

## **Metaphor In The Lyrics Of Olivia Rodrigo's Song On The Album "Sour"**

Tuti Nur Hayati<sup>1</sup>, Zulfa Nabila<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen, Jl. Kutoarjo No.Km.05,  
Wonobojo, Jatisari, Kec. Kebumen, Kabupaten Kebumen, Jawa Tengah 54317  
hayatituti31@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Several songs from Olivia Rodrigo's album "SOUR" utilize metaphorical language to express emotions, feelings, and social critiques. This study aims to identify the types and functions of metaphors found in the album's lyrics. The applied methodology is qualitative descriptive, with data consisting of pop song lyrics. The analysis is supported by three main theories: those of Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Parera (2004), and Ullmann (2014). The study reveals that metaphorical words or phrases undergo a shift from lexical meaning to metaphorical meaning based on similarities in concepts, processes, states, attributes, forms, quantities, sensations, characters, or functions of the described objects or phenomena. The social realities depicted in the lyrics encompass individual behaviors and states, as well as expressions of both positive and negative behaviors. Findings indicate the presence of various types of metaphors, including anthropomorphic metaphors, shifts from abstract to concrete, synesthesia, structural, orientational, and personification.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Olivia Rodrigo's Songs, Semantics

### **Abstrak**

Beberapa lagu dalam album "SOUR" karya Olivia Rodrigo menggunakan gaya bahasa metafora untuk mengekspresikan emosi, perasaan, dan kritik sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan fungsi metafora yang terdapat dalam lirik-lirik album tersebut. Metode yang diterapkan adalah deskriptif kualitatif, dengan data yang berupa lirik lagu pop. Tiga teori utama yang digunakan dalam analisis ini meliputi teori dari Lakoff dan Johnson (2003), Parera (2004), dan Ullmann (2014) untuk memperkuat hasil data. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa kata atau frasa metaforis mengalami pergeseran makna dari makna leksikal ke makna metaforis berdasarkan persamaan konsep, proses, keadaan, sifat, bentuk, jumlah, rasa, karakter, atau fungsi objek atau fenomena yang dijelaskan. Realitas sosial yang tergambar dalam lirik meliputi perilaku dan keadaan individu, serta ungkapan mengenai perilaku positif dan negatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya berbagai jenis metafora, seperti metafora antropomorfik, pergeseran dari abstrak ke konkret, sinestesia, struktural, orientasional, dan personifikasi.

Kata Kunci: Metafora, Lagu Olivia Rodrigo, Semantic

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Corresponding author: Tuti Nur Hayati

Email Address: hayatituti31@gmail.com (Jl. Kutoarjo No.Km.05, Wonobojo, Jatisari, Kec. Kebumen, Kabupaten Kebumen, Jawa Tengah 54317)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Linguistic observations of metaphor fall under the semantic approach, as metaphor represents a change in meaning within language. Semantics, a branch of linguistics focused on meaning, encompasses all aspects of meaning in language. Chomsky (in Chaer, 2012: 285) notes that semantics, alongside syntax and phonology, is a crucial component of grammar, significantly influencing sentence meaning.

The focus of this research is on metaphors in song lyrics, a topic of great interest due to the implicit rather than direct nature of their meaning. A metaphor concisely describes a concept, situation, or idea, often carrying a broader and deeper meaning. Metaphors can be challenging to

understand as they resemble language puzzles. While not all song lyrics contain metaphors, songwriters often use them to enrich the lyrics with creative and expressive language. Lakoff and Johnson (2003:269), pioneers of cognitive metaphor theory, emphasize that metaphors arise from cognitive processes.

Songs typically include both music and lyrics. Songwriters often base lyrics on personal experiences, using them to convey emotions, ideas, and thoughts. Lyrics serve as a medium for delivering messages and feelings. According to Jamalus (in Niswati, 2017: 82), music is a form of artistic sound creation involving elements like rhythm, harmony, and melody. Song lyrics are structurally similar to poetry, with verses and lines, allowing them to be analyzed using poetic theories.

