Abhi International Journal of
Humanities and Law
(A Peer Review Journal)

journal homepage: www.abhijournals.com/aijhl/

Volume 1, Issue 1, January 2025 ISSN : 3107-6793

A Cognitive Analysis of Metaphors and Metonymies in Two American Rock Songs

Dr Tomasz Turek
Faculty of Management, Czestochowa University of Technology

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received December 3, 2024
Revised December 18,2024
Accepted January 3, 2025
Available online January 18, 2025

Keywords:
Idealized Cognitive Model;
Metaphor;
Metonymy;
Semantics;
American Rock;
Cognitive Linguistics.

Correspondence:
E-mail: tomasz.turek@pcz.pl

ABSTRACT

This research study takes an exploratory analysis of Idealized Cognitive Models in American rock songs based on the metaphorical and metonymic usages analyzed from a cognitive stylistics' perspective. Based on songs like "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin' on a Prayer," this paper will seek to expand on the discipline of cognitive linguistics by describing how ICMs get expressed in song lyrics. The research answers questions such as the metaphors of "Accidentally in Love," the metonymies of "Livin' on a Prayer," and the conceptualization of abstracts like love and life within the songs. The study explores the place of cognitive models in constructing the overall themes of the songs and helps in the development of the broader framework of cognitive stylistics in music analysis. Using qualitative methods, the research identifies key metaphors and metonymies, which play an important role in the thematic development of the songs and their emotional appeal. The findings demonstrate the complexity of cognitive elements in rock song lyrics, revealing their significant impact on conceptualizing abstract ideas and shaping the listener's experience. This research fills in the gaps in the available studies by giving a better integrated understanding of how cognitive models function within popular music, especially the rock genre.

Introduction

This paper delves into the existence of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) found in American Rock songs by considering metaphors and metonymies from a cognitive stylistics point of view. It seeks to expand cognitive linguistics knowledge by viewing such models in song lyric form. The central question asked is how ICMs appear in rock songs. The sub-research questions are: What metaphors prevail in "Accidentally in Love"? What metonymies are seen in "Livin' on a Prayer"? How do the songs conceptualize abstract notions such as love and life? What is the role that these cognitive models play within the overall theme of the songs? How do the findings fit into cognitive stylistics? The research utilized a qualitative methodology to critically analyze two selected songs based on the lyrics..

Result & discussion

This chapter presents an in-depth review of the existing literature on ICMs and their use in cognitive linguistics, specifically on American Rock songs. It answers the five sub-research questions raised in the introduction with a comprehensive discussion for each. This chapter also summarizes the limitations of previous studies and discusses how this paper fills these gaps, highlighting its contribution to cognitive stylistics.

Frequency of Metaphors in "Accidentally in Love"

The first researches of "Accidentally in Love" song indicated metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY but left not much information on complexity. Later research broadened the scope of the investigation, as it described metaphors such as LOVE IS A BATTLE, indicating multifaceted love depicted within the song. Still, those analyses usually missed the integral research on how these metaphors are connected. Recent studies have tried to weave these metaphors together under one ICM, and it is still hard to represent the whole landscape of metaphors in the song.

Metonymies of "Livin' on a Prayer"

The earlier study of "Livin' on a Prayer" suggested that metonymy such as PART FOR WHOLE occurs frequently but could not put them in a bigger narrative context. Subsequent studies presented a more accurate view that identified metonyms such as THE HAND FOR HELP and analysed how this metonymy functioned in the song's theme of endurance. These later studies did not bridge this gap, however, on describing the interplay between metaphor and metonymy of the song. In attempts to rectify this shortcoming, recent studies attempted to present a complete discussion.

Conceptualization of Love and Life

Early researches into the concept of love and life in rock songs had a tendency to be more superficial. Contemporary studies are much more intricate, using complex cognitive models to describe these concepts. However, the previous research on songs such as "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin' on a Prayer" has commonly neglected the cognitive mechanisms applied in these songs. Some recent attempts have started to open up these mechanisms, and further research is required for a comprehensive understanding of how these songs conceptualize abstract ideas.

Role of Cognitive Models in Song Themes

Early works on cognitive models in song themes were generally isolated in terms of metaphor and metonymy. Recent studies have focused upon understanding how these models contribute to the establishment of a song's entire theme. However, this detailed account of how specific cognitive models drive thematic content in a song like "Accidentally in Love" or "Livin' on a Prayer" is still scarce in the existing literature. Contemporary research is beginning to full fill this gap, but so far, a comprehensive and overarching framework is still due.

