

# A Semantic Analysis of Living and Dead Metaphors in English Song Lyrics from Jungkook's Golden Album



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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and analyze the types and interpretations of metaphors found in songs from Jungkook's *Golden* album. The analysis focuses on selected tracks including '3D', 'Seven - Explicit Version', 'Yes or No', 'Please Don't Change', 'Somebody', 'Shot Glass of Tears', 'Closer to You', 'Standing Next to You', 'Hate You', and 'Too Sad to Dance'. Employing a qualitative research method, the study utilizes I.A. Richards' (1936) framework to classify metaphor types and draws on the theories of Wittgenstein (2002) for interpreting metaphorical meanings. A total of ninety metaphorical expressions were identified, consisting of fifty-six living metaphors and thirty-four dead metaphors. Living metaphors were more frequently encountered, while dead metaphors appeared less often. The analysis reveals that living metaphors, due to their novelty and the introduction of unfamiliar expressions, tend to require deeper interpretation. In contrast, dead metaphors are more easily understood, as their repeated use over time has led to more conventional and simplified meanings.

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## INTRODUCTION

Metaphor plays a crucial role in language as a cognitive and linguistic device that enables speakers to express abstract experiences, emotions, and ideas through figurative comparison (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2008). In linguistic studies, metaphors are not merely stylistic ornaments but function as essential mechanisms in meaning construction and interpretation across different types of discourse (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). Meaning in language is not only derived from individual words but also from how expressions function within particular contexts, aligning with Wittgenstein's view that meaning emerges through use in language practices (Wittgenstein, 2002). Song lyrics, as a form of creative language use, frequently rely on metaphor to communicate complex emotional states and social meanings concisely and expressively. Because lyrics combine language, emotion, and cultural expression, they provide a rich site for examining how metaphors operate within contemporary discourse.

In recent years, popular music has increasingly attracted scholarly attention in linguistic and literary research due to its global circulation and evolving use of figurative language (Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009; Simpson, 2014). Within this context, Jeon Jungkook's English-language album

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*Golden* presents a distinctive corpus for metaphor analysis, as it features a cohesive set of lyrics that consistently employ both conventional and innovative metaphors to articulate emotional and experiential themes throughout the album. Treating *Golden* as a unified linguistic corpus, rather than a collection of isolated songs, allows this study to systematically examine how metaphor types and meanings are constructed and distributed within contemporary English-language popular music.

Previous research has consistently shown that metaphors are among the most frequently used figurative devices in song lyrics, enabling songwriters to express complex emotions and ideas in a relatable manner (Edyawati, Rufinus, & Suhartono, 2016; Sadiasih & Dewi, 2016). Although metaphors may present interpretative challenges, they are commonly employed in lyrics to address social issues and convey cultural meanings (Lestari, 2017; Valentino & Metekohy, 2016). As a figurative strategy, metaphor allows abstract ideas to be communicated more effectively than literal expression by shifting meaning from one concept to another (Julianto, Siddiq, & Fasha, 2024).

Analyzing metaphors is therefore essential for uncovering the deeper meanings embedded in song lyrics, which often reflect personal emotions, social commentary, and abstract experiences. Through metaphorical expressions, artists are able to communicate layered messages that resonate with listeners on both emotional and cognitive levels. In song lyrics, metaphors not only enhance aesthetic appreciation (Bernadetta, Linuwih, & Kurniawan, 2023) but also encourage critical reflection and emotional engagement (Julianto et al., 2024). Examining the relationship between metaphor and meaning thus provides valuable insight into how language and music interact to shape interpretation and listener experience.

Several previous studies have explored metaphor use in song lyrics using different theoretical frameworks. Jati (2020), for example, applied Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory to classify metaphor types and Parera's (2004) framework to interpret meanings in selected songs by Bring Me the Horizon, though the analysis was limited to two songs within a single genre. Ndraha (2018) employed Goatly's (1997) theory to identify metaphor types in Westlife's songs, revealing the dominance of metaphors in expressing romantic themes but offering limited discussion of contextual or interpretative aspects. Similarly, Pardede, Saragi, and Sidabutar (2023) focused on categorizing metaphors in Charlie Puth's songs, with minimal attention to how metaphor types contribute to meaning construction or cultural interpretation.

