

AN ANALYSIS OF METHAPHORICAL EXPRESSION IN *PINK SEWAT\$* SONG LYRIC

Nadia Nural Fasya¹

¹Student of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta
Nadianuralfasya.01@gmail.com

Yusrita Yanti²

²Lecturer of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bung Hatta
yusrita.yanti@bunghatta.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines metaphorical expressions in the lyrics of Pink Sweat\$'s albums *Pink Planet* (2021) and *Volume 2* (2019) using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Analyzing 22 song lyrics, the research identifies 50 metaphors categorized into 14 Structural Metaphors, 9 Orientational Metaphors, and 27 Ontological Metaphors. The findings reveal that Ontological Metaphors are the most dominant, as they personify emotions and relationships by treating them as tangible objects or forces, making abstract feelings more relatable. Structural Metaphors, the second most frequent, map emotions onto concrete experiences, using elements like waves or rubber to symbolize resilience and endurance. Although Orientational Metaphors are the least common, they effectively convey emotional intensity through spatial contrasts, reinforcing conventional associations between emotions and physical space, such as high for positivity and low for negativity. These metaphorical expressions enrich the poetic depth of Pink Sweat\$'s lyrics, making them more immersive and emotionally resonant. The study highlights the significance of figurative language in contemporary songwriting, demonstrating how metaphors enhance meaning, strengthen emotional impact, and deepen listener engagement with music.

Keywords: metaphor, conceptual metaphor theory, song lyrics, Pink Sweat\$, figurative language

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the use of metaphors in the lyrics of Pink Sweat\$, an American singer-songwriter known for his emotive and metaphorical songwriting. Music serves as a powerful medium for emotional expression, and metaphors play a crucial role in conveying abstract concepts in a relatable manner. Song lyrics often contain deeper meanings through figurative language, yet not all listeners fully grasp these hidden messages. By analyzing metaphors in Pink Sweat\$'s songs, this research aims to highlight how they enhance lyrical depth and emotional impact.

Despite Pink Sweat\$'s recognition for his metaphorical lyricism, little academic research has been conducted on this aspect of his music. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this study seeks to classify and interpret the types of metaphors in his lyrics.

The study focuses on selected songs from his Pink Family album, acknowledging the subjectivity of metaphor interpretation and its cultural context.

The significance of this research extends beyond music analysis. It contributes to the understanding of conceptual metaphors in literary works and can serve as a resource for English teachers and students studying figurative language. Additionally, it offers insights for future linguistic studies on metaphor usage in contemporary songwriting, emphasizing the role of metaphor in enhancing both artistic expression and emotional engagement in music.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which suggests that metaphors are not only linguistic expressions but fundamental cognitive tools that shape human thought and experience. According to this theory, abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete experiences, which allow individuals to conceptualize emotions, relationships, and personal struggles in a structured manner. This study applies CMT to analyze the use of metaphors in Pink Sweat\$'s song lyrics, identifying three main types of metaphors: Structural Metaphors, Orientational Metaphors, and Ontological Metaphors.

Structural Metaphors involve mapping one conceptual domain onto another, enabling listeners to understand complex emotions through familiar experiences. For instance, the lyric "*We were born in the rubber, yeah*" (Pink City, Line 1) conceptualizes resilience and adaptability through the qualities of rubber, providing a structured way to interpret life's challenges.

Orientational Metaphors organize concepts using spatial relationships such as high-low, in-out, and front-back. An example is "*Cause even when I'm at my lowest low*" (Lows, Line 17), where sadness is understood through a downward orientation, reinforcing the conventional metaphor that happiness is up and sadness is down.

Ontological Metaphors personify abstract concepts as physical objects or entities. These metaphors are the most prevalent in Pink Sweat\$'s lyrics, as they make emotions more tangible and relatable. For example, "*You got me wrapped up in your chains*" (Chains, Chorus) portrays emotional attachment as physical restraint, emphasizing the consuming nature of love. Another example, "*Icy in my blood, I can never change*" (Icy, Verse 1), uses ice to symbolize emotional detachment, reinforcing the idea of an unchangeable emotional state.

