METAPHOR IN COLDPLAY'S SONG FIX YOU LYRICS COGNITIVE SEMANTICS ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This research analyzes the metaphorical meanings in the lyrics of Coldplay's song "Fix You" using a cognitive semantics approach, specifically the theories of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) for conceptual metaphors and Croft and Cruse (2004) for image schemas. The study aims to uncover the hidden meanings within the lyrics and understand how the songwriter, Chris Martin, conveys messages through figurative language. The methodology involves listening to the song lyrics, noting down relevant phrases, and then performing a descriptive analysis. The findings reveal two types of conceptual metaphors: orientational and ontological. Out of nine analyzed song lyrics, seven were identified as ontological metaphors and two as orientational metaphors. Correspondingly, the image schema analysis identified two space image schemes, one identity image scheme, and six existence image schemes. The research concludes that the lyrics of "Fix You" metaphorically depict someone navigating difficult times and seeking reunion after loss, using physical and abstract concepts to allow for varied interpretations by listeners.

Keywords: *semantics, cognitive analysis, Coldplay*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a means of expressing intentions and conveying information, allowing speakers to be understood by listeners. Chaer and Agustina (1995:14) state that communication is the primary function of language. As stated by Kramsch (1998), language also represents social and cultural identity, because in every utterance, ideological values, mindsets, and meaning constructions that are unique to the community of speakers are stored. Language is never neutral, it is always tied to the social situation, cultural setting, and power relations that take place between speakers. In this perspective, language does not only function as conveying messages, but also as a cultural and social identification tool, as well as a human thinking tool to structure reality. Additionally, language is an arbitrary system of sound symbols employed by societal members for collaboration, interaction, and self-identification (Moeliono, 2007: 88). Therefore, language not only serves to convey facts or commands, but also becomes a means of expressing feelings, aesthetic expression, and even a tool of social control. Language allows humans to organize thoughts, classify experiences, and frame reality. Language not only reflects the world, but also creates it conceptually.

The relationship between language and meaning is the core study of semantics. Semantics cannot be separated from the nature of language itself as a conceptual representation of human experience. Semantics, a branch of linguistics, focuses on investigating the meaning of language. It encompasses the study of meaning within language, codes, symbols, or other representations. Semantics is often linked with syntax, which concerns the formation of complex symbols, and pragmatics, which deals with the practical use of symbols in specific contexts by communities (Yumna, 2021). Ferdinand de Saussure, in Course in General Linguistics (1916), distinguished between signifier and signified, that is, between the sounds or forms of language we speak and the mental concepts we associate with them. This became an important foundation for the birth of modern semantics, which sees meaning not only as something inherent in words, but as the result of social and cognitive construction. In this view, every element of language from words, phrases, sentences, to pauses or intonation has the potential to convey rich and layered meanings. As George Yule (2010) explains, language does not only convey

meaning lexically, but also implies grammatical, contextual meaning. All these elements combine to form complex meanings in human interactions.

The understanding of language function is increasingly diverse, especially since the emergence of cognitive approaches in linguistics. Cognitive linguistics explains that language is not merely a system of symbols, but an integral part of human mental abilities to build concepts, imagine, and interpret experiences (Evans & Green, 2006). Linguistic semantics specifically examines meaning to comprehend human expression through language.

Other forms of semantics include programming language semantics, formal logic, and semiotics. The term "semantics" itself carries a broad range of meanings, from popular to highly technical, and is frequently used in everyday language to denote understanding issues related to word choice or connotation. This comprehension challenge has been a long-standing subject of formal inquiry, particularly in formal semantics. Within linguistics, semantics is the study of interpreting signs or symbols used by agents or society in particular circumstances and contexts. From this perspective, elements like voice, facial expressions, body language, and proxemics possess semantic content, each comprising various sub-branches of study. In written language, semantic content is conveyed through elements like paragraph structure and punctuation, while other language forms bear different semantic content. Mansoer Pateda (2001:79) suggests that the term "meaning" can be confusing, nothing that meaning is always inherent in words and sentences and manifests in diverse forms within language.