While these studies provide valuable insights into metaphor classification in song lyrics, most focus primarily on identifying metaphor types rather than examining how different types contribute to meaning construction. In addition, existing research largely concentrates on Western popular music and often analyzes individual songs instead of treating a full album as a cohesive linguistic corpus. Studies on metaphor usage in K-pop, particularly in English-language lyrics produced by solo artists, remain relatively limited. These gaps highlight the need for a more integrated approach that combines metaphor categorization with in-depth semantic interpretation in a contemporary musical context.

To address this gap, the present study aims to analyze the types and meanings of metaphors found in the lyrics of Jeon Jungkook's album *Golden*. Drawing on I.A. Richards' theory of metaphor and supported by Wittgenstein's perspective on meaning, this study examines how metaphorical expressions function semantically to convey emotional nuance and deeper meanings in contemporary English-language song lyrics. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of metaphors are employed in the lyrics of Jeon Jungkook's *Golden* album?
2. How do these metaphors function semantically to convey meaning and emotional nuance in the song lyrics?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Figurative Language in Song Lyrics

According to Abrams and Harpham (2009), figurative language includes a clear departure from the standard meaning or word order understood by proficient users of a language, to attain particular effects or carry particular meanings. Figurative language also refers to the use of expressions that

deviate from the conventional meaning or structure of language to create rhetorical or aesthetic effects. Figurative language allows writers and speakers to express ideas in imaginative ways that go beyond literal interpretation (R.Arps and Johnson, 2008). It plays a key role in enhancing emotional resonance and conveying abstract ideas, especially in creative writing and song lyrics. In the context of song lyrics, understanding figurative language is essential for interpreting nuanced emotions, symbolic references, and cultural themes embedded in the text. This study applies relevant forms of figurative language to analyze how metaphor and related devices function within selected songs.

### **Conceptualizing Metaphor: Richards' Framework of Living and Dead Metaphors**

Richards (1936) describes a metaphor as a unique and unconventional use of language, deviating from its usual application and not adhering to the general rule of open expression. This implies that metaphors have a remarkable and distinctive linguistic function. Metaphors provide a figurative and attention-grabbing means of communication, adding depth to the message. In song lyrics, metaphors allow songwriters to convey meaning and evoke emotional reactions from listeners. Additionally, they enhance the beauty and aesthetic quality of the lyrics, contributing to the overall artistic impact of the music.

Richards also explains metaphor through the relationship between the tenor and the vehicle. He argues that the strength of a metaphor depends on how effectively the vehicle helps in understanding the tenor. If the vehicle successfully conveys meaning to the tenor, the metaphor is considered strong. Further, a metaphor's effectiveness lies in how well the tenor and vehicle relate to each other. He also identified different types of metaphors that can be used to interpret metaphorical sentences in literary works.

Richards (1936) categorizes metaphors into two types: dead metaphor and living metaphor.

#### **1. Dead Metaphor**

A dead metaphor is a metaphorical expression that has become so commonly used in everyday language that people no longer perceive it as a metaphor. These types of metaphors tend to be more traditional and often don't stir strong emotional reactions. "She broke the ice with a warm smile and kind words." In this case, the phrase "broke the ice" is categorized as a dead metaphor, as it has become a common expression whose original figurative impact may no longer be strongly felt.

#### **2. Living Metaphor**

In contrast, a living metaphor still creates a vivid and fresh connection between two different ideas or images. It retains its figurative impact and can evoke a strong emotional or imaginative response in the reader or listener. For instance: "Her thoughts were a storm, swirling and crashing without rest." The phrase "a storm" metaphorically represents the turmoil in her mind, vividly capturing the chaos and intensity of her emotions. This kind of metaphor continues to engage the reader's imagination and feelings.

I.A. Richards offers a useful model for understanding how metaphors work. He breaks down a metaphor into two essential parts: the tenor and the vehicle. The tenor, sometimes referred to as the subject, is the actual idea, concept, or object that the metaphor is meant to explain. It represents the deeper meaning or message being conveyed. For instance, in the metaphor "time is a thief", "time" is the tenor because it is the abstract concept being illustrated through the metaphor. The vehicle, on the other hand, is the image or idea that carries the comparison. It provides a familiar context that helps illuminate or clarify the tenor. In the same metaphor, "time is a thief", the word "thief" serves as the vehicle. According to Richards, the vehicle helps transfer meaning from its usual context to the tenor, enriching the listener's or reader's understanding by drawing a symbolic link between the two.

