

The Conceptual Metaphors on the Selected Lyrics of Enhypen's Album

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the types of conceptual metaphors and their meanings in the selected songs from Enhypen's Orange Blood album. A descriptive qualitative method was employed to analyze the English-language expressions found in the original lyrics of four selected songs: Sweet Venom, Still Monster, Blind, and Orange Flower (You Complete Me). The analysis was conducted using Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff & Johnson, (1980). The findings revealed that there were eleven conceptual metaphorical expressions, consisting of three structural metaphors, two orientational metaphors, and six ontological metaphors, with ontological metaphors being the most dominant type. The semantic analysis showed that the denotative meanings represent the literal meanings of lexical items, while the connotative meanings reveal deeper concepts related to love, identity, emotional conflict, sacrifice, healing, hope, and personal growth. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the metaphors are not used independently but form an interconnected conceptual system across the selected songs. Together, these metaphors describe a journey of emotional transformation that begins with attraction and inner conflict, progresses through sacrifice, and concludes with healing and self-acceptance. This study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors in contemporary K-pop songs function not only as stylistic devices within individual lyrics but also as cognitive and narrative structures that create thematic coherence at the album level.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, semantics, song lyrics, denotative meaning, connotative meaning

INTRODUCTION

Literature has developed beyond traditional forms such as novels and poetry into broader forms of cultural expression, including films, television series, and music. This development reflects the diminishing distinction between high art and popular culture, making popular cultural products worthy of academic investigation (Jenkins, 2006; Fiske, 2010). Song lyrics are a sort of literary expression that communicate feelings, ideas, and experiences through language, allowing listeners to perceive meanings beyond the literal level. Similar to poetry, song lyrics employ various literary devices that enhance their aesthetic and communicative functions.

Among these literary devices, metaphor is one of the most significant because it enables songwriters to express abstract ideas and emotional experiences through symbolic language (Riffaterre, 1978). Metaphorical expressions have become an important topic in linguistic and literary studies since they reveal how language represents concepts that cannot easily be explained literally. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is not merely a stylistic feature but a cognitive mechanism through which people understand



abstract concepts in terms of more concrete experiences. This perspective is further developed by Kövecses (2015), who argues that conceptual metaphors are influenced not only by embodied experience but also by contextual factors such as discourse, culture, and communication. Likewise, Gibbs (2011) emphasizes that metaphor interpretation is dynamic because it is shaped by language use, embodied experience, and the communicative context in which it occurs.

Recent studies have demonstrated the importance of metaphor analysis in literary and musical texts. Hanif (2025) analyzed metaphors in a .Feast album and identified various metaphor types and functions, showing that metaphors effectively express ideology and social criticism. Sarifah (2024) examined conceptual metaphors in Kunto Aji's album and found that they represent themes of mental health, self-development, and gratitude. Amelia (2018) investigated metaphorical expressions in Aimer's song lyrics and concluded that metaphors enrich emotional expression through imaginative language. Outside popular music, metaphor studies have also been conducted in traditional expressions and literary works. Muthmainnah and Rijal (2020) found that metaphorical expressions in Buginese pappaseng convey moral and cultural values, while Syam and Dahniar (2024) analyzed figurative language in Anton Chekhov's *The Bet* and demonstrated the dominance of connotative meaning in literary interpretation.

Although previous studies have successfully identified metaphor types, meanings, and functions, most of them focused on individual songs or isolated literary texts. Only limited research has investigated conceptual metaphors across a complete music album as an integrated corpus, particularly in contemporary K-pop. Consequently, the relationship between conceptual metaphors, thematic coherence, and the overall narrative constructed throughout an album remains insufficiently explored. This gap indicates the need for further research that examines metaphorical expressions collectively rather than individually.

Enhypen's *Orange Blood* album provides an appropriate corpus for such analysis because its songs present interconnected narratives concerning love, identity, emotional conflict, healing, and personal growth through rich figurative language. The symbolic and narrative characteristics of the album make it suitable for examining how conceptual metaphors contribute to the construction of meaning across multiple songs.

Based on this background, this study investigates the conceptual metaphors found in the selected songs from Enhypen's *Orange Blood* album. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What types of conceptual metaphors are found in the selected songs from Enhypen's *Orange Blood* album? (2) What are the denotative and

connotative meanings of these conceptual metaphors based on Chaer's (2013) semantic perspective? (3) How do these metaphorical expressions collectively construct emotional experiences and thematic coherence throughout the album? By applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), this study is expected to contribute to metaphor studies in contemporary popular culture, particularly K-pop, while providing additional references for literary and linguistic research on figurative language.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore and interpret conceptual metaphors in the selected song lyrics of Enhypen's Orange Blood album. Qualitative research is appropriate for investigating meanings embedded in texts and understanding how language represents human experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Since the objective of this study was to identify and interpret metaphorical expressions rather than measure numerical data, a qualitative approach enabled an in-depth analysis of the conceptual meanings represented in the lyrics.

