

**A Deep Dive into Conceptual Metaphors of Love:  
A Cognitive Analysis of Taylor Swift's "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*"  
Lyricism**

**Parinya Khumruk**

Language Institute

Thammasat University

Email: khumrukp@gmail.com

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**Abstract**

This research investigated the musical domain of Taylor Swift, with two primary goals: (1) to identify the conceptual metaphors of love embedded in her lyrics and (2) to demonstrate how these metaphors connect with the fundamental nature of love as an emotion. This study utilized data from Taylor Swift's official website, focusing on her acclaimed album, "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*", which includes a collection of 26 outstanding songs. A detailed analysis highlighted the frequent use of love-related metaphors, revealing that Taylor Swift's lyrical decisions are not random but are carefully crafted, drawing from universal human experiences. The structural metaphor surfaced as the most prominent style in her songs. Furthermore, this examination offers an in-depth look at Taylor Swift's unique metaphorical portrayal of love, showcasing the significant role of language in shaping perceptions and profoundly connecting with listeners.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor, cognitive analysis, love metaphors, Taylor Swift

Our everyday functioning from the smallest details to broader aspects of life is guided by the human conceptual system. This cognitive process shapes our perception, influences our daily routines, and affects how we empathize with others. Geary (2009), in a TED Talk, asserted that individuals unconsciously employ a minimum of six metaphors per minute in their conversations. Such metaphors are not limited to verbal communication alone but also commonly utilized in various genres of music, including jazz, pop, rock, and rap. In the book "*Metaphors We Live By*", Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that metaphors are a fundamental element of language and extend beyond the realm of poetry, impacting our understanding and expression of concepts. Since metaphorical expressions play a significant role in our daily lives, extending to the realm of music, song lyrics serve as a powerful medium for individuals to express their

personal experiences, observations, and perceptions. Consequently, songwriters skillfully utilize language as a means to engage and captivate listeners, employing vocal techniques, language styles, and wordplay that are complemented by the melody and musical arrangement (Frida & Zuraida, 2022). It is worth noting that each song lyric holds its own unique meaning, often encompassing implicit or explicit interpretations deliberately selected by the songwriters.

Taylor Swift, a highly acclaimed musician, has achieved numerous awards on the international stage (Cesaric, 2022; Dodds, 2023; Gibson, 2023; King, 2022; Norwin & Brow, 2023; Pham, 2023). As a singer and songwriter, she often incorporates love metaphors in her lyrics to enhance their beauty and imbue them with profound meanings. Her works showcase profound messages conveyed through the lyrics of her songs and accompanying videos, employing intricate literary devices such as metaphor. Through the skillful use of metaphor, Swift crafts songs that go beyond surface-level expressions, inviting listeners to delve into deeper layers of interpretation and appreciation.

As Taylor Swift's songs prominently feature metaphorical expressions, it is worthwhile examining her lyrics to understand how she utilizes love metaphors to captivate audiences worldwide and achieve significant success in the international music industry. By exploring the complexity of her love metaphors, we are able to gain valuable insights into the compelling nature of her music which has collected widespread acclaim and numerous prestigious awards. This investigation will deepen our understanding of the universal appeal and emotional connection that Swift's songs establish with listeners from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, analyzing her use of love metaphors will contribute to the existing scholarly conversation on the effectiveness of metaphors in engaging audiences, expanding our knowledge of how metaphors contribute to the popularity and impact of songs in the global music arena.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Conceptual Metaphor***

Metaphor is commonly understood as an expression that goes beyond its literal meaning, instead conveying a similarity by comparing two distinct things. Initially regarded as a literary device rather than a linguistic concept, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that metaphor plays a significant role in the structure of language, frequently observed in everyday conversations. For instance, the metaphorical phrase "*Time is money*" illustrates this concept. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, time is defined as the measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues, while money refers to something generally accepted as a medium of exchange, a measure of value, or a means of payment. However, metaphorically, "*Time is money*" implies that time holds value. When we allocate our time to someone, we are offering them

something valuable. We “*spend*” our time on activities and can also “*waste*” our time.

However, Lakoff (1993) stated that metaphors function on a conceptual level, known as conceptual metaphors. These are often found in everyday communication, showing how people perceive, think, and behave. Beyond just literature, metaphors appear in meaningful discussions like in politics and religion, and even in practical writing such as scientific texts (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014).

The conceptual metaphor involves transferring meaning from one domain to another, connecting the two realms and considering them interconnected. This theory is commonly known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). CMT focuses on utilizing specific aspects of the source or target domains that play a role in the metaphor. Within this theory, there are two conceptual domains: the *source domain* and the *target domain*. Individuals utilize the source domain, which consists of familiar everyday objects, to comprehend abstract concepts in the target domain. The source domain is more concrete while the target domain is abstract. Thus, metaphors establish relationships between objects and facilitate understanding by relating them to other things. In essence, the source domain serves as a tool for humans to grasp abstract concepts in the target domain.

