



# Metaphor Found in Coldplay's Selected Song Lyrics

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## Abstract

This research aims to identify the types of metaphor found in Coldplay's selected songs. This is descriptive qualitative research. The lyrics used in this research were Coldplay's selected song lyrics. There were 45 collected data from the lyrics. Structural metaphor appears 31 times, orientational metaphor appears 8 times, and ontological metaphor appears 6 times. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that structural metaphor is the dominant type of metaphor that the song writer used to write the lyrics. It is suggested that next researchers who are interested in metaphor need to deepen the analysis because the use of unique choice of word and changing through times will provide new results.

**Keywords:** *metaphor, coldplay, song lyrics*

## Introduction

Language has an important role as a tool of communication between individuals around the world (Devitt & Hanley, 2006). As social beings, humans are inseparable from interaction and communication with other humans. It is related to Harttman (1972) that language is the most fundamental means of communication. English, for example, is used by speakers to interact and communicate with each other. One of the functions of language is a tool to express self-expression (Kerap 2004). Through language, ideas and feelings are processed in the mind and then expressed and delivered into something informative, aesthetic, or artistic. Aesthetic

and artistic expressions of ideas and feelings can be found in poetry or songs. Song lyrics are an expression of someone about something he has seen, heard, or experienced. In expressing his experience, the songwriter plays puns to create appeal and distinctiveness to the lyrics.

The beauty of literary works is largely influenced by the ability of the author or writer to play the language and choice of words. Newmark (1988) states that the first purpose of a metaphor is to describe something comprehensively, economically, and generally more forcefully than what is possible in literal language. Metaphors are not only found in everyday speech or in literary works, but also in songs. Song is part of art and art is part of life (Sukyawaty, 2008). Pardede (2013) states that metaphor is difficult to understand because of the uniqueness and unpredictability in meaning. Metaphor can make it harder to comprehend what the words are saying (Pardede, 2013). However, sometimes people listen to a song without understanding the meaning of the song. Whereas, every song has a message to the listeners. These things underlie the researchers to conduct research on one of the language styles in song lyrics, especially the figurative language found in the lyrics of English songs.

Metaphor also plays a role as background knowledge for the third semester students before they take the Poetry subject in the fourth semester. Therefore, the author conducted research on metaphor to find out what types of metaphor are contained in a song. So, this research focuses on "Identifying Metaphor in Coldplay's Selected Songs" The selected songs from this band are as follows; "Viva La Vida", "A Sky Full of Stars", "Something Just Like That", "Everglow", "Adventure of Lifetime", "Up & Up", "Paradise", "Hymn for The Weekend", "The Scientist", and "Orphans". Author chose the band and the song based on the level of popularity of the song based on a selection from <https://www.bilboard.com/>.

## **Method**

This research used a qualitative research design. Creswell (2002) noted that

qualitative research is the approach to data collection, analysis, and report writing that differs from the traditional, quantitative methods. Qualitative research is research that generates descriptive data in the form of written or oral expressions, and the behaviors are observable (Bogdan and Taylor, 2007). Generally, qualitative research requires an in-depth exploration of thoughts, reasons, and viewpoints. In order to find the metaphor in the data, the suitable method, such as the method of Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by Pragglejaz Group (2007), was applied in this study. Then the data was classified and applied based on the theory of conceptual metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson (2003).

## Results

### The metaphor used by Coldplay

The following are three metaphor that found in Coldplay selected song lyrics: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor. With 31 occurrences or 70% of 45 metaphors, structural appears to be the most common metaphor that were used.

#### 1.1 Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor is a conventional metaphor in which one concept is understood and expressed in terms of another structured (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). In a structural metaphor, an abstract concept usually is presented to concrete concept.

*Datum 11*

(Song: Viva la vida)

#### **Stanza 2**

1. *I used to roll the dice*
2. *Feel the fear in my enemy's eyes*
3. *Listen as the crowd would sing*
4. *"Now the old king is dead! Long live the king!"*

The lyrics above in line 1 are a structural metaphor because they contain a transfer of concepts between two different things. Roll the dice is an activity that is usually done by someone to gamble on something and what is at stake is a real object. However, in the lyrics the concept used by the songwriter is different from the actual meaning, the meaning used in this lyric is daring to take risks and gamble with the life you live. Gambling is usually done between two or more people but the songwriter indicates that he is gambling with his own destiny by taking risks. So, the meaning of the lyric metaphor is that “I” used to be a brave person who dared to take risks.