## Semantic Perspectives on Meaning Construction in Metaphorical Language

Semantics is the branch of science that focuses on the study of meaning. Geeraerts (2010) describes semantics as an interpretative approach to meaning, aimed at uncovering the meanings embedded in historical language materials. Semantics also seeks to describe how language users interpret sentences. There are several reasons why studying semantics is so important. Semantics can give and ensure that understanding the meaning of a term is the key to avoiding misconceptions during communication, allowing communication between individuals or groups to function smoothly and effectively. Following that, the use of language is vital when utilized, for example, in a formal session a semantics understanding can help ensure that the terminology and phrases used by someone are accurate and appropriate for the situation.

While Semantics deals with the specific meanings of words, metaphor, on the other hand, is a statement that conveys a deeper meaning or significance beyond the literal interpretation. Metaphors directly affect semantics by transferring meaning from one concept to another. When metaphors are employed, the meanings of words or phrases are influenced by their comparisons with other elements. This creates a connection between metaphors and semantics.

## Meaning as Use: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Interpreting Song Lyrics

According to Wittgenstein (2002), a sentence gains meaning when the meanings of its individual words are clearly understood. However, for the sentence to truly represent a fact, its structure must reflect the structure of the fact it describes, regardless of the language it's expressed in. In essence, meaning is tied to the idea that a sentence should be comprehensible enough to communicate a particular message or intention.

Learning a language helps individuals expand their vocabulary and understand sentence structure in both speaking and writing. Mastery of language enhances one's ability to analyze and comprehend words more effectively. Understanding meaning is crucial for conveying thoughts and feelings to others. In the context of songs, grasping their meaning is important for two reasons: first, it allows us to discern the message the song is trying to convey; second, songwriters often express their emotions through their music. Therefore, accurately capturing the meaning of a song ensures that the songwriter's feelings or thoughts are communicated effectively to the listener.

## METHODS

### Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, aiming to interpret and explain non-numerical linguistic data found in song lyrics. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for metaphor analysis because metaphors involve subjective meaning construction, contextual interpretation, and semantic nuance that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. The analysis focused on linguistic units (words, phrases, and sentences) as meaningful textual data, allowing the researcher to examine how metaphors function contextually to convey emotional and conceptual meanings.

### Data Collection

The primary data consisted of song lyrics from Jeon Jungkook's English-language album *Golden*. Ten songs were selected as the corpus of analysis: *3D*, *Seven (Explicit Version)*, *Yes or No*, *Please Don't Change*, *Somebody*, *Shot Glass of Tears*, *Closer to You*, *Standing Next to You*, *Hate You*, and *Too Sad to Dance*. These songs were chosen because they represent the album as a cohesive lyrical unit and contain recurrent figurative expressions. Data collection followed a systematic procedure:

1. Immersive listening and reading: The researcher repeatedly listened to the songs while simultaneously reading the official lyrics to understand their musical and textual context.
2. Preliminary identification: Potential metaphorical expressions were identified during close reading, guided by established definitions of metaphor.

3. Data extraction: Lyrics containing metaphorical expressions were marked, segmented, and compiled as the primary dataset for analysis.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through an iterative and theory-driven qualitative process to ensure analytical rigor and minimize subjective bias.

1. First, the unit of analysis consisted of words, phrases, or sentences that exhibited figurative meaning. Each identified expression was examined in its lyrical and thematic context.
2. Second, metaphor identification and classification were guided by Richards' (1936) theory, which distinguishes between living metaphors and dead metaphors. This theoretical framework functioned as an explicit analytic criterion, ensuring that metaphor categorization was grounded in established linguistic theory rather than personal judgment.
3. Third, the interpretation of metaphorical meaning was informed by Wittgenstein's (2002) perspective on meaning as use, emphasizing how meaning emerges from contextual function rather than isolated lexical definitions. This approach allowed metaphors to be interpreted in relation to the surrounding lyrics, themes, and emotional tone of the songs.
4. To strengthen analytical rigor, the analysis was conducted iteratively, involving repeated reading and re-evaluation of the data to refine metaphor identification and interpretation. Ambiguous cases were revisited multiple times to ensure consistency between metaphor type and meaning.
5. Finally, analytical validation was achieved through theoretical triangulation and peer review. The interpretations were compared with findings from previous metaphor studies in song lyrics and discussed with academic peers to assess plausibility and coherence. This process enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis, aligning with qualitative research standards proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The analysis of ten selected songs from Jeon Jungkook's *Golden* album identified a total of ninety metaphorical expressions. These metaphors were categorized into two types: fifty-six (56) living metaphors and thirty-four (34) dead metaphors. Although this study adopts a qualitative approach, frequency counts are employed as an analytical indicator to reveal patterns of metaphor usage across the album rather than as statistical generalizations. The predominance of living metaphors indicates a stylistic tendency toward novel, expressive figurative language that enhances emotional intensity and contemporary appeal. The findings of the research are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Findings**

