel it exists.

3.3.3   I'm the beat in your heart

This metaphor belongs to the ontological metaphor because there is something concrete is projected onto something abstract. In this sentence, **I** is something concrete that is projected into **the beat in your heart**, which is something abstract. **The beat in your heart** is something that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, but we can detect it. The part of the lyrics **"I'm the beat in your heart"** tells a man who is far from his children because of work, but actually, the man sensibly does not stay with his children however all of his heart is left in their children that similar to **the beat in your heart.**

This research reveals that structural and ontological metaphors are both strong in the song "I'm Already There," with each accounting for 43%. This differs from previous research findings, which generally revealed the dominance of a single type of metaphor. This balanced proportion demonstrates the complexities of using metaphor in specific song lyrics and contributes to a better understanding of the various uses of metaphorical language. The discovery that the song "I'm Already There" contains a balanced amount of structural and ontological metaphors opens up the possibility of more alternative interpretations of the song's meaning. This adds an artistic and interpretative component to the analysis of song lyrics, which can create space for deeper and more alternative interpretations of the song's meaning. The results of this research are supported by several previous studies which discussed conceptual

metaphors in song lyrics. The only difference is in the type of metaphor findings, where previous research tended to find 1 type of conceptual metaphor while our research found 2 types of conceptual metaphor.

4.   CONCLUSION

In analyzing this research, the researchers found that there are 3 (three) number of Structural metaphors (43%), 3 (three) number of Ontological metaphors (43%), and only 1 (one) number of Orientational metaphor (14%) found in this song. In Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics, the structural and the ontological metaphors are the most dominant metaphors in this song with a percentage of 43%. This data demonstrates that the song's writer uses more Structural and Ontological metaphors in describing the meaning contained in the song. Moreover, this data indicates that the song's writer in explaining the song uses concrete things as abstract things and also uses abstract things as concrete things to convey the meaning contained in the song and it makes this song different from other songs. It means that the Structural and Ontological metaphors have the same position in giving particular meaning to this song. However, this study is only focused on Lonestar's "I'm Already There" song lyrics. For reason, the result of the type of conceptual metaphor found in this song was not valid in all songs. The researchers suggest future researchers interested in researching this topic thoroughly investigate other sorts of metaphor theory, such as monitoring the type of metaphor in song lyrics based on the song genre. Therefore, the researchers expect that future studies will explore the utilization of metaphorical types based on song genre.

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