



Conceptual Metaphors in the Songs of Wicked (2024)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the conceptual metaphors found in the song lyrics of *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack by employing Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The research aims to identify the types of conceptual metaphors used in the selected songs, interpret their thematic meanings, and determine the dominant metaphor categories and themes represented in the soundtrack. This study used a qualitative content analysis approach. The data were collected from seven selected songs in *Wicked* (2024), namely "No One Mourns the Wicked," "The Wizard and I," "What Is This Feeling?," "Dancing Through Life," "Popular," "I'm Not That Girl," and "Defying Gravity." The findings reveal 43 metaphorical expressions consisting of 22 ontological metaphors, 14 structural metaphors, and 7 orientational metaphors. Ontological metaphors appear as the most dominant type, while identity and emotion emerge as the dominant thematic meanings. The study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors function not only as aesthetic devices but also as cognitive tools that shape emotional and narrative understanding within musical films.

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INTRODUCTION

Language functions as a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, experiences, and social realities. In linguistics, semantics plays an important role in understanding how meaning is constructed and interpreted through language (Leech, 1981). This reflects how language functions cognitively and socially in constructing meaning (Jakobs & Hüning, 2022). Through semantics, speakers and listeners can interpret not only literal meanings but also figurative meanings embedded in communication. One of the most widely used forms of figurative language is metaphor (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

Metaphor is commonly understood as a comparison between two unlike concepts without using explicit comparative markers such as "like" or "as." Metaphorical language also strengthens expressive and emotional dimensions in literary communication (Rahmawati, 2021). However, metaphor is not merely a literary ornament. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor reflects the way humans conceptualize abstract experiences through more concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Their Conceptual Metaphor

Theory explains that human thought processes are fundamentally metaphorical because people understand abstract concepts through familiar physical or experiential frameworks.

Conceptual metaphors frequently appear in literary works, films, poetry, and songs. Song lyrics, in particular, provide rich metaphorical expressions because they combine emotional experience, artistic expression, and narrative storytelling. Lyrics function not only as musical elements but also as textual representations of emotion, experience, and meaning (Firdaus, 2013). Through metaphorical language, songwriters can express identity, emotion, conflict, morality, and resistance in a more imaginative and emotionally engaging manner.

Musical films represent a unique cinematic genre in which songs function not only as entertainment but also as narrative devices that develop plot, character identity, and emotional conflict (McDonnell, 2013). Within musical films, lyrics often carry thematic meanings that deepen audience interpretation. One contemporary musical film that gained significant global recognition is *Wicked* (2024), directed by Jon M. Chu. Adapted from the Broadway musical *Wicked* and Gregory Maguire's novel, the film achieved remarkable commercial and critical success through both its cinematic production and soundtrack (Caulfield, 2024).

The *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack gained international popularity by topping multiple music charts and becoming one of the most-streamed musical soundtracks globally (Trust, 2024). Songs such as "Defying Gravity," "Popular," and "What Is This Feeling?" became cultural phenomena and attracted widespread audience engagement. Beyond commercial success, the soundtrack presents emotionally rich and metaphorically dense lyrics that explore themes of identity, social judgment, emotional struggle, freedom, and empowerment.

Some previous studies have analyzed metaphors in song lyrics using conceptual metaphor theory. Research conducted by Danial and Widyawati explored conceptual metaphors in contemporary English songs and found that ontological metaphors frequently dominate emotional expressions (Danial & Widyawati, 2024). Another study by Fatwansyah et al. analyzed metaphorical expressions in musical soundtracks and emphasized the relationship between metaphor and character development (Fatwansyah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Agustina and Mustikawati investigated figurative language in modern popular songs and revealed that metaphors help listeners interpret emotional and social experiences (Agustina & Mustikawati, 2023).

Although metaphor analysis in song lyrics has been widely conducted, studies focusing specifically on *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack remain limited. Most previous studies examine general popular songs rather than musical movie soundtracks. Furthermore, few studies analyze how conceptual metaphors function within musical narratives to construct thematic meanings such as identity, liberation, morality, and emotional conflict. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by examining conceptual metaphors in selected songs from *Wicked* (2024).

This study focuses on three research questions:

1. What types of conceptual metaphors are found in the selected song lyrics of *Wicked* (2024)?
2. What thematic meanings are conveyed through these metaphors?