Songs provide a common avenue for expressing human feelings and thoughts. A song is defined as a collection of beautifully arranged words sung with musical accompaniment. Its foundation in musical composition, along with rhythm and tempo, draws listeners into its meaning. Song lyrics represent a person's expression of what they have seen, heard, or experienced. Songwriters manipulate words and language to enhance the appeal and uniqueness of their lyrics or poetry. A song can be understood as a poetic arrangement of words sung with musical accompaniment. Rhythmic elements such as melody, tempo, and harmony help strengthen the meaning contained in the lyrics. As Juslin and Sloboda (2001) explain, music has an extraordinary ability to evoke and convey emotions. This happens through a complex combination of tones and words, making songs a very powerful and touching form of emotional expression.

Song lyrics are a reflection of the songwriter's subjective experiences, whether personal, social or spiritual. Through the words chosen, a songwriter can describe events they have seen, heard or experienced, while implicitly inserting values, ideologies or moral messages. As stated by Moore (2012), lyrics are a form of musical narrative that forms the emotional identity of the song and becomes the main link between the singer and the listener. Typically, song lyrics contain hidden meanings and incorporate figures of speech, and songs can be a very rich expressive tools to analyze how metaphorical language is used in framing emotional experiences.

Koelsch (2014) highlights that song lyrics can reflect the emotions we experience as humans, as well as being a space to explore the psychological and social sides of those emotions. Through the use of metaphorical language, song lyrics allow listeners to feel personally connected as if they are narrating their own feelings. This is what makes songs capable of creating strong emotional resonance. Therefore, songs not only function as entertainment, but also become a medium that is rich in meaning, both semantically and pragmatically. Songs open up opportunities for the researcher to understand how meaning in language is formed, processed and perceived through music.

The presence of a metaphor in a song allows a songwriter to express emotions regarding something that has touched their heart and been experienced in real life. In songs, the use of metaphors plays an important role in conveying emotional experiences in a subtle yet profound way. Metaphors allow songwriters to imply feelings or psychological experiences without having to express them explicitly. This creates a richness of meaning that is not only affective (emotional), but also aesthetic (beauty of language). For example, when a songwriter uses the word "brokenhearted", he is not simply stating that someone is sad. Instead, he describes the sadness as something real, as if the heart were actually broken-concrete, imaginable, and sensory. Using metaphors like this increases the emotional closeness between the song and the listener. Metaphors activate imagination and sensation: the listener not only hears the words, but can also "see" the emotional images in them and "feel" the atmosphere. This creates a much more personalized and visceral experience compared to

direct expression. Metaphor involves comparing two things or objects by likening one to another with similar characteristics, creating a vivid mental impression without explicit verbal comparison, unlike parables. In addition, metaphors connect the inner world of the songwriter and the personal experience of the listener. In this metaphorical space, subjective experiences such as loss, falling in love, or confusion are transformed into language that can be felt by anyone who hears it. The song becomes more than just a series of words and notes; it also becomes a tool to share and experience emotions together.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as something with an alternative meaning, primarily functioning to aid understanding. Metaphors are not just a decoration in language, but a fundamental way humans think and construct meaning. Lakoff and Johnson explain that metaphors work by comparing one entity to another for example by mapping abstract concepts into a more concrete framework to make them easier to understand. A common example of this metaphor is the concept of "time is money", which shows how the concept of time which is abstract is understood through the concept of money which is concrete and economically familiar. As a form of figurative language, metaphor compares one entity with another. As a form of figurative language, metaphors allow for a shift in meaning, where one experience is used to understand another. Metaphors work through a cognitive process called conceptual mapping, which associates the source domain with the target domain. In many cases, the source domain comes from more concrete and familiar sensory experiences, while the target domain is usually a more abstract or complex concept, such as emotions, social relationships or moral values. In this way, metaphor becomes a very important cognitive tool in human understanding, both in everyday life and in literary texts and popular culture, including songs. observed that all human languages utilize metaphorical meanings in various levels of abstraction. This means that metaphors are not only found in poetry or literary works, but also appear in everyday conversation, political discourse, religion, and of course in song lyrics. For example, when someone says "his heart is broken", he is not talking about the physical condition of the heart organ, but rather expressing deep sadness by comparing his feelings to something physically broken. This shows how metaphors allow one to express emotional states powerfully and clearly, without having to be literal. Lakoff and Johnson also observe that all human languages utilize metaphorical meanings for communication across various levels of abstraction from concrete reality.