Conceptual metaphors are deeply rooted in our physical experiences and the realities we encounter. How we perceive, understand, and talk about things often stems from our bodily experiences (Evans & Green, 2006). This includes how we sense, move, act, and interact with others. For example, drawing from journey experiences helps us grasp the concept of love more easily, rather than the other way around. In this metaphor, those traveling together are seen as participants in a love affair, akin to life partners. The physical challenges faced on the journey, like steep paths or broken bridges, parallel the difficulties in a love relationship, such as conflicts or intimacy issues. Moreover, love is often depicted through physical objects in English metaphors, like in expressions where love is a hidden or valuable object. Phrases like “he eventually found love” or “you’re my treasure” (Kövecses, 2006) are examples of this.

The present study employs Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) three types of metaphors; structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors as the theoretical framework. These metaphorical categories serve as a conceptual framework for analyzing and interpreting conceptual metaphors of love in the lyrics written by Taylor Swift.

### **1) Structural Metaphor**

The notion of structural metaphor arises from the systematic process of conceptualizing our perceptions of the world and incorporating them into our everyday language. It involves metaphorically interpreting a complex concept by mapping it onto another concept in a structured manner. That is to say, structural

metaphor involves using one concept to structurally frame another, often complex, concept. For example, the phrase *“love is peace”* simplifies the complex concept of love by equating it with the concept of peace or highlighting the similar qualities they possess. In this sentence, the meaning of love is effectively conveyed through its connection to peace.

## **2) Ontological Metaphor**

Ontological metaphor is a type of metaphor that uses familiar or concrete examples from everyday life to elaborate on abstract ideas. In other words, ontological metaphor typically involves the representation of abstract concepts in more concrete terms. For example, the sentence *“love is you”* can be seen as an ontological metaphor because it equates the abstract concept of *“love”* with the concrete representation of *“you”*. This metaphor helps us understand and relate to the concept of love by connecting it to something tangible and recognizable.

## **3) Orientational Metaphor**

Orientational metaphor is a different type of metaphor that does not involve structural relationships, but rather connects one concept to another as a whole (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This type of metaphor is referred to as orientational because it relates to spatial associations that we experience in our physical lives. For instance, the sentence *“I’m feeling down”* utilizes the word *“down”* to convey a spatial position that accurately expresses the feeling of sadness or low spirits.

## ***Previous Studies on Conceptual Metaphors of Love***

The exploration of conceptual metaphors of love in English songs has garnered considerable academic interest over the years, with several studies delving into the intricate relationship between language and emotion in music. Gavelin’s (2015) examination of Mariah Carey’s albums highlighted the consistency in the use of love metaphors over a span of twenty-four years, demonstrating how themes like *“LOVE IS AN OBJECT”* and *“LOVE IS JOURNEY”* remained prevalent. This consistency over time is a crucial observation, suggesting a persistent conceptualization of love in popular music.

Further expanding on this theme, Leskelä (2018) utilized Lakoff and Johnson’s metaphor theory to analyze songs from the Billboard Hot 100 chart since the 1960s. This study revealed a rich tapestry of metaphorical expressions such as *“LOVE IS COMMODITY”* and *“LOVE IS A DRUG”*, showcasing the diversity in how love is portrayed in popular music. Similarly, Wulandari’s (2018) analysis of Coldplay’s *“A Head Full of Dreams”* album unearthed a range of metaphors, including *“LOVE IS ADDICTION”* and *“LOVE IS LIGHT,”* adding depth to the understanding of love’s metaphorical representation.

Girnyte’s (2019) researched on Maroon 5’s songs further contributed to this field by identifying specific metaphors like *“LOVE IS RAPTURE”* and *“LOVE IS INSANITY”*, emphasizing the varied emotional landscapes explored

in music. Nguyen's (2019) study of English love songs from the late 20th century echoed these findings, illustrating the use of metaphors such as "LOVE IS FIRE" and "LOVE IS HEAVEN", which enrich the linguistic portrayal of love in music.

Climent and Coll-Florit's (2020) exploration of popular songs in the USA from 1946 to 2016 revealed an evolution of love metaphors over seven decades, with themes like "LOVE IS CLOSENESS" and "LOVE IS POSSESSION" coming to the forefront. This evolution is indicative of the changing societal and cultural perceptions of love, mirrored in the lyrics of popular songs.

In the context of these studies, the analysis of Taylor Swift's "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*" serves as a significant addition to the field. Taylor Swift's work, characterized by its emotional depth and modern appeal, offers a unique perspective on the established themes of love metaphors. The inclusion of her lyrics in this academic exploration is not just a continuation of the existing research but also a necessary expansion, considering her profound impact on contemporary music and culture.

By examining Taylor Swift's songs, the study bridges a gap in the literature and brings a contemporary relevance to the academic understanding of conceptual metaphors in music. It reinforces the continuity in the metaphorical representation of love while simultaneously offering fresh insights into how an influential modern artist like Swift navigates and expresses these complex emotional themes. Therefore, the study on Taylor Swift's "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*" is not only a logical extension of the existing body of research but also a crucial contribution that enhances our understanding of the dynamic and evolving nature of love metaphors in the realm of popular music.

The present study is therefore aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the conceptual metaphors of love appearing in the selected lyrics written by Taylor Swift?
2. How do the lyrics in Taylor Swift's "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*" employ conceptual metaphors to represent the concept of love?