Metaphors in songs play a significant role in meaning creation. They often carry multiple meanings, making the song's interpretation rich and varied. Metaphorical lyrics can enhance listener engagement by offering diverse perspectives on the song's meaning. Olivia Rodrigo, a popular artist among Generation Z, released the album "SOUR" in 2021, which reflects her experiences and emotions. The album's lyrics, rich in rhetorical beauty and metaphor, convey messages about romantic heartbreak. This research aims to analyze the metaphors in Olivia Rodrigo's "SOUR" album lyrics, examining their types and functions using theories from Ullmann and Jacobson (Soeparmo). This study differs from previous research by focusing on an entire album rather than individual songs, with the goal of deepening the understanding of metaphor in song lyrics and enhancing language style education through engaging music.

## **METHOD**

Research methods are scientific approaches for collecting data to achieve specific goals. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on gathering and describing data through direct observation of language and behavior. Qualitative research explores experiences, motivations, and behaviors through detailed, naturalistic descriptions. The research examines metaphors in Olivia Rodrigo's album "SOUR," selected for its rich metaphorical content. Data were collected by listening to the album and noting metaphorical phrases, clauses, and sentences from various songs. Analysis involved identifying metaphor types and functions. Data were categorized and coded based on metaphor types and functions. For example, "And I thought my heart was detached from all the sunlight of our past" was classified as a synesthesia metaphor, indicating emotional detachment, while "She probably gives you butterflies" used synesthesia to describe feelings of nervousness or excitement. The study aims to deepen understanding of metaphorical language in music and its emotional significance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted on the lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's songs from the album "Sour," data on the types of metaphors and their functions have been identified. The data includes words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The following is a presentation of the research results regarding the types and functions of metaphors.

### *Types of Metaphors in Olivia Rodrigo's Song Lyrics from the Album "Sour"*

The research identified several types of metaphors utilized in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics. These include anthropomorphic metaphors, which attribute human characteristics to non-human entities, enhancing emotional connection and relatability. Abstract to concrete metaphors transform intangible ideas into tangible concepts, making complex emotions more comprehensible. Synesthesia metaphors blend sensory experiences, such as describing sounds with colors or tastes, to create vivid and multi-sensory imagery. Structural metaphors organize and understand one idea through the framework of another, often providing a systematic way to view abstract concepts. Ontological metaphors, subdivided into container and personification types, describe abstract phenomena as physical entities or containers, or attribute human traits to objects and concepts, respectively. Each type contributes uniquely to the expressive power of the lyrics, enriching their meaning and impact. Here is a summary of the findings:

Table 1. Lakoff and Johnson, Parera, Ullmann

Type of Metaphor	Amount of Data
Anthropomorphic	2
Abstract to Concrete	7
Synesthesia	3
Animals	0
Structural	8
Orientalional	7
Ontological (Container)	0
Ontological (Personification)	4
Total	39

The analysis of metaphor usage across Olivia Rodrigo's album \*Sour\* reveals a diverse application of metaphors in each song. In the first song, four metaphorical instances were identified, consisting of two structural metaphors, one abstract to concrete metaphor, and one abstract metaphor. The second song featured three instances, including one abstract to concrete, one abstract, and one orientational metaphor. The third song included two metaphors: one abstract to concrete and one orientational. The fourth song was notable for its six metaphorical instances, comprising two structural and four orientational metaphors.

In the fifth song, two instances were found, one abstract and one orientational. The sixth song exhibited seven metaphorical instances, with a mix of two structural, three abstract, and two abstract to concrete metaphors. The seventh song contained no metaphors. The eighth song presented five instances, including two structural, two abstract, and one anthropomorphic metaphor. The ninth song

was characterized by two instances of synesthesia. The tenth song included four instances, with one abstract to concrete, one anthropomorphic, and two personifications. Finally, the eleventh song featured four metaphorical instances, consisting of one synesthesia, two personifications, and one abstract to concrete metaphor. This distribution highlights the varied and rich use of metaphor throughout the album.