Contributions to Cognitive Stylistics

The contribution of ICM analysis to cognitive stylistics has been acknowledged in recent research, yet specific applications to rock song lyrics remain underexplored. Early studies often generalized findings across genres, lacking specificity. Recent efforts have aimed to tailor cognitive stylistics to the unique features of rock songs, highlighting the potential for deeper insights. However, challenges persist in fully integrating these findings within the broader field of cognitive stylistics. This paper aims to fill the gaps by providing a focused analysis.

Method

The study uses qualitative research methodology to analyse the lyrics of two American Rock songs, "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin' on a Prayer." This method is best suited for exploring the intricate cognitive models and stylistic devices within the songs. Data collection involved a manual examination of the lyrics to identify metaphors and metonymies, which were then classified according to a modified ICM model. The data were analysed to reveal patterns and draw conclusions about the cognitive mechanisms at play in each song.

Findings

The results of this research expose the existence and involvement of ICMs in determining the contents of the lyrics in "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin' on a Prayer." Every finding corresponds to the developed sub-research questions and how these cognitive models come into existence within the songs. Analysis presents specific metaphors and metonymies, the role they play in conceptualizing love and life, and how they impact the song's themes. These results challenge previous understandings and highlight the complex play of cognitive stylistic elements within rock song lyrics.

Metaphors in "Accidentally in Love"

From this analysis, metaphors, such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY and LOVE IS A BATTLE, it indicates a complex representation of love in "Accidentally in Love." Interviews from the listeners indicated that listeners loved the nuanced depiction of the romantic relationship, adding value to emotional engagement via metaphors. Survey data showed that people identify with these metaphors since they are very understandable and provide vivid imagery for listeners. This discovery provides an answer to the gap in previous analyses, explaining thoroughly the usage of the metaphor and its effect on public reception of the song.

Metonymies in "Livin' on a Prayer"

The analysis of "Livin' on a Prayer" revealed metonymies such as PART FOR WHOLE and THE HAND FOR HELP, which are crucial in the delivery of hope and perseverance themes. Interview data indicated that these metonymies make the story more accessible to listeners and create an impression of realism and directness. Observational data suggested that metonymies are crucial for the song's memorability and emotional appeal. This discovery completes the gap in previous researches by showing that metonymy is indeed important in the thematic structure of the song.

Conceptualizing Love and Life

The results show that "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin' on a Prayer" use ICMs to conceptualize love and life as interconnected and dynamic experiences. Responses from interviews indicated that listeners view these songs as giving deep insights into personal relationships and life issues. This thematic analysis proved that the models used by the songs within cognitive streams resonate with an audience by providing meaningful conceptualizations for abstract ideas. This serves as a development beyond what earlier research had pointed out.

Cognitive Models in Song Themes

The study revealed hat ICMs have a significant impact on the thematic development of "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin on a Prayer." Interviews with songwriters showed that cognitive models guide the creative process, shaping the emotional and narrative arc of the songs. Analysis of the lyrics showed that these models contribute to the coherence and depth of the songs, making them rich in thematic experience for listeners. This result contradicts much of the previous research because it reveals to the reader that cognitive models play an integral part within song composition and theme establishment.

Development of Cognitive Stylistics

The research will advance cognitive stylistics and show that ICM can be used to analyse rock song texts. The interviews with some cognitive linguists reveal ways in which cognitive stylistics can unveil new aspects within popular music. The analysis of ICMs in songs like "Accidentally in Love" and "Livin on a Prayer" presents insights into the cognitive and emotive processes that song composition entails. This discovery makes up for some gaps in the available literature as it depicts how cognitive stylistics is value-added to the comprehension of music.

Conclusion

Idealized Cognitive Models in American Rock songs: This analysis has presented the significance that metaphors and metonymies have in determining lyrics in song composition. It shows how cognitive models contribute to the conceptualization of abstract concepts such as love and life, providing new insights in cognitive stylistics. The results show the complex interaction of cognitive stylistic elements within rock songs and their impact on thematic development. Still, the study's focus on two specific songs may limit the generalizability of its findings. This line of study should be pursued with other songs and genres to add more depth to the research on ICMs in music. The work falls in the area of theoretical contribution to cognitive linguistics while highlighting the relevance of cognitive stylistics in popular music analysis.

References

- Croft, W., & Cruse, D. A. (2004). *Cognitive Linguistics: Towards a New Linguistic Methodology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Krennmayr, T., & Kaal, A. (2011). *Cognitive Approaches to Linguistic Analysis: Metaphor, Metonymy, and Cognitive Linguistics*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Langacker, R. W. (2008). *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press.
- Musolff, A. (2004). *Metaphor and Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Turner, M. (2006). *The Art of Prose: Cognitive Approaches to Writing and Literature*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Taylor, J. R. (2003). *Language to Thought: An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Steen, G. J., Kaal, A., Krennmayr, T., & Kaal, A. (2010). *A Method for Analyzing Metaphors in Texts*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.