## **Research Methodology**

The analysis of the conceptual metaphor of love in the lyrics of Taylor Swift employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Through qualitative method, the analysis could capture the complexities of the conceptual metaphors of love in Taylor Swift's lyrics. It also allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying messages, cultural representations, and personal experiences related to love conveyed through her music. While qualitative research is the main methodological approach used in this study, the researcher opted to incorporate quantitative method by employing frequency and percentage measures to present the data. This decision was made to provide a more statistical data and quantitative overview of the findings, allowing for a

clearer representation of the distribution and prevalence of certain metaphorical expressions of love identified in the qualitative analysis.

### ***Data Collection***

For the purpose of this study, the researcher specifically chose the album titled “*Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*”, which is widely regarded as one of the most renowned albums by Taylor Swift. The lyrics were obtained from Taylor Swift’s official website (2023), ensuring their authenticity. The selected album comprises a total of 26 distinct songs, providing a diverse range of material for analysis and examination. However, the research excluded one song from the analysis as it is a repetition of a song on the same album, but in an acoustic version.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data underwent manual analysis. After collecting the words related to metaphorical expressions of love, the identification process for metaphors followed the method described by Pragglejaz Group (2007), involving the following steps:

1. Read the lyrics of “*Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*” by Taylor Swift thoroughly to capture their overall meaning.
2. Pinpoint the crucial lexical units within these lyrics.
3. (a) Analyze the meaning of each lexical unit in the context of the song, focusing on how it relates to the scenarios, relationships, or aspects that the lyrics portray.  
(b) Determine whether these lexical units have more straightforward or fundamental meanings in other scenarios outside the song.  
(c) If a lexical unit has a more basic meaning applicable in other contexts, discern how this foundational meaning differs yet can be related to its use in the song’s context.
4. Should a metaphorical connection exist between the song’s contextual meanings and these basic meanings, classify the lexical unit as metaphorical.

In this research study, ensuring reliability in the analysis is crucial, and one effective method to achieve this is by employing inter-coder agreement. This approach involves inter-coder analyzing the data according to a set of predefined criteria or coding scheme. The researcher conducted the inter-coder by selecting one university teacher with degrees in English language studies. By doing so, it ensures that the analysis is not merely the subjective interpretation of a single researcher but is a reproducible and reliable interpretation of the data. Once the coding process was agreed upon by both the primary researcher and the inter-coder, it formed the basis of the analysis presented in the paper. After conducting the systematic investigation outlined in the previous steps and undergoing the inter-coder agreement, the data were analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage measures.

## Results and Analysis

An investigation on the conceptual metaphor of love depicted in the “*Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*” album created by Taylor Swift was conducted, revealing a broad spectrum of love conceptual metaphors. The analysis involved manual scrutiny of lyrics from 25 songs, leading to the identification of 26 metaphorical expressions.

Regarding the research questions, the analysis of metaphorical expressions focused on two primary concerns: first, to gain a deeper comprehension of the function and form of love metaphors produced by Taylor Swift, and second, to investigate the relationship between these two aspects. The conceptual love metaphors identified from the 25 songs are presented as the conceptual mapping of target and source domains along with their frequency and percentage in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Conceptual metaphors of love and the frequency of metaphorical expressions in this study*

Conceptual Metaphors	Frequency of Metaphorical Expressions	Percentage
1. LOVE IS JOURNEY	6	16.6
2. LOVE IS AN OBJECT	6	16.6
3. LOVE IS MAGIC	5	13.8
4. LOVE IS WAR	5	13.8
5. LOVE IS LIGHT	4	11.1
6. LOVE IS INSANITY	3	8.3
7. LOVE IS FIRE	2	5.6
8. LOVE IS PAIN	2	5.6
9. LOVE IS POSSESSION	2	5.6
10. LOVE IS THE AIR	1	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***LOVE IS JOURNEY***

It is crucial to note that the conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS JOURNEY” represents a significant proportion (16.6 percent) of the overall analysis. The metaphor “LOVE IS JOURNEY” conceptualizes love as a journey or a voyage (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In this metaphorical expression, love is understood as a process or a path that individuals embark on. Just like a journey, love involves various stages, experiences, and transformations.

**Table 2**

Source and target domain of “LOVE IS JOURNEY”

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. Physical movement (back and forth pacing)	1. The state of being in love, particularly the feeling of uncertainty or restlessness in a relationship.
2. A journey with an unforeseen conclusion	2. The unexpected developments or endings in a romantic relationship.
3. Physical proximity or staying in place	3. Commitment and enduring presence in a romantic relationship.
4. Physical steadfastness	4. Perseverance and resilience in love
5. Physical departure or movement	5. The desire for change or escape from emotional distress within a romantic relationship.
6. Being physically lost in a foggy or unclear environment	6. Feeling of confusion, ambivalence, or uncertainty in a relationship.