3. What are the dominant metaphor types and thematic meanings represented in the soundtrack?

This research contributes theoretically to the study of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory, particularly in the context of musical film lyrics. Practically, the findings may also support English language teaching by providing authentic materials for teaching figurative language, interpretation, and critical thinking (Yule, 2016).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to investigate conceptual metaphors in the selected song lyrics of *Wicked* (2024). Qualitative content analysis was chosen because the study focused on interpreting meanings and examining metaphorical language within textual data rather than measuring numerical information (Roller, 2019). The primary data consisted of seven selected songs from the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack, namely “No One Mourns the Wicked,” “The Wizard and I,” “What Is This Feeling?,” “Dancing Through Life,” “Popular,” “I’m Not That Girl,” and “Defying Gravity.” These songs were selected based on their popularity and relevance to the research objectives. The study was guided by Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which classifies conceptual metaphors into three categories: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

The data were collected through a documentation technique. First, the researcher listened to the selected songs and obtained the official lyrics from reliable sources. The lyrics were then read repeatedly to gain familiarity with their content, context, and narrative meanings. Afterward, metaphorical expressions found in the lyrics were identified and highlighted for further examination. Finally, the identified expressions were recorded and documented according to the categories of conceptual metaphors to facilitate the analysis process.

The data analysis followed the procedures of Qualitative Content Analysis and was guided by Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Roller, 2019; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The analysis began with data familiarization through repeated reading of the lyrics, followed by the identification and coding of metaphorical expressions. Each metaphor was then classified as a structural, orientational, or ontological metaphor based on the conceptual mapping between source and target domains. Subsequently, the categorized data were interpreted to identify thematic meanings represented in the lyrics, particularly those related to identity, emotion, morality, liberation, and resistance. To enhance the credibility of the findings, repeated reviews and peer validation were conducted throughout the analysis process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Conceptual Metaphors in *Wicked* (2024)

The analysis identified 43 metaphorical expressions distributed into three categories of conceptual metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson). The findings indicate that ontological metaphors are the dominant type found in the soundtrack.

1. Ontological Metaphors

Ontological metaphors conceptualize abstract experiences as concrete objects, entities, or substances (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In *Wicked* (2024), ontological metaphors are frequently used to represent emotions, identity, morality, and social judgment.

One example appears in the lyric “Too much to mention” from “Popular.” The abstract concept of emotional complexity is treated as a physical object that can be counted or contained. Another example appears in “Defying Gravity,” where emotional struggle and freedom are conceptualized as physical forces that can be resisted.

The dominance of ontological metaphors indicates that the soundtrack strongly emphasizes emotional embodiment and personal identity through concrete imagery.

2. Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors organize one abstract concept through the structure of another familiar concept (Lakoff and Johnson). In the soundtrack, structural metaphors are used to conceptualize life, freedom, social expectations, and relationships.

For example, “Defying Gravity” conceptualizes liberation as resistance against physical gravity. Here, gravity functions as the source domain representing oppression, while freedom becomes the target domain. Similarly, “Dancing Through Life” conceptualizes life as a dance, suggesting movement, performance, and social adaptation.

These metaphors allow listeners to understand emotional and social experiences through familiar physical activities and structures.

3. Orientational Metaphors

Orientational metaphors relate abstract concepts to spatial orientation such as up-down, in-out, or forward-backward (Lakoff and Johnson). In *Wicked* (2024), orientational metaphors commonly represent emotional states and empowerment.

For instance, upward movement in “Defying Gravity” symbolizes empowerment, liberation, and self-acceptance. Conversely, downward imagery often represents sadness, fear, or oppression. These spatial orientations reflect bodily and emotional experiences that audiences can easily recognize.

Table 1. *Types of Conceptual Metaphors on Wicked (2024) Songs*

No.	Song	Structural	Orientational	Ontological
1	No One Mourns The Wicked	1	0	5
2	The Wizard And I	1	1	5
3	What Is This Feeling?	1	1	3
4	Dancing Through Life	3	1	2
5	Popular	3	0	1
6	I'm Not That Girl	1	1	6
7	Defying Gravity	4	3	0
	Subtotal	14	7	22
	Total		43	

Based on the table, a total of 43 conceptual metaphors were identified in the seven selected songs from the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack. Among the three types of conceptual metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, ontological metaphors appeared most

frequently with 22 occurrences, followed by structural metaphors with 14 occurrences and orientational metaphors with 7 occurrences. This finding indicates that the song lyrics predominantly represent abstract concepts, emotions, and experiences as concrete entities, allowing listeners to better understand complex ideas through more tangible forms.

Furthermore, the distribution of metaphor types varied across the songs. *I'm Not That Girl* contained the highest number of ontological metaphors, while *Defying Gravity* showed the highest number of structural and orientational metaphors. These differences suggest that each song employs metaphorical expressions according to its thematic focus and narrative purpose. Overall, the findings demonstrate that conceptual metaphors play a significant role in conveying meanings, emotions, and messages throughout the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack, with ontological metaphors serving as the dominant strategy used by the lyricists.