According to Ayu (n.d.), metaphors are generally recognized as part of figurative language, which serves not only to embellish language style, but also to convey deeper and emotional meanings. Figurative language such as metaphor enriches communication because it allows speakers and listeners to understand complex meanings through simpler and more familiar images. In the context of the arts, such as music and poetry, metaphors play an important role in creating emotional resonance between the creator and the listener. Through metaphors, abstract ideas such as sadness, hope, or loss can be expressed more clearly and meaningfully. This allows the listener or reader to emotionally connect with the message being conveyed, even if the situation is not literally the same as their own. Metaphors also help bridge the gap between thought and language by transforming internal emotions into external expressions. For example, phrases like "heavy heart" or "glimmer of hope" give shape to feelings that are difficult to describe. In music, the use of metaphors can transform simple lyrics into powerful expressions that evoke empathy and reflection. It allows listeners to project their personal experiences into the song, creating a shared emotional space. As such, metaphor is not just a stylistic choice, but also a cognitive and emotional tool that deepens meaning.

Metaphors play an important role in enriching language and enhancing meaning. Metaphors assist in conveying complex ideas and deep emotions by linking abstract concepts to concrete, everyday experiences. For instance, the expression "a heavy heart" allows the listener to visualize and emotionally grasp the feeling of sadness. Metaphors serve as a bridge between thought and emotion, as well as between language and lived experience. Thus, metaphor deepen understanding of both the world and the human condition. Metaphors are not merely decorative elements in language, but essential cognitive tools that shape perception and communication.

Lakoff and Jhonson (1980) divide two categories of metaphors, namely Ontological Metaphors are concepts that transform abstract thoughts or experiences into something physical and concrete, often called personification, and involve the relationship between substance and container (e.g., event

as object, state as container). Meanwhile, Orientational Metaphors relate to the orientation of human experience (such as up-down, in-out) derived from physical experience and are used to concretize abstract things. According to Croft and Cruse (2004: 45), image schemas are structures of meaning formed from the body's experience of interacting with the world. This experience serves as a tool to understand abstractly and capture a truth. Although the document states that Croft and Cruse divide the image schema into seven parts, the details of the seven parts are not specifically explained in the text provided. However, in the analysis presented in the document, some of the image schemes contained in the lyrics of the song "Fix You" and associated with Croft and Cruse's theory include Space, Existence, and Identity.

According to Croft and Cruse (2004:45), image schemas are meaning structures formed from the experiences of the human body in interacting with the surrounding world. Basic experiences such as moving, standing, falling, entering, exiting, full, empty, and so on, form cognitive patterns that humans then use to understand abstract concepts. In this case, the human body is not only a physical tool, but also the center of meaning formation through direct experience with the environment. These image schemas allow humans to understand and interpret the world in a consistent way, as the patterns are deeply recorded in memory and used in everyday thought processes, including in language. This experience serves as a tool to understand abstractly and capture a truth.

Croft and Cruse emphasize that image schemas are not merely visual images, but conceptual patterns that are dynamic, formed from repeated experiences that then become structures of understanding. For example, the concepts of "in" and 'out' are not only understood in a physical context such as someone entering a room, but are also used to understand abstract situations such as "getting into trouble" or "getting out of trouble". These image schemas serve as a bridge between sensory experience and linguistic meaning, ultimately enriching semantic understanding in human communication. In the document analyzing the lyrics of the song "Fix You" by Coldplay, it is mentioned that Croft and Cruse divide image schemes into seven types. Although a detailed explanation of the seven types is not provided in the document, some of the image schemes that can be identified in the song lyrics include space, existence, and identity. The space scheme refers to how an entity moves or moves from one place to another, which in the lyrics of "Fix You" can be seen through the narrative of an emotional journey or a change in one's inner state. The existence scheme highlights the existence of an entity or feeling, for example when the song describes feelings of loss or hopes that arise. Meanwhile, the identity schema relates to the wholeness or unity of the self, which in this song can be linked to an attempt to heal or "fix" someone who is experiencing emotional wounds.