(1) As I paced back and forth all this time – *White Horse (Taylor’s Version)*

(2) ‘Cause none of us thought it was gonna end that way – *Breathe (Taylor’s Version)*

(3) I’m never gonna leave you – *Jump Then Fall (Taylor’s Version)*

(4) ‘Cause I’m a stay through it all – *Jump Then Fall (Taylor’s Version)*

(5) Swore that I’d get out of here – *You All Over Me (Taylor’s Version)*

(6) Lost in the gray – *Bye Bye Baby (Taylor’s Version)*

As shown in (1) the metaphor, “LOVE IS JOURNEY” is expressed through the verb “*paced*”. Pacing back and forth suggests a sense of movement and uncertainty, resembling the experience of being on a journey. It implies that the person is unsure and searching for direction in their romantic relationship, symbolizing the ups and downs that can occur in love. In Lyric (2), love is compared to a journey with its own path and direction. The phrase suggests that the individuals involved in the relationship did not expect the particular outcome that occurred. This metaphor highlights the idea that love is like a journey with unpredictable twists and turns where the ending may not align with initial expectations. Excerpt (3) illustrates that love is a continuous journey that the speaker is willing to embark on with their partner, suggesting a sense of endurance and dedication.



Lyric (4) suggests that love requires going through different experiences, challenges, and stages in the relationship, similar to embarking on a journey and staying committed until the end. In (5), it is suggested that a desire to move away from a negative or confining experience, possibly indicating a journey towards personal growth or a better place. This aligns with the metaphor of “LOVE IS JOURNEY”, where love is seen as a path or voyage that involves seeking change, freedom, or a new beginning. Excerpt (6), the phrase “*lost in the gray*” represents a state of uncertainty, confusion, or lack of clarity within a romantic relationship. It symbolizes being in a situation where the direction or outcome of love is unclear, much like being lost or disoriented on a journey.

### **LOVE IS AN OBJECT**

It is worth pointing out that “LOVE IS AN OBJECT” accounts among the second of the two highest percentage (16.6 percent). The metaphor “LOVE IS AN OBJECT” is a way of thinking about love by comparing it to physical objects. It means that love is seen as something concrete and tangible, similar to how we perceive objects in the world.

**Table 3**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS AN OBJECT”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. Knowing something extremely well (as well as one knows the back of their hand)	1. Intimate knowledge or familiarity in a romantic relationship
2. The physical act of not breaking	2. The emotional state of not experiencing heartbreak
3. The physical act of picking something up	3. The process of recovering from emotional hurt and moving on in a romantic relationship
4. The physical state of being broken	4. Emotional impact and reciprocity in a relationship
5. Physical possession and the inability to retain it.	5. The transient nature or inability of a romantic relationship
6. The act of taking something and keeping it	6. The physical possession to express expectation in a relationship

- (7) You're the only thing I know like the back of my hand – *Breathe (Taylor's Version)*
- (8) And my heart's not breaking – *The Way I Loved You (Taylor's Version)*
- (9) I've been pickin' up my heart, he's been pickin' up her – *Mr. Perfectly Fine (Taylor's Version)*

- (10) How's your heart after breakin' mine? – *Mr. Perfectly Fine (Taylor's Version)*
- (11) 'Cause you took me home but you just couldn't keep me Bye, bye, baby – *Bye Bye Baby (Taylor's Version)*
- (12) Oh, you took me home, I thought you were gonna keep me – *Bye Bye Baby (Taylor's Version)*

The excerpt lyrics above all describe LOVE in the same terms as real-life objects which can be manipulated. As seen in (7), this lyric can be interpreted within the "LOVE IS AN OBJECT" category where love is conceptualized as a tangible entity or thing that the speaker is intimately familiar with, just like they are with the back of their hand. In (8), it is suggested that the heart is being portrayed as an object that can experience damage or breakage. Lyric (9) illustrates that love is being portrayed as an object that can be physically held and lifted. Excerpt (10) implies that love is being compared to a physical entity where one person's heart is depicted as being broken by another person's actions. This aligns with the conceptual metaphor of "LOVE IS AN OBJECT", suggesting that love can cause emotional pain and damage, similar to how a physical object can be broken or damaged. In lyrics (11) and (12), they are also reflected the metaphor of love as an object. They portray love as something that can be obtained or acquired as indicated by the phrase "*you took me home*". However, the phrase "*couldn't keep me*" implies that love is temporary or short-lived, similar to an object that can be lost or let go.

### **LOVE IS MAGIC**

The metaphor "LOVE IS MAGIC" refers to the concept of love being described or understood as a mystical or enchanting force that has transformative and extraordinary qualities. It draws parallels between love and the notion of magic, suggesting that love possesses a certain captivating and inexplicable power (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

**Table 4**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS MAGIC”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The use of magic	1. The entrancing and transformative experience of falling in love.
2. The disorienting experience of getting lost	2. The bewitching attraction and deep impact of love.
3. The inability to divert one’s gaze	3. The compelling allure and enhancement of love.
4. The emotion of falling in love	4. The captivating onset of love as if one has been enchanted on the spot.
5. The physical slowing of time	5. The magical alteration of reality where time seems to stand still or slow down.