Thematic Meanings of Conceptual Metaphors

The findings indicates that identity becomes the most dominant thematic meaning with 15 occurrences, followed closely by emotion with 14 occurrences. Meanwhile, liberation/resistance appears 10 times, while morality becomes the least dominant theme with 4 occurrences. These findings suggest that the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack primarily emphasizes self-identity and emotional conflict as its central narrative concerns.

The dominance of identity-related metaphors reflects the soundtrack's focus on self-definition, social acceptance, and personal transformation. This thematic pattern is especially represented through Elphaba's character, whose experiences consistently involve rejection, misunderstanding, and struggles against external judgment.

Similarly, emotional themes emerge strongly because the songs frequently depict interpersonal conflict, admiration, fear, loneliness, jealousy, and insecurity. Emotional experiences are commonly represented through metaphors involving movement, containment, distance, and physical sensation.

In addition, liberation and resistance appear as important recurring themes throughout the soundtrack. Songs such as "Defying Gravity" metaphorically frame liberation as upward movement and resistance against restrictive forces. Although morality appears less frequently compared to the other themes, its presence remains significant within the narrative structure of *Wicked*. Through metaphorical language, the soundtrack challenges traditional perceptions of good and evil by portraying morally labeled characters as emotionally complex individuals.

Overall, the thematic distribution demonstrates that conceptual metaphors in *Wicked* (2024) function not only as figurative and aesthetic expressions but also as narrative tools that shape character development, emotional depth, and audience interpretation throughout the musical soundtrack.

Table 2. *Distribution of Themes Across Songs in Wicked (2024)*

No.	Song	Identity	Morality	Emotion	Liberation / Resistance
1	No One Mourns The Wicked	1	4	0	0
2	The Wizard And I	5	0	1	1
3	What Is This Feeling?	0	0	5	0
4	Dancing Through Life	2	0	2	1

5	Popular	4	0	1	0
6	I'm Not That Girl	3	0	5	0
7	Defying Gravity	0	0	0	8
	Subtotal	15	4	14	10
	Total			43	

Based on the table, four major themes were identified in the selected songs from the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack, namely identity, morality, emotion, and liberation/resistance. A total of 43 thematic occurrences were found across the seven songs. The theme of identity appeared most frequently with 15 occurrences, followed closely by emotion with 14 occurrences. Meanwhile, liberation/resistance occurred 10 times, whereas morality was the least frequent theme with only 4 occurrences. These findings suggest that the soundtrack primarily focuses on characters' self-discovery, personal struggles, and emotional experiences throughout the narrative.

The distribution of themes also varied among the songs. *The Wizard and I* contained the highest number of identity-related themes, reflecting the character's aspirations and search for self-definition. *What Is This Feeling?* and *I'm Not That Girl* were dominated by emotional themes, emphasizing interpersonal relationships and inner feelings. In contrast, *Defying Gravity* was entirely characterized by the theme of liberation and resistance, highlighting freedom, empowerment, and the rejection of social constraints. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the themes represented in the lyrics contribute significantly to the narrative development of *Wicked* (2024), with identity and emotion emerging as the most dominant thematic concerns.

Dominant Metaphor Types and Thematic Meanings

The analysis reveals that ontological metaphor becomes the most dominant metaphor type found in the selected songs from *Wicked* (2024). Out of 43 identified metaphorical expressions, 22 are categorized as ontological metaphors. This finding indicates that the soundtrack frequently conceptualizes abstract experiences such as identity, emotion, morality, and social judgment through concrete entities, objects, and physical experiences.

The dominance of ontological metaphors suggests that the soundtrack strongly emphasizes emotional embodiment and psychological representation. Abstract feelings and social experiences are repeatedly transformed into tangible imagery that audiences can cognitively and emotionally understand. This metaphorical pattern allows listeners to connect complex emotional experiences with familiar physical concepts.

Meanwhile, structural metaphors become the second most dominant category with 14 occurrences. These metaphors commonly conceptualize freedom, struggle, relationships, and social expectations through familiar structures such as movement, gravity, and performance. Songs such as "Defying Gravity" and "Dancing Through Life" prominently employ structural metaphors to construct narrative meaning and character development.

Oriental metaphors appear as the least dominant category with 7 occurrences. Although less frequent, these metaphors still contribute significantly to emotional interpretation within the soundtrack. Spatial orientations such as upward and downward movement symbolize empowerment, liberation, fear, sadness, and oppression. These

metaphorical orientations strengthen the emotional atmosphere represented throughout the songs.