The object of this study was the conceptual metaphors found in the English lyrics of four selected songs from Enhypen's Orange Blood album, namely Sweet Venom, Still Monster, Blind, and Orange Flower (You Complete Me). These songs were selected because they form an interconnected narrative that reflects themes of love, identity, emotional conflict, healing, and personal growth. The primary data consisted of the official English lyrics, which were obtained from Genius and Color Coded Lyrics and cross-checked with the official album lyrics released by BELIFT LAB to ensure textual accuracy. Secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, and official publications related to conceptual metaphor theory, semantics, and Enhypen's narrative universe. The research was conducted in January 2026 through document analysis without involving human participants.

The main research instrument was the researcher, who identified, classified, and interpreted the metaphorical expressions based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and semantic theory proposed by Chaer (2013). To improve consistency during analysis, a data classification table was used to record each metaphorical expression together with its source domain, target domain, metaphor type, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning.

The data were collected using content analysis. The researcher repeatedly read the selected song lyrics to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their context and narrative. Metaphorical expressions in the form of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences were then

identified and recorded systematically. Each identified expression was documented using a coding system before being organized into a research corpus for further analysis.

The data were analyzed using Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). First, metaphorical expressions were identified in the selected lyrics. Second, each expression was classified into one of three conceptual metaphor categories: structural, orientational, or ontological metaphor. Third, the relationship between the source domain and target domain was examined to explain the conceptual mapping. Finally, each metaphorical expression was interpreted using Chaer's (2013) semantic theory by analyzing its denotative and connotative meanings. The findings were then synthesized to explain how conceptual metaphors represent the dominant themes throughout the selected songs.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study are presented based on the two research questions. The first research question concerns the types of conceptual metaphors found in the selected songs from Enhypen's Orange Blood album, while the second examines their denotative and connotative meanings. A total of 11 metaphorical expressions were identified in the four selected songs. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, these expressions were classified into three categories: structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors.

Table 1. Types of conceptual metaphors identified in the selected songs

Types of conceptual metaphor	Frequency	Percentage
Structural metaphor	3	27.3%
Oriental metaphor	2	18.2%
Ontological metaphor	6	54.5%
Total	11	100%

Table 1 shows that ontological metaphors are the most dominant type, accounting for more than half of the identified data (54.5%). Structural metaphors represent 27.3%, whereas orientational metaphors account for 18.2%. These findings indicate that the songwriters tend to conceptualize abstract experiences such as love, identity, and emotional conflict as concrete entities or objects.

The distribution of conceptual metaphors across the selected songs is presented in

Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of conceptual metaphors in each song

Song	Structural	Orientalational	Ontological	Total
Sweet Venom	1	1	2	4
Still Monster	–	1	1	2
Blind	1	–	1	2
Orange Flower (You Complete Me)	1	–	2	3
Total	3	2	6	11

The analysis further reveals that the metaphorical expressions represent several recurring conceptual themes throughout the album. Expressions such as Sweet Venom and Poison in My Blood Veins conceptualize love as a dangerous substance, while Still a Monster represents inner identity conflict. In Blind, the expressions Blinding Lights and Burn My Life portray obsessive love and sacrifice. Meanwhile, Orange Flower, Color My World, and In Full Blossom symbolize healing, emotional growth, and self-completion. Collectively, these metaphors establish a coherent emotional progression across the album.

The second research question examines the denotative and connotative meanings of the identified conceptual metaphors using Chaer's (2013) semantic theory. The analysis shows that every metaphorical expression contains two layers of meaning. The denotative meaning explains the literal or dictionary meaning of the lexical items, whereas the connotative meaning reveals the implied ideas that emerge from the context of the songs.

For example, the expression "Sweet Venom" literally refers to a poisonous substance that is described as sweet. Connotatively, however, it represents love as something attractive yet dangerous, illustrating an emotional experience that is both pleasurable and harmful. Likewise, "Poison in My Blood Veins" literally describes poison flowing through the bloodstream, while metaphorically it depicts love as an emotion that has completely entered the narrator's life and influences thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Other expressions reveal different conceptual meanings. "Still a Monster" and "I'm Not a Monster" literally refer to a frightening creature, but connotatively they represent self-doubt, guilt, and the struggle for self-acceptance. In "Blind," the expression "Blinding Lights" literally describes an intense light that obstructs vision, whereas metaphorically it symbolizes overwhelming attraction that prevents rational thinking. Similarly, "Burn My Life" expresses the willingness to sacrifice everything for love rather than literal destruction.

In "Orange Flower (You Complete Me)," the metaphorical expressions emphasize emotional recovery and personal growth. "Orange Flower" symbolizes hope and transformation, "Color My World" represents the ability of love to give new meaning to life, and "In Full Blossom" reflects the achievement of emotional maturity. These findings

indicate that the denotative meanings provide the literal foundation of the expressions, while the connotative meanings reveal the conceptual messages communicated throughout the album. Consequently, the identified metaphors collectively portray an emotional journey from attraction and inner conflict to healing, hope, and self-completion.