- (13) Come feel this magic I’ve been feeling since I met you – *Hey Stephen (Taylor’s Version)*
- (14) Maybe I was naïve, got lost in your eyes – *White Horse (Taylor’s Version)*
- (15) I can’t keep my eyes off of you – *Superstar (Taylor’s Version)*
- (16) Fell in love when I saw you standing there – *Today Was A Fairytale (Taylor’s Version)*
- (17) Time slows down whenever you’re around – *Today Was A Fairytale (Taylor’s Version)*

Regarding excerpt (13), the metaphor “LOVE IS MAGIC” is utilized to express the intense and enchanting emotions experienced upon meeting someone special. The line suggests that the love of Taylor Swift for the person she met is like a magical feeling, highlighting the extraordinary and transformative nature of their emotions. In (14), this lyric depicts the metaphor by describing her experience of falling in love as being captivated or enchanted by the person’s eyes. The metaphor portrays that the love she felt was so powerful that it felt magical, evoking a sense of wonder and fascination. As shown in (15), the lyric expresses the inability of Taylor Swift to take her eyes off the person she is in love with. The line implies that her love for the person is so mesmerizing and captivating that she is constantly drawn to him, reinforcing the enchanting and magical qualities associated with love.

Lyric (16) portrays the metaphor of “LOVE IS MAGIC” by describing the moment of falling in love as a magical experience. The line suggests that Swift’s love for the person began instantly, as if by a spell or enchantment, further emphasizing the transformative and extraordinary nature of love. Excerpt (17) conveys the metaphor through the idea that being in the presence of the loved one

creates a magical effect where time seems to slow down. The line depicts that the love between Taylor Swift and the person that she is referring to is so enchanting and powerful that it alters her perception of time.

### **LOVE IS WAR**

The conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS WAR” conceptualizes love as a war, symbolizing the conflicts, struggles, and adversities that can be encountered in romantic relationships. It portrays love as a fierce and intense struggle, where individuals engage in emotional battles, make sacrifices, and experience victories and defeats (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

**Table 5**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS WAR”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The lethal effect (metaphorically speaking)	1. The profound pain and emotional suffering caused by a loved one's departure
2. The susceptibility to being hurt as opposed to being bulletproof	2. Vulnerability in love and an emotional relationship
3. An unfair battle or fight	3. Struggles and challenges in a romantic relationship
4. A fight to protect or keep something valuable	4. The effort and determination to maintain a relationship
5. A prolonged and significant battle	5. The long-term effort and challenges in a romantic relationship

(18) It's killing me to see you go after all this time – *Breathe (Taylor's Version)*

(19) And you might think I'm bulletproof, but I'm not – *Tell Me Why (Taylor's Version)*

(20) It's hard to fight when the fight ain't fair – *Change (Taylor's Version)*

(21) Fight for what we've worked for all these years – *Change (Taylor's Version)*

(22) And the battle was long, it's the fight of our lives – *Change (Taylor's Version)*

In (18), the metaphor “LOVE IS WAR” is used to express the intense pain and emotional turmoil experienced when a loved one leaves or ends a relationship. The phrase “*killing me*” signifies the deep emotional impact of the separation, likening it to a battle where Taylor Swift feels devastated by the loss. Excerpt (19) portrays the vulnerability and fragility within the context of love as war which is employed to convey that although she is appearing strong and

invulnerable on the outside, she is still susceptible to emotional wounds by conflicts or challenges encountered within relationships. Lyric (20) depicts that love can resemble a battle where one must confront difficulties and conflicts. The phrase “*the fight ain’t fair*” conveys the sense of facing unequal or unjust circumstances within the relationship, making it challenging to engage.

As seen in (21), the metaphor of love as war emphasizes the need to actively defend and protect the investment made in the relationship. The line suggests a determination to overcome obstacles and preserve the love that has been nurtured over a significant period of time. In (22), this lyric emphasizes the importance and seriousness of the conflicts and challenges experienced in the relationship. The metaphorical representation of the war being lengthy and the fight being the most significant one in their lives emphasizes the intensity and significance of the struggles they face in their journey of love.

### **LOVE IS LIGHT**

The conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS LIGHT” is used to conceptualize love as a source of illumination and brightness. It suggests that love has the power to bring clarity, goodness, potential and positivity into one’s life (Nguyen, 2019).

**Table 6**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS LIGHT”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The light	1. The potential or positive qualities seen in a romantic partner
2. The act of shining brightly	2. The unique and captivating qualities of a loved one
3. The fading of light	3. The loss of the attractive qualities in a romantic relationship
4. Reflecting light or shining response	4. Mutual support in love

(23) ...but I know I saw a light in you – *Hey Stephen (Taylor’s Version)*

(24) ...but I never seen nobody shine the way you do – *Hey Stephen (Taylor’s Version)*

(25) You used to shine so bright, but I watched all of it fade – *You’re Not Sorry (Taylor’s Version)*

(26) And every time you shine, I’ll shine for you – *Jump Then Fall (Taylor’s Version)*

Lyric (23) suggests that Taylor Swift recognizes a radiant and positive quality within the person being addressed. It implies that love illuminated and revealed something special and captivating about him, like a metaphorical light that brought out his true essence. Excerpt lyric (24) portrays the person being sung to as someone who radiates brightness and stands out among others. His presence and qualities are likened to a shining light, emphasizing his exceptional and captivating nature. In (25), this lyric implies that the person being referred to once possessed a vibrant and radiant aura. However, over time, their brightness diminished or faded away. It symbolizes a change or loss in their positive qualities and suggests that love may have played a role in that transformation.