| Song Title                  | Living Metaphors | Dead Metaphors | Total     | Dominant Type |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| <i>3D</i>                   | 9                | 3              | 12        | Living        |
| <i>Seven</i>                | 6                | 4              | 10        | Living        |
| <i>Yes or No</i>            | 3                | 8              | 11        | Dead          |
| <i>Please Don't Change</i>  | 5                | 5              | 10        | Balanced      |
| <i>Somebody</i>             | 4                | 3              | 7         | Living        |
| <i>Shot Glass of Tears</i>  | 6                | 4              | 10        | Living        |
| <i>Closer to You</i>        | 2                | 2              | 4         | Balanced      |
| <i>Standing Next to You</i> | 7                | 5              | 12        | Living        |
| <i>Hate You</i>             | 4                | 3              | 7         | Living        |
| <i>Too Sad to Dance</i>     | 10               | 2              | 12        | Living        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>56</b>        | <b>34</b>      | <b>90</b> |               |

As shown in Table 1, living metaphors dominate most songs in the album, particularly in emotionally expressive tracks such as *3D*, *Standing Next to You*, and *Too Sad to Dance*. This pattern indicates a deliberate stylistic preference for novel metaphorical expressions that intensify emotional

engagement and reflect contemporary language use. Songs with a higher proportion of dead metaphors, such as *Yes or No*, tend to employ more conventional expressions, suggesting a focus on clarity and relatability rather than metaphorical innovation.

These frequency patterns support the qualitative interpretation that living metaphors play a central role in shaping the album's expressive character, while dead metaphors function as stabilizing elements that reinforce meaning through familiarity. Rather than measuring significance numerically, the frequency data highlight how metaphor types contribute differently to meaning construction across songs. To illustrate these patterns, selected examples of living and dead metaphors are discussed below.

**Title of the song: 3D**

**Datum 3:**

[Chorus: Jung Kook]

*So if you're ready (So if you're ready) And if you'll  
let me (And if you'll let me) I wanna see it in motion*

*In 3D (Uh-uh)*

*You won't regret me (You won't regret me)  
**Champagne confetti** (Champagne confetti)*

*I wanna see it in motion*

*In 3D*

The expression “champagne confetti” functions as a living metaphor due to its novelty and lack of conventionalized meaning in everyday language. The phrase merges two celebratory symbols: “champagne,” which is commonly associated with pleasure and celebration, and “confetti,” which represents festivity and excitement. Through this combination, the metaphor creates a vivid image of heightened enjoyment and emotional intensity.

Within Richards' framework, the tenor refers to the speaker's experience of intense pleasure or emotional fulfillment, while “champagne confetti” serves as the vehicle, transferring associations of exuberance, celebration, and release to that experience. As a living metaphor, the expression relies on imaginative interpretation and contemporary cultural associations, requiring listeners to actively construct meaning rather than immediately recognizing a fixed figurative sense.

**Datum 24:**

*It's the way that we can ride*

*It's the way that we can ride (oh-oh, oh-oh)*

*Think I met you in another life*

*So break me off another time (oh-oh, oh-oh)*

*You wrap around me and **you give me life***

*And that's why night after night*

*I'll be lovin' you right*

The phrase “you give me life” is classified as a dead metaphor because its figurative meaning has become highly conventionalized and can be readily understood without requiring interpretive effort. Through frequent use in everyday and artistic discourse, the expression no longer evokes a novel image but instead functions as a fixed metaphorical expression.