*Datum 26*

(Song: Paradise)

**Stanza 1**

1. *When she was just a girl she expected the world*
2. *But it flew away from her reach*
3. *So she ran away in her sleep*
4. *Dreamed of para-para-paradise*
5. *Para-para-paradise, para-para-paradise*
6. *Every time she closed her eyes*

In line 1 there is an ontological type of metaphor because the songwriter uses the expression that the expectation that a woman has can do something that only birds can do, namely fly. The meaning of this metaphor is that a girl's life cannot go the way she wants.

*Datum 27*

(Song: Hymn for the weekend)

**Stanza 2**

1. *Oh, angels sent from up above*
2. *You know you make my world light up*
3. *When I was down, when I was hurt*
4. *You came to lift me up*
5. *Life is a drink, and love's a drug*
6. *Oh now I think I must be miles up*
7. *When I was a river, dried up*
8. *You came to rain a flood*

In line 7-8, word "river" refers to a flow of water that flows from upstream to downstream and rain is a natural phenomenon where water comes from a natural process. These two things have the concept of complementing each other and have something in common, namely that there is water as something vital between the two. The author uses this concept to humans who are experiencing adversity and are not being themselves who are saved by a woman by bringing everything the man needs to be able to continue living and become fully human as he should be.

### *1.2 Orientational Metaphor*

According to Lakoff and Johnson, An orientational metaphor is a [metaphor](#) (or [figurative](#) comparison) that involves spatial relationships (such as UP-DOWN, IN-OUT, ON-OFF, and FRONT-BACK).

*Datum 27*

(Song: Hymn for the weekend)

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In line 2, the songwriter uses orientational metaphors in the lyrics because there is the use of express the happy-as-up and the sad-as-down metaphors. The lyrics have the meaning that the partner of the man came into his life and gave him new hope.

*Datum 33*

(Song: A sky full of stars)

**Stanza 5**

1. *Yes I want to grow, yes I want to feel*
2. *Yes I want to know, show me how to heal it up*
3. *Heal it up*
4. *See the forest there in every seed*
5. *Angels in the marble waiting to be freed*
6. *Just need love just need love*
7. *When the going is rough saying*

This lyric has an orientational element in the phrase "heal it up" in line 2 which means it has the opposite of a direction word where there is the word "up" which means there is an increase, the increase listed by the songwriter in this lyric has the meaning of healing the wounds that have ever existed. in his life to be free from the problems that exist.

*Datum 38*

(Song: Hymn for the weekend)

**Stanza 3**

1. *So drink from me, drink from me*
2. *When I was so thirsty*
3. *We're on a symphony*
4. *Now I just can't get enough*
5. *Put your wings on me, wings on me*
6. *When I was so heavy*
7. *We're on a symphony*
8. *When I'm lower, lower, lower, low*

In line 5-6 there is a metaphor in the sentence "put your wings on me" where the songwriter draws his partner as a winged angel who has a noble heart and kindness like an angel so that the man also wants to be like the woman who has an angelic heart and personality when he is born. are experiencing difficulties in life which are indicated by the use of the word "heavy".

In last line, the use of "low" in the lyrics refers to the orientational concept because the songwriter uses the concept of happy is high and sad is low. This lyric describes the condition where "I" is feeling the downturn in his life.

### 1.3 Ontological Metaphor

Ontological metaphor is a metaphor in which an abstraction, such as activity, emotion, or idea is represented as something concrete, such as an object, substance, container, or even a person.

*Datum 38*

(Song: Hymn for the weekend)

#### **Stanza 6**

1. *It was the wicked and wild wind*
2. *Blew down the doors to let me in*
3. *Shattered windows and the sound of drums*
4. *People couldn't believe what I'd become*

In line 1, the songwriter uses an ontological metaphor because there is a use of the nature of living things to inanimate objects, namely the wind. The songwriter says that the wind is an evil and wild wind both of which are qualities shared by living beings. The meaning of this metaphor is that problems exist like a wild and evil wind that can destroy anything.