Regarding thematic meanings, identity emerges as the most dominant theme with 15 occurrences. This finding reflects the soundtrack's primary focus on self-definition, personal transformation, social acceptance, and identity conflict. The dominance of identity-related metaphors is particularly visible through Elphaba's character development, which consistently portrays struggles against prejudice and external judgment.

Emotion becomes the second most dominant thematic meaning with 14 occurrences. Emotional experiences such as fear, loneliness, admiration, jealousy, insecurity, and hope are represented through metaphorical imagery involving movement, distance, containment, and physical sensation. These metaphors intensify the emotional depth of the soundtrack and increase audience engagement with the characters' experiences.

Furthermore, liberation and resistance appear as recurring themes with 10 occurrences. These themes are strongly represented in songs associated with empowerment and rebellion against restrictive systems. The metaphor "Defying Gravity" particularly symbolizes resistance against limitation and societal control, making liberation one of the soundtrack's central narrative messages.

Morality becomes the least dominant thematic meaning with 4 occurrences. However, its presence remains important because the soundtrack challenges conventional assumptions regarding good and evil. Through metaphorical language, characters labeled as "wicked" are portrayed as emotionally complex individuals rather than purely immoral figures.

Overall, the dominant metaphor types and thematic meanings demonstrate that conceptual metaphors in *Wicked* (2024) function not only as artistic expressions but also as cognitive and narrative mechanisms that shape emotional interpretation, character development, and audience understanding throughout the musical soundtrack.

DISCUSSION

The Types of Conceptual Metaphors in *Wicked* (2024)

The findings demonstrate that conceptual metaphors play a significant role in constructing narrative meaning within the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack. Among the three metaphor categories proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, ontological metaphors appear as the most dominant type. This dominance indicates that the soundtrack frequently conceptualizes abstract experiences such as identity, emotion, morality, and social judgment through concrete entities and bodily experiences.

Ontological metaphors are widely used throughout the soundtrack to transform abstract psychological and social experiences into tangible forms. In *No One Mourns The Wicked*, abstract morality is personified through expressions such as "Goodness knows the Wicked die alone," where goodness is conceptualized as a human-like entity capable of awareness and judgment. Similarly, in *The Wizard and I*, identity and ability are represented as contained objects through expressions such as "this gift or this curse I have inside." In *I'm Not That Girl*, emotional suffering is conceptualized as bodily injury in the expression "wishing only wounds the heart." These patterns reflect conceptual mappings such as GOODNESS IS A PERSON, IDENTITY IS A CONTAINED ENTITY, and

EMOTIONAL SUFFERING IS PHYSICAL INJURY.

The dominance of ontological metaphors supports Lakoff and Johnson's argument that ontological metaphors allow people to understand abstract experiences by conceptualizing them as entities, objects, or substances (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In musical narratives such as *Wicked*, these metaphors help listeners emotionally connect with the characters' internal struggles by transforming invisible feelings and psychological conflicts into embodied and experientially accessible forms.

The findings of this study differ from previous research conducted by Danial and Widyawati, which identified structural metaphors as the dominant category in contemporary song lyrics (Danial & Widyawati, 2024). Similarly, Fatwansyah et al. also found structural metaphors to be dominant in selected Imagine Dragons songs (Fatwansyah et al., 2022). In contrast, the *Wicked* soundtrack demonstrates a stronger tendency toward ontological metaphors, indicating that the musical primarily conceptualizes abstract experiences such as identity, emotion, and social judgment through concrete entities and bodily embodiment. This difference may be influenced by the narrative and emotional characteristics of musical film soundtracks, which rely heavily on psychological and character-centered expressions (McDonnell, 2013).

Structural metaphors also contribute significantly to the narrative framework of the soundtrack. Songs such as *Defying Gravity* conceptualize freedom and empowerment through resistance against gravity. In this metaphorical structure, gravity functions as the source domain representing oppression, limitation, and societal expectation. Similarly, *Dancing Through Life* structures life through the experience of dance, reflecting the mapping LIFE IS A DANCE. In *No One Mourns The Wicked*, moral consequence is conceptualized through agriculture in the expression "They reap only what they've sown," reflecting the mappings ACTIONS ARE SEEDS and CONSEQUENCES ARE HARVEST.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, structural metaphors allow abstract concepts to be understood through systematic experiential frameworks (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In the *Wicked* soundtrack, these metaphorical structures organize complex concepts such as freedom, conformity, morality, and identity into cognitively understandable patterns. This finding is also supported by studies discussing metaphorical constructions in narrative media, which suggest that structural metaphors help audiences comprehend abstract conflicts through familiar experiential domains (Kulezic-Wilson, 2015).