In this context, “life” symbolizes emotional vitality, psychological support, and a renewed sense of purpose provided by a romantic partner. From Richards' perspective on metaphor, the tenor

is the speaker's emotional state or sense of self, while "life" operates as the vehicle, representing emotional renewal and fulfillment derived from the relationship. Rather than inviting imaginative interpretation, the metaphor contributes to semantic clarity and emotional immediacy, reinforcing intimacy through familiarity.

**Title of the song: Standing Next to You**

**Datum 33:**

*Play me slow*

*I push up on this funk and give me miracles (let ya body know)*

*Make it known*

The expression "push up on this funk" is categorized as a living metaphor due to its unconventional phrasing and reliance on genre-specific associations. The term "funk" refers not only to a musical genre characterized by strong rhythm and energetic grooves, but also to the embodied experience of movement, vitality, and emotional engagement that the music evokes. Meanwhile, "push up" suggests activation or intensification, implying an effort to elevate emotional and physical response.

Applying Richards' framework, the tenor is the speaker's emotional and relational energy, while "push up on this funk" functions as the vehicle, transferring the dynamic qualities of funk music, including rhythm, excitement, and vitality onto the interpersonal interaction described in the lyrics. The metaphor suggests that the speaker seeks to generate enthusiasm and emotional momentum in the relationship by aligning it with the energizing atmosphere of the music.

This metaphor highlights the power of music to stimulate both emotional and physical engagement. Rather than describing emotion directly, the lyric conveys intimacy and connection through the sensory experience of rhythm and movement. As a living metaphor, "push up on this funk" requires contextual interpretation and reflects contemporary language use, where musical genres are employed metaphorically to express emotional states and relational dynamics.

**Datum 37:**

*You know that all night long we rock to this*

*Screaming, I testify this lovin'*

*All night long we flock to this*

*Screaming, I testify that we'll survive the test of time*

*They can't deny our love*

*They can't divide us, we'll survive the test of time*

*I promise I'll be right here*

The expression "testify this lovin'" is classified as a dead metaphor because its figurative meaning is immediately accessible and no longer requires interpretive effort. The verb "testify", which conventionally refers to giving a formal statement or evidence, is commonly used in emotional or lyrical contexts to express sincerity or certainty. Due to its frequent usage, the metaphorical force of the expression has become conventionalized, allowing listeners to readily grasp its intended meaning.

In this context, "testify" functions as a declaration of emotional truth, suggesting that the speaker affirms the authenticity and endurance of the love he experiences. Within Richards' framework, the tenor is the speaker's emotional commitment and affection, while "testify" serves as the vehicle, transferring the notion of proof or evidence to the emotional domain of love.

Rather than introducing a novel image, this dead metaphor emphasizes clarity and assurance. The phrase reinforces the idea that the love described is genuine, resilient, and openly acknowledged.

Its conventional nature contributes to emotional transparency and accessibility, allowing the message to be conveyed effectively without ambiguity or complex interpretation.

**Datum 39:**

*Standing next to you*

***Standing in the fire next to you, oh***

*You know it's deeper than the rain*

*It's deeper than the pain*

*When it's deep like DNA*

*Something they can't take away, ayy*

*Take-take-take-take-take-take off*

The phrase “standing in the fire next to you” is identified as a living metaphor because it employs an unconventional and striking image that is not commonly used in everyday language. While the verb “standing” is familiar, its combination with “fire” creates a vivid figurative expression that conveys intensity and emotional risk. In this context, “fire” symbolizes powerful passion and heightened emotional experience, suggesting that being close to a loved one involves both warmth and intensity.

According to Richards’ framework, the tenor of the metaphor is the speaker’s intense emotional attachment and passion, while “standing in the fire” functions as the vehicle, transferring the qualities of heat, danger, and intensity associated with fire to the emotional experience of love. This metaphor highlights how love is portrayed not merely as comforting but as an overwhelming and consuming force.

The metaphor also implies loyalty and emotional commitment, as the act of “standing” in fire suggests endurance and willingness to remain despite discomfort or risk. As a living metaphor, the phrase invites interpretation and emotional engagement, reflecting a contemporary lyrical style that favors evocative imagery to communicate deep emotional bonds.

**“Title of the song: Hate You”**

**Datum 62:**

*It's not the truth*

***It's not the cure***

*But hatin' you's the only way it doesn't hurt*

The phrase “it’s not the cure” is categorized as a dead metaphor because its figurative meaning is widely recognized and easily understood without requiring extensive interpretation. The term “cure”, commonly associated with medical healing, is frequently used in emotional discourse to refer to relief from psychological or emotional pain. Due to its conventional usage, the metaphorical force of the expression has become familiar and transparent to listeners.