As seen in (26), this line signifies a mutual and supportive relationship where Taylor Swift vows to match or enhance the brightness and positivity of the person she loves. It symbolizes her commitment to be a source of light and encouragement, shining alongside her loved one in moments of joy and happiness.

### ***LOVE IS INSANITY***

The metaphor “LOVE IS INSANITY” is a conceptualization of love that draws parallels between intense romantic emotions and a state of madness or irrationality. It suggests that love can evoke intense and often unpredictable emotions, causing individuals to behave in ways that may seem irrational or unconventional (Gavelin, 2015; Girnyte, 2019; Nguyen, 2019).

**Table 7**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS INSANITY”*

<b>Source Domain</b>	<b>Target Domain</b>
1. Absent-mindedness or unconscious behavior	1. The involuntary or subconscious attraction in love
2. Insanity or irrational behavior	2. The overwhelming or irrational behavior driven by intense love
	3. Personal experience of uncharacteristic behavior due to love

(27) Absent-mindedly making me want you – *Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*

(28) You’re so in love that you act insane – *The Way I Loved You (Taylor’s Version)*

(29) I’m so in love that I acted insane – *The Way I Loved You (Taylor’s Version)*

In (27), this line suggests that love has a strong grip on Taylor Swift's mind, causing her to become forgetful or distracted. The intense desire for the person she loves overwhelms her thoughts and leads to a sense of insanity or irrationality. Excerpt (28) depicts that being deeply in love can push someone to exhibit behaviors that are perceived as crazy or irrational. It highlights the idea that love has the power to disrupt one's normal behavior patterns and make them act in unconventional ways. Lyric (29) also reflects Taylor Swift's acknowledgment that her own love has driven her to behave in ways that might be considered insane. It emphasizes the overwhelming nature of her emotions and the effect they have on her behavior.

### ***LOVE IS FIRE***

The conceptual metaphor "LOVE IS FIRE" shows that love shares similar qualities with fire, such as passion, intensity, warmth, and the ability to ignite or consume. This metaphor also portrays that love can be both captivating and dangerous as fire can bring comfort and light but also has the potential to burn and destroy (Nguyen, 2019; Wulandari, 2018).

**Table 8**

*Source and target domain of "LOVE IS FIRE"*

<b>Source Domain</b>	<b>Target Domain</b>
1. The brightness and heat of a burning object (like the sun)	1. The intense allure and unattainability of a loved one
2. The physical pain of being burned from fire	2. The negative consequences in a romantic relationship

(30) ...but you're untouchable, burning brighter than the sun – *Untouchable (Taylor's Version)*

(31) Had you, got burned – *You All Over Me (Taylor's Version)*

The excerpt lyric (30) compares someone to a burning fire, expressing his unreachability and radiant presence. It depicts that the person being described shines brightly and is captivating, just like the sun. The metaphor emphasizes his irresistible nature and the powerful effect he has on Taylor Swift. It also conveys a sense of passion and intensity, drawing a parallel between the blazing qualities of love and the energy of flames. In (31), the metaphor of "LOVE IS FIRE" is utilized to convey the experience of getting hurt or being emotionally burned in love. It also illustrates that she had a romantic involvement with someone that resulted in pain or disappointment.

**LOVE IS PAIN**

The conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS PAIN” represents love as a source of emotional suffering and hardship. It suggests that love can be a challenging experience that involves emotional pain, heartbreak, and vulnerability (Gavelin, 2015; Girnyte, 2019).

**Table 9**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS PAIN”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The physical pain	1. The emotional pain caused in a relationship
2. The cessation of physical pain	2. The desire to escape from emotional pain in a romantic relationship

(32) Never wanted this, never wanna see you hurt – *Breathe (Taylor’s Version)*

(33) Don’t wanna hurt anymore – *You’re Not Sorry (Taylor’s Version)*

In (32), the line expresses that Taylor Swift desires to protect her loved one from experiencing pain. It acknowledges that love can inadvertently cause hurt and acknowledges her reluctance to be the source of that pain. Lyric (33) conveys the speaker’s weariness and longing for an end to the pain caused by love. It reflects the emotional toll that love can take and the desire to move past the hurtful experiences. The line implies that love has been a source of pain for her, and she expresses her wish to no longer endure that pain.

**LOVE IS POSSESSION**

The conceptual metaphor “LOVE IS POSSESSION” represents love as a state of possessing or being possessed by someone. It implies a strong sense of ownership, attachment, and control within a romantic relationship. This metaphor conveys that love is characterized by the desire to have exclusive rights and authority over the loved one.



**Table 10**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS POSSESSION”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The sense of belonging or fitting in	1. The sense of rightness or compatibility in a romantic relationship
2. Possession of keys that provide access	2. The emotional vulnerability and openness in a romantic relationship.