By analyzing these metaphors, this study highlights how Pink Sweat\$'s lyrics employ figurative language to deepen emotional expression and listener engagement. Metaphors not only enhance the poetic quality of his songs but also serve as cognitive tools that allow audiences to process complex emotions through structured and familiar experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze metaphorical expressions in the lyrics of Pink Sweat\$'s albums *Pink Planet* (2021) and *Volume 2* (2019). According to Creswell qualitative is an approach to understanding and exploring the meaning of individuals or groups associated with social or human problems and also this qualitative process involves data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, direct observation or document analysis (Cresswell, 2013, p. 44).

The research focuses on identifying and interpreting metaphors using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980), which categorizes metaphors into Structural, Orientational, and Ontological types. Song lyrics were collected from verified sources, and metaphorical expressions were identified through close reading and textual analysis.

The data analysis involved three steps: identification, classification, and interpretation. Identified metaphors were categorized based on their conceptual function, such as Structural Metaphors that map abstract concepts onto concrete experiences (e.g., "*We were born in the rubber, yeah*" to symbolize resilience), Orientational Metaphors that use spatial direction to convey emotions (e.g., "*Cause even when I'm at my lowest low*" to signify sadness), and Ontological Metaphors that personify emotions as tangible entities (e.g., "*You got me wrapped up in your chains*" to represent emotional attachment). This methodological approach ensures a systematic examination of metaphorical language in Pink Sweat's lyrics, revealing how figurative expressions enhance emotional depth and listener engagement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study identifies 50 metaphorical expressions in the lyrics of Pink Sweat's Pink Planet and Volume 2 albums, categorizing them based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory into Structural, Orientational, and Ontological Metaphors. Through a detailed analysis, the research examines how these metaphors convey deeper meanings beyond their literal interpretation, reflecting emotions, themes, and conceptual ideas within the songs. By analyzing metaphorical meanings, the study highlights how figurative language enhances the lyrical depth and emotional expression of Pink Sweat's music. Applying Lakoff and Johnson's framework, the research explains how metaphors shape the listener's understanding and interpretation of the lyrics, reinforcing the poetic and artistic quality of his songwriting.

The Types of Metaphor in Pink Sweat's Lyrics

1. Structural Metaphor

Lyric:

We were born in the **rubber**, yeah

Source Domain: Rubber

Target Domain: Life

(Pink City, Line 1)

The lyric "We were born in the rubber, yeah" is a structural metaphor as it figuratively compares "rubber" to "life." Here, "rubber" symbolizes qualities such as flexibility, resilience, or industrialization, shaping how life is perceived. According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, structural metaphors provide a framework for understanding one concept through another. In this case, the metaphor structures the listener's perception of life by emphasizing its adaptable and enduring nature. Rather than merely describing life, this metaphor actively shapes its meaning, reinforcing the idea that life, like rubber, has the capacity to withstand and bounce back from challenges.

2. Structural Metaphor

Lyric:

“And I won't let all these **waves** knock us down”

Source Domain: Waves

Target Domain: Obstacle

(Heaven, Lines 17-19)

The lyric “And I won't let all these waves knock us down” is categorized as a metaphor because it figuratively compares "waves" to "obstacles." In this context, "waves" do not refer to literal ocean waves but instead symbolize difficulties or challenges in life. This indirect comparison gives the phrase a deeper meaning beyond its literal interpretation, making it a metaphor. This metaphor is an example of a structural metaphor. Structural metaphors occur when one conceptual domain (in this case, waves) provides a framework for understanding another domain (in this case, obstacles). By using the image of waves knocking someone down, the lyric suggests that obstacles in life behave like waves powerful, unpredictable, and capable of overwhelming a person. This helps shape the listener's understanding of obstacles through the characteristics of waves. The metaphor is categorized as structural because it actively shapes the way obstacles are perceived. Rather than simply describing difficulties in a straightforward way, it presents them through the conceptual structure of waves, emphasizing their force and persistence.

3. Orientational Methaphor

Lyric: “Cause even when I'm at **my lowest low**”

Source Domain: Lowest low

Target Domain: Mental orientation

(Lows, Line 17)

The lyric “Cause even when I'm at my lowest low” is an orientational metaphor as it figuratively compares "lowest low" to emotional struggles, sadness, or despair rather than a physical position. Orientational metaphors structure concepts using spatial orientation, where low is associated with negative emotions and high with positive emotions. This metaphor reinforces the idea that happiness and strength are metaphorically higher, while sadness and weakness are lower, shaping the listener's perception of emotional states through spatial direction. Instead of directly stating sadness, the lyric depicts emotional distress as a downward position, intensifying the feeling of despair and making the metaphor a powerful representation of emotional decline.