In line with Richards’ framework, the tenor of the metaphor is the speaker’s emotional pain or process of healing, while “the cure” functions as the vehicle, transferring the concept of medical treatment to the emotional domain. In this context, the lyric suggests that what the speaker initially believes might alleviate emotional suffering ultimately fails to do so. The metaphor highlights the inadequacy of the perceived solution rather than introducing a novel image.

As a dead metaphor, “it’s not the cure” emphasizes clarity and emotional directness. The phrase conveys frustration and resignation, reflecting the speaker’s realization that the chosen coping mechanism does not bring genuine healing. Its conventional nature allows the emotional message to

be communicated effectively and immediately, reinforcing the theme of unresolved emotional conflict without relying on complex figurative imagery.

In relation to the first research question, the findings show that both living and dead metaphors are present across the analyzed songs, with living metaphors occurring more frequently. This distribution indicates a stronger reliance on novel and context-dependent figurative expressions rather than fully conventionalized ones. Addressing the second research question, the analysis demonstrates that metaphor meanings are constructed through contextual interpretation, where dead metaphors tend to convey immediately accessible emotional meanings, while living metaphors require deeper engagement with imagery and situational cues. In short, these findings reveal systematic patterns in both metaphor type and meaning construction, providing an empirical basis for discussing how figurative language functions in shaping emotional expression in contemporary song lyrics.

## Discussion

In addressing the first research question, the findings reveal that the lyrics of *Golden* employ two dominant metaphor types that vary in distribution across songs and function differently in lyrical expression. The analysis identified a higher occurrence of living metaphors than dead metaphors, indicating a tendency in contemporary English-language song lyrics to favor novel and expressive figurative forms for conveying emotional intensity and experiential meaning.

This distribution supports Richards' (1936) distinction between living and dead metaphors, in which living metaphors demand active interpretation due to their novelty, whereas dead metaphors rely on conventionalized meanings that are readily accessible to listeners. In the context of *Golden*, living metaphors frequently appear in emotionally salient sections such as choruses and climactic verses, where expressive force and listener engagement are foregrounded. Dead metaphors, by contrast, tend to function as emotionally accessible expressions that stabilize meaning and facilitate immediate comprehension. This pattern aligns with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) view of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism for structuring experience rather than as a purely ornamental linguistic feature.

In response to the second research question, the analysis demonstrates that metaphor types in *Golden* differ not only in form but also in their interpretive roles. Living metaphors encourage deeper semantic engagement by prompting listeners to actively negotiate meaning through imagery, association, and contextual inference. Dead metaphors, on the other hand, contribute to interpretive efficiency by drawing on shared linguistic conventions that enable emotional messages to be communicated quickly and clearly. This distinction resonates with Wittgenstein's (2002) notion that meaning emerges through use, as metaphors in the lyrics function meaningfully within particular communicative and emotional contexts rather than through isolated lexical definitions.

The analytical use of frequency counts in this study serves not merely as descriptive statistics but as interpretive indicators that reveal dominant patterns of metaphor usage across the album. The higher frequency of living metaphors suggests an artistic preference for expressive novelty and heightened emotional engagement, while the continued presence of dead metaphors underscores the importance of conventional expressions in maintaining clarity and accessibility. In this sense, frequency functions analytically by illustrating how metaphor types are strategically distributed to balance innovation and comprehensibility within lyrical discourse.

When situated within previous research, these findings extend earlier studies that primarily focused on identifying and categorizing metaphor types in song lyrics (Ndraha, 2018; Pardede et al., 2023). While those studies effectively applied established frameworks such as Goatly's typology, they offered limited discussion of how metaphor types contribute to meaning construction. Jati's (2020) study moves closer to interpretation by examining metaphor meaning; however, the analysis is restricted to a small number of songs and does not explore how metaphor types systematically shape interpretive engagement across a cohesive corpus.