Discussion

The semantic analysis also provides important insights into the interpretation of the identified conceptual metaphors. Based on Chaer's (2013) semantic theory, the denotative meanings explain the literal meanings of the lexical items, whereas the connotative meanings reveal the emotional and conceptual messages intended by the songwriter. The findings demonstrate that the literal meanings alone cannot adequately explain the significance of the metaphorical expressions because the intended messages emerge only after considering the conceptual relationship between the source and target domains.

The connotative meanings identified in this study consistently represent psychological experiences such as love, emotional conflict, sacrifice, identity, healing, and personal growth. Although each song contains different metaphorical expressions, their implied meanings are interconnected and contribute to the album's narrative development. For instance, *Sweet Venom* presents love as an addictive yet dangerous experience, *Still Monster* represents internal conflict and the search for self-acceptance, *Blind* depicts complete emotional surrender and sacrifice, while *Orange Flower (You Complete Me)* symbolizes recovery, hope, and emotional fulfillment. This progression demonstrates that the metaphorical meanings are not isolated but collectively construct a coherent emotional narrative across the selected songs.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that found conceptual metaphors play an important role in expressing abstract emotions through concrete experiences. For example, Hanif (2025) reported that metaphorical expressions in song lyrics represent emotional and psychological experiences beyond their literal meanings. Similarly, Sembiring (2022) found that conceptual metaphors enable listeners to understand abstract concepts such as love and identity through familiar physical experiences. However, unlike these previous studies, which mainly focused on identifying metaphor types and interpreting individual expressions within single songs or albums, the present study demonstrates how conceptual metaphors function as an interconnected system across several songs. By combining Conceptual Metaphor Theory with Chaer's (2013) semantic analysis, this study explains not only the metaphorical mappings but also how denotative and connotative meanings contribute to the construction of a continuous emotional

narrative throughout the Orange Blood album.

Furthermore, the semantic findings complement Conceptual Metaphor Theory by showing that conceptual mappings become meaningful only when interpreted within their contextual and emotional environments. The combination of denotative and connotative analyses enables a more comprehensive understanding of how metaphorical language functions not only to beautify the lyrics but also to communicate complex emotional experiences in a way that listeners can cognitively and emotionally understand.

Overall, this study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors contribute simultaneously to cognitive representation, semantic interpretation, and thematic organization. Rather than functioning independently, the metaphorical expressions collectively support the narrative development of Orange Blood, reinforcing the album's central themes of love, emotional conflict, sacrifice, healing, and personal growth. Therefore, this study extends previous metaphor research by showing that conceptual metaphors can be analyzed as an integrated conceptual system operating across an entire music album, providing a broader perspective on the relationship between metaphor, meaning, and narrative coherence in contemporary K-pop lyrics.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conceptual metaphors play an essential role in constructing meaning in the selected songs from Enhypen's Orange Blood album. By representing abstract experiences through concrete concepts, the metaphorical expressions enable the lyrics to communicate emotions, psychological states, and life experiences beyond their literal meanings. The findings also indicate that the conceptual metaphors function not only as linguistic expressions but also as cognitive and narrative devices that contribute to the thematic coherence of the album.

The findings answer the research objectives in two ways. First, the study identified 11 conceptual metaphorical expressions, consisting of three structural metaphors, two orientational metaphors, and six ontological metaphors, with ontological metaphors emerging as the dominant type. This predominance suggests that abstract concepts such as love, identity, emotional conflict, healing, and personal growth are primarily conceptualized as concrete entities or objects. Second, the semantic analysis revealed that each metaphor contains both denotative and connotative meanings. While the denotative meanings explain the literal meanings of the lexical items, the connotative meanings reveal the deeper conceptual messages embedded in the lyrics. Together, these metaphorical expressions construct a continuous emotional journey that moves from attraction and inner conflict to

sacrifice, healing, hope, and self-completion across the selected songs.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in the context of contemporary K-pop lyrics. By integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory with Chaer's (2013) semantic perspective, this study demonstrates how conceptual metaphors not only represent abstract experiences through concrete domains but also construct a coherent emotional narrative across multiple songs within a single album. This finding enriches metaphor studies by highlighting the relationship between conceptual mapping, semantic interpretation, and thematic coherence. Practically, this study provides useful insights for students, researchers, and lecturers in linguistics and literary studies, particularly those interested in figurative language, semantics, and discourse in popular music. It also offers a reference for future studies examining conceptual metaphors in song lyrics and other forms of contemporary media.

Nevertheless, this study is limited to the analysis of four selected songs from a single album and focuses only on the English-language lyrics using Conceptual Metaphor Theory and semantic analysis. Future research may analyze a larger corpus of songs, compare conceptual metaphors across different K-pop groups or musical genres, or apply other linguistic approaches such as cognitive semantics, discourse analysis, or multimodal analysis. Further studies may also investigate audience interpretations of conceptual metaphors to provide a broader understanding of how metaphorical meanings are constructed and understood in contemporary popular music.

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