By understanding song lyrics through this image schema approach, the analysis does not only stop at the lexical or grammatical level, but also touches on deeper cognitive and conceptual aspects. This shows how song lyrics are not just a collection of words, but also a reflection of bodily experiences and conceptually formed meanings. Therefore, the image schema approach provides a rich analytical framework in understanding the relationship between language, the body and human experience as a whole.

Research on cognitive semantic analysis has developed significantly, particularly in understanding how language reflects patterns of thought and concepts in the human mind. This approach not only emphasizes the analysis of literal word meanings, but also pays attention to how meaning is formed through a cognitive that involves bodily experience, culture, and social context. There are several recent studies that show concrete applications of cognitive semantic theory in various discourses, ranging from prototypical categories to cultural collocations and moral values in language.

Research by Kurek and Zawidzki (2024) showed that cognitive semantic theory can be applied to understand statements relating to prototype-based category membership. They examined the application of cognitive semantic theory in understanding statements related to prototype-based category membership. In prototype theory, an object can be a central member of a category if it has the most distinctive features of the category, while other members may be less associated. By combining this cognitive semantic approach with fuzzy logic, Kurek and Zawidzki were able to handle uncertainty and ambiguity in the meaning categorization process. For example, when determining whether an object is a "bird", we can use fuzzy logic to score its membership based on

how close it is to the prototype of whether it is more like an eagle (central member) than a chicken (peripheral member). This approach allows research to capture the nuances of uncertainty in natural language that binary categories cannot accommodate. As such, the theory is able to bridge between the structure of human thought-how mental categories are formed-with the diverse and ambiguous reality of language.

Research by Li (2024) highlights how the relationship between verbs and objects in Chinese reflects the conceptual way of thinking of its speakers, which is heavily influenced by culture. One example is the use of phrases like "riding a bicycle" which are more common than other verb and object pairs. Li found that the selection of such pairs does not happen by chance, but is closely related to the underlying meaning of the verb itself and the nature of the noun that follows it. Verbs meaning "to ride" in Mandarin semantically require the object to be a means of transportation that can be ridden. This usage considers both physical and cultural aspects, such as the view that bicycles are a means of public transportation or are easily accessible to the wider community. The cognitive semantic approach explains that collocations like this arise from the mapping between the domain of origin, such as concrete objects and physical actions, and the domain of destination, which is the concept of transportation or mobility. This means that language reflects the speakers' cultural experience and perspective on the world around them.

Hidayat and Iswandi (2023) examined how the concept of cheerfulness in Indonesian proverbs shows certain emotional dimensions and social values. hey found that proverbial expressions not only carry literal meanings, but also shape people's cultural views on what is considered cheerful, grateful and thankful. For example, proverbs such as while diving to drink water contain the value of cheerfulness in simplicity. This analysis shows that cognitive semantics is able to reveal the emotional dimensions embedded in cultural expressions, exploring how collective experiences are conveyed through figural language.

Meanwhile, Azkia and Prasetya (2024) explored the relationship between meanings in proverbs and character education, and confirmed that proverbs have moral values relevant to personality formation. They concluded that proverbs hold moral values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility that are relevant for personality formation. By applying cognitive semantic analysis, they were able to explain the conceptual mechanism behind expressions such as "*bagai enau dalam belukar*", "*melepaskan pucuk masing*-masing" which cognitively describe individuals who compete but remain respectful and link them to character education. This shows that proverbs are not only a cultural heritage, but also a means of contextualized character education through the process of conceptual meaning construction.