### **Metaphor Functions**

The research identified 11 instances of metaphor functions, categorized as follows:

Table 2. Amount of Metaphor Function Research Data

Metaphor Function	Amount of Data
Informative	6
Expressive	5
Directive	0
Phatic	0
Total	11

The examination of metaphor functions in Olivia Rodrigo's \*Sour\* album reveals a clear pattern in how metaphors serve various expressive purposes across the songs. In the first song, "Brutal," there is one instance of the informative metaphor function, which provides factual or explanatory content. Similarly, the second song, "Traitor," also contains one instance of the informative function. The third song, "Deja Vu," and the fourth song, "Driver's License," each include one instance of the informative function as well. The fifth song, "Jealousy, Jealousy," follows the same pattern with one instance of the informative function.

The sixth song, "Happier," presents two metaphor functions: one informative and one expressive, the latter conveying emotions and personal sentiments. The seventh song, "1 Step Forward, 3 Steps Back," features one instance of the expressive function. The eighth song, "Hope Ur OK," includes two instances of the expressive function, emphasizing emotional depth. Finally, the ninth song, "Favorite Crime," has one instance of the expressive function. Overall, the total number of metaphor function instances amounts to 11, with informative functions being prevalent, followed by expressive functions that enhance emotional expression throughout the album.

### **Types of Metaphors in Olivia Rodrigo's Song Lyrics on the Album "Sour"**

The research reveals various types of metaphors present in Olivia Rodrigo's album "Sour," including 1) anthropomorphic metaphors, 2) abstract to concrete metaphors, 3) synesthesia metaphors, 4) structural metaphors, 5) orientational metaphors, 6) container metaphors, and 7) abstraction metaphors. The study identifies the following instances: 2 examples of anthropomorphic metaphors, 14 examples of abstract to concrete metaphors, 4 examples of synesthesia metaphors, 8 examples of structural metaphors, 3 examples of orientational metaphors, and 20 examples of abstraction metaphors. Below is an analysis of each type of metaphor.

### ***Anthropomorphic Metaphor***

Anthropomorphic metaphors attribute human characteristics or actions to non-human objects or concepts. For example:

1. (Ja. An. 14) “But jealousy, jealousy started following me”. These lyrics are categorized as anthropomorphic because they attribute the human action of "following" to "jealousy," a non-human concept. This metaphor suggests that jealousy feels like a persistent, active force that haunts the individual, indicating a deep, inescapable emotion.
2. (Fa. An. 04) “And I watched as you fled the scene doe-eyed as you buried me”. This lyric assigns human traits to "doe-eyed" and uses "buried me" figuratively to describe emotional betrayal. "Doe-eyed" implies innocence, while "buried me" evokes a sense of being emotionally overwhelmed or destroyed, adding a human dimension to the emotional experience described.

### ***Abstract to Concrete***

Abstract to concrete metaphors convey abstract concepts using tangible images or terms:

1. (Bu. Abs. 21) “They say these are the golden years”. The term "golden years" metaphorically represents an idealized period of happiness or success. The metaphor links this abstract concept with the tangible experience of life, suggesting that while society may idealize certain times, reality often differs significantly from these expectations.
2. (Ho. Abs. 23) “And when the clouds are ironed out”. The phrase "clouds" represents confusion or problems, and "ironed out" is a physical action applied to clothes. This metaphor uses a concrete action to describe the resolution of abstract issues, illustrating how complex problems can be made clearer or more manageable.

### ***Synesthesia Metaphor***

Synesthesia metaphors blend different sensory experiences:

1. (Ha. Sy. 05) “And I thought my heart was detached from all the sunlight of our past”. This lyric combines emotional experience ("heart") with visual imagery ("sunlight"). By mixing sensory experiences, the metaphor creates a vivid image of emotional detachment and lingering memories.
2. (Ha. Sy. 18) “She probably gives you butterflies”. The metaphor "butterflies" describes the physical sensation of nervousness or excitement, associating it with an emotional experience. This use of synesthesia connects physical and emotional sensations to create a more vivid and tangible depiction of feelings.