While earlier studies have successfully documented the presence and classification of metaphors in song lyrics (Ndraha, 2018; Pardede et al., 2023), they largely treat metaphor types as descriptive categories rather than as functional elements in meaning construction. Jati (2020) moves closer to interpretation by discussing metaphor meaning; however, the analysis remains limited to a small number of songs and does not examine how metaphor types systematically shape interpretive engagement across a complete lyrical corpus. In contrast, the present study advances metaphor research by explicitly linking metaphor classification to interpretive function, demonstrating how living and dead metaphors operate differently in guiding listener understanding, emotional engagement, and semantic processing within an album-length discourse.

Rather than advancing deterministic claims about genre or cultural differences, this study adopts a cautious interpretive stance. While the lyrics reflect contemporary popular-music discourse and globalized English usage, the analysis does not assume fixed cultural meanings. Instead, it recognizes that metaphor interpretation is shaped by shared linguistic practices and listener familiarity, aligning with Barradas and Sakka's (2022) view that contextual awareness informs interpretation without prescribing singular cultural readings.

Although this study does not adopt a pedagogical framework, its findings may offer transferable insights for EFL contexts, particularly in fostering metaphor awareness and interpretive sensitivity through authentic lyrical texts. However, this study does not claim pedagogical effectiveness or instructional outcomes; rather, it offers analytical insights that may support future metaphor-focused language research and instruction.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that metaphor usage in *Golden* reflects a dynamic interaction between conventional meaning and expressive innovation. By linking metaphor type to interpretive function, the study shows that metaphors in popular music operate not only as aesthetic devices but also as mechanisms of meaning construction shaped by linguistic, emotional, and contextual factors. By integrating Richards' metaphor typology with Wittgenstein's view of meaning as use, this study moves beyond metaphor identification to show how metaphor types function as interpretive cues within popular-music discourse. This theoretical integration offers a more dynamic understanding of metaphor in lyrics, positioning metaphor not only as a linguistic form but also as a mechanism of meaning negotiation between text and listener.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

Building on and extending previous metaphor studies in song lyrics, this research reframes living and dead metaphors as functional indicators of interpretive engagement rather than static classificatory labels. This study extends metaphor research by demonstrating that metaphor classification gains analytical value when linked to interpretive function, showing how different metaphor types contribute to meaning construction in lyrical discourse rather than serving merely as taxonomic categories.

Theoretically, this research contributes to metaphor interpretation by positioning living and dead metaphors as dynamic elements that shape how meaning is processed and experienced by listeners. Living metaphors are shown to prompt active semantic negotiation, while dead metaphors facilitate emotional immediacy and shared understanding. By integrating Richards' distinction between metaphor types with Wittgenstein's conception of meaning-as-use, the study enriches discussions of figurative language in contemporary popular-music discourse and offers a more functional framework for analyzing metaphor beyond surface-level classification.

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate that metaphor plays a significant role in shaping meaning and emotional expression in contemporary song lyrics. Living metaphors, characterized by their novelty and imaginative quality, contribute strong artistic value by inviting active interpretation and enabling songwriters to convey emotions in expressive and impactful ways. Dead metaphors,

while less innovative, remain important in providing clarity and emotional accessibility through their familiar and conventional meanings. The interaction between these two metaphor types illustrates how lyrical discourse balances creativity and comprehensibility.

By linking metaphor classification with interpretive function, this study highlights that metaphor types are not merely formal categories but function as meaningful devices that shape listener engagement and meaning construction. The findings suggest that the strategic use of varied metaphor types can enhance lyrical richness and memorability, allowing songs to resonate more deeply with audiences. This study is expected to serve as a useful reference for future researchers interested in metaphor analysis, song lyrics, and contemporary popular-music discourse.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is limited to a single album, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader musical genres, artists, or cultural contexts. Second, the interpretation of metaphors relies on qualitative analysis and contextual reading, which inevitably involves researcher subjectivity, even though theoretical frameworks were applied systematically. Third, the study focuses on lyrical text without incorporating listener reception data or songwriter perspectives, which could provide additional insight into how metaphors are perceived and intended.

Future research could expand this line of inquiry by examining metaphor use across multiple albums, artists, or musical genres to allow for more comparative and cross-cultural analysis. Further studies may also integrate audience reception or discourse-based approaches to explore how listeners interpret living and dead metaphors in different sociocultural contexts. Additionally, interdisciplinary research combining linguistic analysis with musicology or media studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how metaphor interacts with musical elements such as rhythm, melody, and performance. Such extensions would deepen our understanding of metaphor as a dynamic and multifunctional resource in contemporary lyrical discourse.

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