In addition, Sari and Lestari (2023) highlighted how Indonesian proverbs also have educational messages that can be utilized in the context of cultural learning through a cognitive semantic approach. highlighted how proverbs in Indonesia also carry educational messages that can be utilized in cultural learning. They found that through cognitive semantic analysis, proverbs such as "*bersatu kita teguh, bercerai kita runtuh*" can be used to teach the value of togetherness and "gotong royong". They emphasized the importance of using a cognitive perspective when teaching culture to the younger generation, as this approach helps students understand meanings more deeply and apply them in real-life contexts.

In general, many recent studies show that cognitive semantics is growing quickly in today's world. This approach helps researcher to understand how people use language to show their thoughts and ideas. For example, research by Kurek and Zawidzki explains that we often understand the meaning of something by thinking of a typical example. They also used a system called fuzzy logic, which helps us deal with words that have unclear or flexible meanings. This makes it easier to group and understand words that don't fit into strict categories.

METHOD

This research method uses note-taking technique by listening to the lyrics of the Coldplay's song Fix You, then recording the analysis found. The method used in this research is descriptive analysis, descriptive analysis method was chosen because it allows researchers to describe and interpret the data as it is, making it suitable for studying linguistic phenomena and emotional meanings in song

texts. As explained by Nazir (2011), the descriptive method aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately about the facts and characteristics of a particular population or object.

Descriptive analysis is a research method by collecting data in accordance with the actual data then compiled, processed and analyzed to be able to provide an overview of the existing problems. Descriptive qualitative methods are used to understand the meaning of verbal data in a natural way, especially in a social and cultural context (Moleong, 2012). This descriptive analysis was carried out when the researcher wanted to find out the answers to the problems and the meaning of a phenomenon that exists in the lyrics of the song Coldplay Fix You, which is one of the songs from the Parachutes album.

The analytical method used to analyze the data in this study is cognitive semantics from Lakoff and Johnson (2003) which is used as a determinant of whether a phrase is included in a metaphorical expression or not. Lastly, to determine the type of image schema that is in the metaphorical expression that will be analyzed using the theory from Croft and Cruse (2004). Researchers obtained data by listening to the lyrics of the song Fix You. After that, record the analysis found. Analyzing the lyrics into the cognitive semantics of metaphors while the analysis uses conceptual metaphor theory and image schemes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis carried out, the results found were two things related to conceptual metaphors. Then it will be discussed about the meaning of conceptual metaphors and image schemes from the lyrics of the song Coldplay Fix You. Here's the discussion of the research.

Findings

Table 1. Metaphor analysis in Coldplay's song Fix You

An example of a heading	Conceptual Metaphors	Image Schemas
Stuck in reverse	Orientational	Space
And the tears come staring down your face	Ontological	Existence
Lights will guide you home	Ontological	Existence
And ignite your bones	Ontological	Existence
And ligh up above or down below	Orientational	Space
But if you never try you'll never know	Ontological	Identity
You lose something you can't replace	Ontological	Existence
Tears stream down you face	Ontological	Existence
You try your best	Ontological	Existence

The analysis presented in Table 1 reveals that the researcher identified nine specific song lyrics from Coldplay's "Fix You" which carry conceptual metaphorical meaning. This table meticulously details each lyric, associating it with its corresponding conceptual metaphor type and image schema. For example, the phrase "Stuck in reverse" is classified as an orientational metaphor, linked to a "Space" image schema. Similarly, the line "And the tears come streaming down your face" is identified as an ontological metaphor, corresponding to an "Existence" image schema. Other instances, such as "Lights will guide you home" and "And ignite your bones," are also categorized as ontological metaphors, both sharing an "Existence" image schema, highlighting how abstract concepts are made concrete. The lyric "And light up above or down below" clearly indicates an orientational metaphor with a "Space" image schema, emphasizing spatial relationships. Furthermore, "But if you never try, you'll never know" is presented as an ontological metaphor, connected to an "Identity" image schema, suggesting a conceptualization related to self. Lastly, the phrases "You lose something you can't replace," "Tears stream down you face," and "You try your best" are consistently identified as ontological metaphors, each aligning with an "Existence" image schema, thereby conceptualizing

abstract states or actions as concrete entities. This detailed examination within Table 1 forms the empirical foundation for the research's conclusions regarding the prevalence and specific types of conceptual metaphors found in the song's lyrics.