*Datum 40*

(Song: Viva la vida)

#### **Stanza 2**

1. *See a pearl form, a diamond in the rough*
2. *See a bird soaring high above the flood*
3. *It's in your blood, it's in your blood*
4. *Underneath the storm an umbrella is saying*



5. *"Sitting with the poison takes away the pain"*
6. *Up and up, up and up it's saying*

In line 4, the use of figure of speech is found in the phrase "umbrella is saying". Speaking is an action that can only be done by humans but the songwriter uses the verb to an inanimate object. The meaning of the metaphor is that we must provide everything before something unwanted happens and "saying" here means that when we are in a controlled situation in the midst of a problem then we can think of the next steps that can be taken to solve the problem.

*Datum 45*

(Song: Scientist)

#### **Stanza 5**

1. *Oh, take me back to the start*
2. *I was just guessing at numbers and figures*
3. *Pulling the puzzles apart*
4. *Questions of science, science and progress*

In this lyric, the songwriter explains that an abstract thing is research that is made as if it can speak or represent something that is felt by someone. The purpose of using metaphors here is that things that smell like science cannot properly explain and describe what the man's heart feels.

#### **Discussion**

From the result of the data analysis, it can be concluded that the structural metaphor is the most widely used metaphor by songwriters as a form to express the meaning of the song with the beauty and aesthetic elements in it. Structural metaphor is a metaphor that uses the concept of something concrete that is used in another form into an abstract concept contained in the song so that there is an

abstract sentence structure that is beautiful but also has meaning in it according to what the songwriter wants to be understood by the songwriter. listener of the song.

The structural metaphor, which is the most frequent type used by the song writer, was used thirty times (31). This type of metaphor presents the cases where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Structural metaphors exist based on the systematic correlation of everyday experiences. Eight (8) data appeared in orientational metaphor where a metaphor in which concepts are spatially related to each other. Such as up or down, in or out, front or back. Ontological metaphor is the last most frequent type used in the selected song lyrics, supporting eleven (6) data as a type of metaphor in which something concrete is projected onto something abstract or such a thing that provides ways of viewing emotions

Based on the findings, the writer tends to compare the present work with the previous research. The first relevant study is conducted by Rizky (2018). Rizky (2018) analyzed the metaphors in Album "A Head Full of Dreams" by Coldplay. Other research is also conducted by Yusaputra (2017). He analyzed the metaphors in "A Sky Full of Stars" by Coldplay. Both researchers used the theory of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) about metaphor. Rizky (2018) explained the types of metaphor and the most frequent metaphor that occurs is structural metaphor. While Yusaputra (2019) discussed the metaphor and the most frequent metaphor that occurs is structural metaphor.

Relating to those two previous studies, this present work provides a different research result. The writer concludes that the metaphors as one of figurative language, metaphors are used in song lyrics with aesthetic purposes so that the song becomes beautiful, pleasant to hear, and helps listeners to more easily understand the meaning of the song. It is worth studying in order to make the readers get excited when they listen and read the lyrics of the song and tend to know concepts about the meaning of the metaphoric expression.

## **Conclusions**

After analyzing the metaphors in Coldplay's selected song lyrics, "Viva La Vida", "A Sky Full of Stars", "Something Just Like That", "Everglow", "Adventure of Lifetime", "Up & Up", "Paradise", "Hymn for The Weekend", "The Scientist", and "Orphans". Some conclusions can be formulated as follows: The song writer used the theory based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in defining the meaning of the metaphor. The songwriter applied all three types of metaphor: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, and ontological metaphor. The writer describes the meaning and types of metaphors found in the song lyrics to facilitate the listeners to understand the implicit meaning of metaphors.

From the tabulated data analysis, it is shown that the most metaphor found in the Coldplay's selected song lyrics is a structural metaphor. Structural metaphor becomes the frequent type that is used by the songwriter in Coldplay's songs because most structural metaphors in which one concept is understood and expressed in terms of another are structured. In another word where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Moreover, the research can increase the knowledge of metaphors.

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