(34) You belong with me, you belong with me – *You Belong With Me (Taylor’s Version)*

(35) You got the keys to me – *Jump Then Fall (Taylor’s Version)*

In the lyric (34), this line portrays a sense of possessiveness and a desire for exclusivity in the romantic relationship. Swift believes that the person she is addressing should be with her, indicating a strong sense of ownership and the belief that she is the rightful partner for the loved one. In (35), the line illustrates that the person being addressed holds the keys to Taylor Swift’s heart and emotions. It signifies a deep level of emotional attachment and vulnerability as if the loved one has the power to access and control her inner feelings.

### **LOVE IS THE AIR**

The metaphor “LOVE IS THE AIR” represents the idea that love is essential and fundamental to our lives, just like the air we breathe. It emphasizes the importance and necessity of love for our well-being (Gavelin, 2015).

**Table 11**

*Source and target domain of “LOVE IS THE AIR”*

Source Domain	Target Domain
1. The physical necessity of breathing for survival	1. The essential and life-sustaining nature of love in one’s life

(36) I can’t breathe without you, but I have to breathe without you – *Breathe (Taylor’s Version)*

Excerpt (36) expresses the intense emotional connection that Taylor Swift feels with her loved one, emphasizing that being without him feels suffocating as

if she cannot breathe properly. Moreover, this line employs the metaphor of breathing, a fundamental life-sustaining process, to express how essential and vital the loved one is to the speaker's existence. The phrase "*I can't breathe without you*" suggests that the loved one is as crucial to the speaker's life as air is to breathing. However, the addition of "*but I have to*" reflects the painful realization or necessity of having to continue living even in the absence of this essential love, indicating a struggle to adapt to a life without the loved one.

**Table 12**

*Frequency of love metaphors in three subtypes and their percentage*

Type of Metaphors	Frequency	Percentage
Structural Metaphor	30	83.3
Ontological Metaphor	6	16.7
Orientational Metaphor	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 12 clearly shows a significant difference in the number of conceptual metaphors related to love in the songs. The data reveal numerous structural metaphors which are appropriately categorized under suitable conceptual metaphors. It is noteworthy that the songs played most frequently feature structural metaphor, a significant aspect contributing to their appeal, accounting for 83.3 percent of the three subtypes. Ontological metaphors make up 16.7 percent. Importantly, no orientational love metaphors were found in this study. This absence is not due to a lack of thorough analysis, but rather reflects the specific lyrical choices in "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*". While orientational metaphors were indeed present in the lyrics, they did not pertain directly to the theme of love, hence their exclusion from the study. This observation aligns with the artistic style and thematic focus of Taylor Swift in this album, where she predominantly utilizes structural and ontological metaphors to articulate the complexities of love. The preference for these types of metaphors over orientational ones in the context of love underscores the unique linguistic and conceptual approach Taylor Swift employs in her songwriting, highlighting the nuanced ways in which love is expressed and experienced in her music.

**Table 13**

*Occurrence of love metaphors in Fearless (Taylor's Version) album in three subtypes*

Conceptual Metaphor	Structural Metaphor	Ontological Metaphor	Orientalational Metaphor
1. LOVE IS JOURNEY	√	—	—
2. LOVE IS AN OBJECT	—	√	—
3. LOVE IS MAGIC	√	—	—
4. LOVE IS WAR	√	—	—
5. LOVE IS LIGHT	√	—	—
6. LOVE IS INSANITY	√	—	—
7. LOVE IS FIRE	√	—	—
8. LOVE IS PAIN	√	—	—
9. LOVE IS POSSESSION	√	—	—
10. LOVE IS THE AIR	√	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 13 displays various conceptual metaphors of love and whether they are represented in terms of structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors. It is clear that out of the 10 conceptual metaphors of love, the structural metaphor is the most prevalent among the three subtypes of metaphors in the album “*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*”. Taylor Swift incorporates the notion of love into everyday language in a structured manner. For example, the metaphor “LOVE IS A JOURNEY” simplifies the complex notion of love by equating it with the concept of a journey or highlighting the path that couples embark on, emphasizing the ups and downs, twists and turns, and growth that love entails. On the other hand, “LOVE IS AN OBJECT” is the only ontological metaphor found in this album as it uses familiar or concrete examples from everyday life to explain the abstract idea of love, making it more relatable and understandable to the listeners. These metaphors serve as powerful tools for Taylor Swift to convey her messages about love and connect with her audience on a deeper level.

In cognitive linguistics, structural and ontological metaphors serve distinct roles in shaping our understanding of abstract concepts (Evans & Green, 2006). Structural metaphors are characterized by their complex, systematic mappings, allowing for a nuanced exploration of intricate relationships within abstract concepts. On the other hand, ontological metaphors simplify and concretize abstract concepts, making them more tangible and relatable. These often involve personification or objectification, as in “TIME IS MONEY”, where time is treated as a physical commodity. While structural metaphors delve into the deeper structures and relationships of concepts, ontological metaphors focus on rendering

abstract ideas more graspable by equating them to concrete entities or human qualities.