Table 2. Relationship between Metaphor in Coldplay's song Fix You

Lakoff and Johnson Theory	Croft and Cruse Theory
Ontological	Existence
Ontological	Identity
Orientational	Space

Based on Table 2, a summary of the relationship between the identified metaphor types from Johnson & Lakoff's theory and the image schemes from Croft & Cruse's theory is presented. The table consolidates the findings, indicating that ontological metaphors are primarily associated with the "Existence" and "Identity" image schemes. Specifically, ontological metaphors align with "existence" in one instance and "Identity" in another. In contrast, orientational metaphors are consistently linked to the "Space" image scheme. This table effectively condenses the detailed analysis from Table 1, providing a clear overview of how the various conceptual metaphor types relate to their corresponding image schemas found within the song lyrics.

DISCUSSION

Based on Table 1, the researcher identified nine distinct song lyrics from Coldplay's Fix You that contain conceptual metaphorical meanings. These metaphorical expressions illustrate how abstract emotional experiences are structured through more concrete and familiar concepts. The analysis is further developed in Table 2, which categorizes the identified conceptual metaphors in line with the theoretical framework of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and aligns them with corresponding image schemas as described by Croft and Cruse (2004).

The results revealed two instances of orientational conceptual metaphors and seven instances of ontological conceptual metaphors across the selected lyrics. Orientational metaphors typically involve spatial orientation, such as "up" for positive emotions and "down" for negative ones, while ontological metaphors frame intangible emotions or experiences as objects, substances, or containers, thereby making abstract feelings more understandable and relatable.

Each metaphor identified in the lyrics was also connected to one or more image schemas—recurring mental patterns derived from physical and perceptual experience. The study found two occurrences of space image schemas, which deal with movement, direction, or location; one instance of an identity image schema, reflecting unity or fragmentation of the self; and six instances of existence image schemas, which focus on presence, absence, and being.

These findings demonstrate how the song Fix You uses metaphor and image schemas to express deep emotional experiences. The interplay between conceptual metaphors and image schemas offers insight into how language shapes listeners' emotional understanding, making the lyrics resonate more personally and powerfully.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the lyrics of Coldplay's song Fix You, this research identified two main types of conceptual metaphors used throughout the song: orientational metaphors and ontological metaphors. These metaphor types help convey complex emotions and abstract ideas by connecting them with more physical, familiar experiences. Orientational metaphors involve directions and spatial orientation, such as "up" representing happiness or "down" representing sadness. Ontological metaphors, on the other hand, treat abstract ideas or emotions as if they were concrete objects or entities, making them easier to understand.

In addition to metaphor types, the study also found several image schemas, which are recurring patterns derived from human bodily experience and perception. Specifically, there were two space image schemas, one identity image schema, and six existence image schemas present in the lyrics. These schemas reflect how the song portrays movement, presence, absence, and emotional states in

metaphorical ways, often rooted in spatial or existential experiences. For example, the idea of being "lost" or "guided" reflects the space schema, while the struggle to cope with pain and return to wholeness ties into identity and existence schemas.

From the analysis of nine key lyrical segments, it can be concluded that Fix You is a song aimed at comforting and supporting someone going through loss or emotional hardship. The lyrics paint a picture of a person dealing with sadness, disappointment, or failure, but also express the presence of someone offering help and healing. Notably, the songwriter Chris Martin has not given a fixed or literal interpretation of the song. Instead, he deliberately used physical and abstract concepts to create a poetic and emotional atmosphere. This openness allows listeners to interpret the song in ways that connect to their own personal experiences and feelings.

The research findings including the use of conceptual metaphors and image schemas are specifically drawn from the nine selected lyrics within the song, providing insight into how language, emotion, and cognition come together in musical expression.

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