4. Orientational Methaphor

Lyric: “Girl, I wanna love you closely”

Source Domain: Closely

Target Domain: Emotional Closeness

(Body Ain't Me, Line 17)

The lyric "Girl, I wanna love you closely" is categorized as a metaphor because it figuratively equates physical closeness with emotional intimacy. In this context, "closely" does not merely refer to physical proximity but symbolizes a deep emotional bond, trust, and affection between two people. The lyric suggests a desire for a strong, intimate connection that goes beyond surface-level interactions, reinforcing the idea that love involves emotional nearness as well as physical presence. This metaphor falls under the category of Orientational Metaphors, which structure concepts based on spatial relationships, such as near-far, up-down, or inside-outside. In this case, emotional closeness is understood through the spatial concept of physical proximity. Being "close" to someone typically signifies warmth, affection, and connection, while being "distant" implies emotional detachment or separation. By using this metaphor, the lyric conveys the depth of the speaker's emotions through a familiar spatial orientation, making it easier for listeners to relate to the sentiment. By framing love in terms of physical closeness, the metaphor enhances the emotional depth of the lyric, making it more expressive and impactful. It emphasizes the idea that emotional connection is not just about feelings but also about the sense of nearness and presence that partners share in a relationship.

5. Ontological Methaphor

Lyric:

"I'm overpaid and **underdressed**"

Source Domain: Underdressed

Target Domain: Social Status

(Pink Money, Verse 2)

The lyric "I'm overpaid and underdressed" is an ontological metaphor as it figuratively compares "underdressed" to social status, symbolizing a disconnect between financial success and a sense of belonging. Ontological metaphors treat abstract concepts, like social identity, as physical states. Here, "underdressed" represents a feeling of not fitting into one's wealth or status, while the contrast with "overpaid" highlights a mismatch between external success and internal identity. Instead of directly stating discomfort in a social position, the metaphor uses clothing as a representation of societal expectations, emphasizing a lack of refinement or preparedness. This structured comparison deepens the lyric's meaning, reinforcing themes of identity and self-perception.

6. Ontological Methaphor

Lyric :

"If that body ain't me, **body ain't me**"

Source Domain: Body ain't me

Target Domain: Sense of belonging

(Body ain't me, Line 10)

The lyric "If that body ain't me, body ain't me" is categorized as a metaphor because it figuratively compares "body" to a "sense of belonging." In this context, "body" does not merely refer to a physical form but symbolizes emotional connection, identity, or exclusivity in a relationship. This indirect comparison gives the phrase a deeper meaning beyond its literal interpretation, making it a metaphor. This metaphor falls under the category of ontological

metaphors. Ontological metaphors occur when abstract concepts, such as belonging or identity, are treated as physical objects. In this lyric, the phrase “body ain’t me” implies that if the speaker is not the one present, then there is no true connection. This suggests that belonging is tied to physical presence and identity, reinforcing the idea that relationships or emotional bonds are defined by exclusivity. The repetition of the phrase strengthens the emotional weight of this idea, emphasizing a deep desire for loyalty or attachment. This comparison helps shape the listener’s understanding of belonging through the structured concept of physical presence. The metaphor is categorized as ontological because it gives an abstract concept (sense of belonging) a physical form (the body). Rather than simply stating that the speaker wants to be the only one in a meaningful relationship, the metaphor presents this idea through the structured concept of bodily presence, emphasizing exclusivity and personal identity. This structured comparison enhances the meaning and emotional impact of the lyric, making it a clear example of an ontological metaphor.

Table 1. Data Representing Metaphorical Expressions in Pink Sweat\$’s Song Lyrics

No	Data	Methaphorical Types
1	We were born in the rubber , yeah	Structural metaphor
2	And I won't let all these waves knock us down	Structural metaphor
3	Cause even when I'm at my lowest low	Orientalational
4	Girl, I wanna love you closely	Orientalational
5	I'm overpaid and underdressed	Ontological
6	If that body ain't me, body ain't me	Ontological

Meaning of Metaphors in Pink Sweat\$ *Pink Planet* Album

Data (1)

"We were born in the rubber, yeah"

(Pink City, Line 1)

The lyric uses "rubber" as a structural metaphor to symbolize resilience and adaptability, emphasizing the singer's ability to withstand hardship and bounce back from setbacks. Rubber's elasticity and durability represent flexibility and perseverance, suggesting that the singer and their community have developed strength through challenges. Additionally, rubber symbolizes endurance over time, reinforcing the idea that experiences have shaped the singer rather than broken them. This metaphor conveys a tough yet adaptable background, allowing listeners to connect with themes of struggle, growth, and perseverance in the singer's journey.