### ***Structural Metaphor***

Structural metaphors use a concrete framework to understand abstract concepts:

1. (Jea. Str. 03) “With paper-with teeth and perfect bodies”. This metaphor uses concrete elements like "paper," "teeth," and "perfect bodies" to represent abstract standards of beauty or ideals. These tangible elements help illustrate the often unattainable or unrealistic nature of societal expectations.

2. (Bu. Str. 40) "Got a broken ego, broken heart". Here, "broken" is applied to abstract concepts like "ego" and "heart," using physical damage as a metaphor for emotional or psychological distress. This structural metaphor helps convey complex emotional states through more tangible, physical terms.

### ***Oriental Metaphor***

Oriental metaphors use spatial or directional terms to understand abstract concepts:

1. (1S3. Ori. 20) "It's always one step forward and three steps back". This metaphor employs spatial movement to describe the experience of progress and setbacks. It conveys the feeling of persistent struggle and frustration in a way that is easy to visualize and understand.
2. (1S3. Ori. 23) "It's back and forth, maybe this is all your fault". The phrase "back and forth" illustrates a pattern of uncertainty or conflict using spatial movement, providing a concrete way to understand emotional or relational instability.

### ***Personification Metaphor***

Personification metaphors attribute human qualities to non-human entities:

1. (Hop. Per. 23) "And when the clouds are ironed out". By giving clouds the human action of "ironing out," this metaphor creates a vivid image of making things clearer, attributing human characteristics to a natural phenomenon.
2. (Hop. Per. 24) "And the monsters creep into your house". The metaphor "monsters" are given the human action of "creeping," making abstract fears or anxieties seem more tangible and menacing. This personification helps convey the emotional impact of these fears.

### ***Abstraction Metaphor***

Abstraction metaphors use concrete terms to explain abstract ideas:

1. (Tra. Pgt. 01) "Brown guilty eyes and little white lies". This metaphor uses concrete colors and sizes to represent abstract concepts like guilt and dishonesty. "Brown guilty eyes" and "little white lies" simplify complex emotions and behaviors into tangible, relatable terms.
2. Metaphor Function in Olivia Rodrigo's Song Lyrics on the Album "Sour"

### ***Informative Function***

The informative function conveys specific information about feelings and thoughts:

1. (Ha. If. 15) "An eternal love bullshit you know you'll never mean". This metaphor expresses skepticism about the notion of eternal love, communicating the author's disbelief in such promises.
2. (Bu. If. 09) "Who am I if not exploited". This metaphor explores the author's feelings about identity and exploitation, emphasizing how negative experiences shape one's sense of self.

### ***Expressive Function***

The expressive function conveys personal feelings and emotions:

1. **(Ha. Ex. 18)** “And now I’m pickin’ her apart, like cuttin’ her down will make you miss my wretched heart”. This metaphor expresses the singer’s jealousy and pain, illustrating how criticizing others is a way to cope with emotional suffering.
2. **(Os. Ex. 18)** “It’s one step forward and three steps back”. This metaphor reflects the singer’s frustration and uncertainty, capturing the sense of ongoing setbacks despite efforts to progress.

Overall, the study found a total of 39 instances of metaphor types and 11 instances of metaphor functions in Olivia Rodrigo's album "Sour." The analysis covers various metaphorical uses, including anthropomorphic, synesthesia, abstract to concrete, abstraction, structural, orientational, and personification metaphors, with functions including both informative and expressive purposes.

## **CONCLUSSION**

This study analyzes the use of metaphors in the lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's album "SOUR" to identify the types and functions of metaphors, employing theories from Lakoff and Johnson, Parera, and Ullmann. The metaphors in the lyrics function to convey emotions, feelings, and social critique implicitly. The research found 39 types of metaphors and 11 functions of metaphors, including informational and expressive. In conclusion, the lyrics of the "SOUR" album utilize a diverse and profound range of metaphors, enriching the meaning of the songs and providing insights into figurative language in music.

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