### **Discussion**

The present study was conducted to identify conceptual metaphors of love emerging in the lyrics written by Taylor Swift and describe how the conceptual metaphors are related to the existence of love. The analysis results through data collected from 25 songs reveal that metaphors related to love are frequently used in lyrics of Taylor Swift. The choice of words in song lyrics follows a specific structure that draws from our everyday experiences, background knowledge, and culture. This process of mapping allows for a clear connection between the original concept and the metaphorical representation, making it easier for individuals to comprehend the words or sentences used in her lyrics.

When comparing the findings to those of previous studies (e.g., Climent & Coll-Florit, 2020; Gavelin, 2015; Girnyte, 2019; Leskelä, 2018; Nguyen, 2019; Wulandari, 2018), a similar pattern of conceptual metaphors was obtained, namely “LOVE IS AN OBJECT”, “LOVE IS JOURNEY”, “LOVE IS MAGIC”, “LOVE IS WAR”, “LOVE IS LIGHT”, “LOVE IS INSANITY”, “LOVE IS FIRE”, “LOVE IS PAIN”, “LOVE IS POSSESSION”, and “LOVE IS THE AIR”. That is to say, some of the findings observed in this study mirror those of the previous research that have examined the conceptual metaphor of love in English music and the metaphorical expressions mentioned above are directly consistent with what have been found in previous studies. The results may be explained by the fact that these metaphorical expressions reflect the love experience in individuals across different cultures and time periods. Therefore, the concept of love is likely a universally experienced and universally illustrated emotion and these conceptual metaphors have become conventional ways of expressing and comprehending them since they are likely to provide a framework that listeners can easily relate to and interpret based on their personal experiences and cultural context. The recurrent use of these metaphors also highlights their effectiveness in capturing the essence of love, its joys and sorrows, its challenges and triumphs.

Furthermore, the alignment of the findings from “*Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*” with previous research underscores the enduring and universal nature of these conceptual metaphors in portraying love. It could reaffirm the notion that music as a form of artistic expression, taps into a collective understanding and experience of love, employing a common metaphorical language that transcends individual differences. This universality not only speaks to the shared human experience but also to the power of music as a medium for expressing complex emotional landscapes.

All three subtypes (structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors) of conceptual metaphor in the “*Fearless (Taylor’s Version)*” album by Taylor Swift were found through the analysis of conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and

Johnson (1980). There were 30 structural metaphors and 6 ontological metaphors found in the present study. The structural metaphor is the most frequently used by Taylor Swift in the song lyrics. There are several possible explanations why Taylor Swift employs substantial structural metaphorical expression in her songs. To begin with, this metaphor serves as powerful tool for enhancing the understanding of abstract notions, such as love, by grounding it in familiar and relatable structures. Taylor Swift enables her audience to establish a deeper emotional connection with her songs by utilizing tangible and recognizable imagery resulting in evoking stronger feeling attachment. On top of that, love and relationships are dynamic and multifaceted. Structural metaphors effectively capture these complexities, depicting the evolving nature of relationships, the interplay of emotions, and the consequences of actions within a romantic context.

In addition, the use of structural metaphor aids in the organization and cohesion of the love themes and narratives within Taylor Swift's music. This metaphor provides frame of reference that help shape the songs and make them more coherent and memorable for the audience (Gavelin, 2015). Consequently, she is able to portray complex emotions and ideas of love in a manner that is accessible and comprehensible. In other words, the use of structural metaphor allows her to create vivid imagery and conceptual frameworks that engage audiences' imaginations, making her songs more memorable and visually evocative. Furthermore, the utilization of such metaphorical expression empowers Taylor Swift to bridge the gap between her personal experiences and universal love themes. Through the employment of concrete imagery and relatable conceptual metaphors of love, she can reach a broader spectrum of audience and develop a sense of shared understanding which creates emotional impact in her lyrics.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The examination of the conceptual metaphors of love in Taylor Swift's "*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*" lyricism has some limitations that must be addressed. To begin with, the analysis is confined to this particular album and may not encompass the entirety of Taylor Swift's repertoire or her artistic development. Furthermore, the analysis primarily emphasizes the cognitive aspects of conceptual metaphors of love and may overlook other elements that contribute to the interpretation of the lyrics. Additionally, the researcher is aware that the analysis may not adequately account for the diverse interpretations and meanings that listeners ascribe to the lyrics, considering that the comprehension of metaphors can vary among individuals. Finally, the generalizability of the study is limited to the specific album and may not be applicable to other albums or artists.

In future studies, it is recommended to analyze a wider range of Taylor Swift's albums to understand how her use of conceptual metaphors of love has

evolved over time. This would provide a more complete picture of the metaphors in her lyrics and how they differ across her music collection. Moreover, future research could explore how listeners interpret and understand the lyrics by using methods such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups. This will capture diverse perspectives and shed light on how individual differences in understanding contribute to the overall comprehension of the metaphors. Last but not least, conducting comparative studies that examine the use of conceptual metaphors in lyrics by other artists or albums in the same genre would be valuable. This will help identify common patterns or variations in the employment of love metaphors in popular music across different artists and albums.

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