Data (2)

"And I won't let all these **waves** knock us down"

(Heaven, Lines 17-19)

The metaphor in this lyric compares challenges in a relationship to waves, illustrating the struggles that the singer and their partner must endure. Waves symbolize powerful and unpredictable forces, much like the difficulties couples face in maintaining their connection. By stating that these waves will not knock them down, the singer expresses resilience and commitment to overcoming struggles rather than being overwhelmed. This metaphor allows listeners to conceptualize emotional hardships in a concrete way, framing them as obstacles that must be weathered rather than avoided. Furthermore, waves are often associated with cycles and turbulence, mirroring the ups and downs of relationships. The lyric conveys the idea that, like a strong swimmer navigating the ocean, the singer is determined to push forward and protect the relationship from being destroyed by external pressures. The imagery enhances the emotional depth of the song, reinforcing themes of perseverance, unity, and devotion. It provides a powerful representation of enduring love despite adversity, making it easier for listeners to relate to the feeling of struggling to keep a relationship afloat.

Data (3)

"Cause even when I'm at my **lowest low**"

(Lows, Line 17)

This lyric uses a spatial metaphor by linking emotional states to height, where "low" represents sadness or despair and "highest" symbolizes happiness or success. The phrase "lowest low" intensifies the emotional distress, emphasizing a rock-bottom state of hopelessness. This metaphor helps listeners visualize the depth of the singer's pain, making the emotions more relatable and impactful. The repetition of "low" reinforces the severity of the struggle, while also subtly implying the possibility of rising again. By creating a clear and evocative image, this metaphor enhances the song's emotional depth and connection with the audience.

Data (4)

“I’m **overpaid and underdressed**”

(Pink Money, Verse 2)

This lyric uses the metaphor "overpaid and underdressed" to symbolize a sense of imbalance or incongruity in the singer’s life. "Overpaid" suggests material success, while "underdressed" implies a lack of preparation or belonging, highlighting the contrast between external achievements and internal fulfillment. The metaphor reflects feelings of alienation and disconnection, where wealth or recognition does not necessarily bring personal completeness. It also critiques societal expectations, emphasizing that material success does not resolve deeper emotional struggles. Through this paradox, the lyric explores themes of self-worth, authenticity, and personal fulfillment, reinforcing the idea that external validation does not always equate to true happiness.

Table 2. Pink Sweat\$ Metaphorical Meaning

No	Data	Methaphorical Meaning
1	We were born in the rubber , yeah	Resilience and adaptability
2	And I won't let all these waves knock us down	Overcoming challanges
3	Cause even when I'm at my lowest low	Deep emotional struggle
4	Girl, I wanna love you closely	Suggest a desire to rebuild intimcay
5	I’m overpaid and underdressed	Feeling out of place in a particular environment
6	If that body ain’t me, body ain’t me	Represents detachment or emotional separation from a partner.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the use of metaphorical expressions in Pink Sweat\$'s song lyrics through Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, revealing that metaphors play a crucial role in shaping emotions, themes, and messages in his music. By incorporating structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors, Pink Sweat\$ enhances the poetic depth and emotional expressiveness of his lyrics, making them more engaging and relatable. His metaphors often explore themes of love, emotions, and personal experiences, allowing listeners to connect with the lyrics on a profound level. The study highlights the broader significance of metaphors as fundamental tools of communication, shaping how individuals perceive emotions and experiences. Additionally, it emphasizes metaphor's role in bridging personal storytelling with universal emotions, reinforcing its power in contemporary songwriting. Future research could expand on this by comparing metaphor use across different artists, genres, and cultural contexts, or by applying other linguistic approaches such as Critical Discourse Analysis or Cognitive Linguistics. Educators and songwriters can also benefit from these findings, using song lyrics to teach figurative language or enhance lyrical composition. Ultimately, this study confirms that metaphors are not just artistic embellishments but essential linguistic tools that contribute to the emotional and aesthetic impact of modern music.

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