Orientational metaphors also strengthen emotional interpretation within the soundtrack. Upward orientation is consistently associated with empowerment, freedom, hope, and self-acceptance, while downward orientation symbolizes fear, oppression, sadness, and insecurity. Expressions such as "defying gravity," "flying free," and "bring me down" rely on spatial orientation to represent emotional and ideological movement. This finding supports Lakoff and Johnson's claim that orientational metaphors emerge from embodied human experience and organize abstract concepts spatially (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Similar findings regarding spatial and motion-based metaphorical representation in narrative media were also identified by Ulinuha in the analysis of visual metaphors in film narratives (Ulinuha, n.d.).

Overall, the findings reveal that conceptual metaphors in the *Wicked* soundtrack function not merely as stylistic or aesthetic devices, but also as cognitive, emotional, and narrative tools that shape thematic meaning and audience interpretation throughout the

musical film.

The Thematic Meanings of Conceptual Metaphors in *Wicked* (2024)

When analyzed collectively, the metaphorical expressions found in the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack reveal several thematic meanings that structure the narrative and emotional development of the characters. Rather than functioning as isolated figurative expressions, the metaphors construct broader conceptual patterns reflecting identity formation, emotional experience, morality, and liberation.

Identity emerges as the most dominant thematic meaning conveyed through the soundtrack. This dominance reflects the broader narrative focus of *Wicked*, where characters struggle with social labeling, acceptance, transformation, and self-definition. In *Popular*, identity is metaphorically represented as something that can be corrected and socially improved. In *The Wizard and I*, expressions such as “prove my worth” and “my whole life will change” conceptualize self-worth and identity through value and transformation. Meanwhile, “don’t lose sight of who you are” in *I’m Not That Girl* frames identity through visibility and perception.

The prominence of identity-related metaphors supports Lakoff and Johnson’s argument that conceptual metaphors structure how individuals cognitively understand abstract experiences through concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Through metaphors of visibility, transformation, bodily containment, and value, the soundtrack presents identity as relational and socially constructed rather than fixed. This thematic tendency is closely related to the narrative structure of *Wicked*, which centers on Elphaba’s struggle against social judgment and imposed identity. This finding also supports Dobrovolskij and Piirainen’s argument that figurative language contributes to the cultural and conceptual understanding of identity and social experience (Archana Srinath, 2024).

Emotion also appears strongly throughout the soundtrack, particularly in songs reflecting interpersonal conflict and emotional vulnerability. In *What Is This Feeling?*, hatred and disgust are represented through bodily reactions such as rushing pulse, dizziness, and crawling flesh. Similarly, *I’m Not That Girl* conceptualizes longing and heartbreak through physical pain in expressions such as “the ache we feel” and “wishing only wounds the heart.” These metaphorical patterns demonstrate that emotions in *Wicked* are consistently embodied and physically experienced.

This finding aligns with Leech’s argument that figurative language intensifies emotional expression by transforming internal psychological experiences into vivid sensory imagery (Leech, 1981). By representing emotions through bodily sensation and physical movement, the soundtrack allows audiences to experience the characters’ emotions more directly and empathetically. This finding is similar to Ramadian and Hasan’s study, which revealed that metaphorical language frequently represents emotional experience through bodily sensation and physical imagery (Ramadian & Hasan, 2021). Another significant thematic meaning is liberation and resistance against social constraints. This theme appears most prominently in *Defying Gravity*, where metaphors of gravity, flight, upward movement, and limitless expansion symbolize autonomy and resistance against oppressive authority. Expressions such as “defying gravity,” “flying free,” and “bring me down” conceptualize liberation through physical and spatial movement. Upward orientation symbolizes empowerment and freedom, while downward movement represents oppression and social limitation.

The metaphorical representation of liberation in *Defying Gravity* reflects the broader ideological conflict within the narrative. Elphaba's resistance against institutional authority is not represented literally, but metaphorically through bodily ascent and transcendence. This supports Lakoff and Johnson's argument that spatial orientation frequently structures abstract concepts such as power, emotion, and social experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

Meanwhile, morality appears primarily in *No One Mourns The Wicked*. Expressions such as "goodness could subdue" and "they reap only what they've sown" conceptualize morality through force, personification, and agricultural consequence. These metaphors frame morality as socially constructed and ideologically reinforced rather than universally fixed. The soundtrack therefore challenges simplistic distinctions between good and evil by presenting wickedness as socially interpreted and emotionally complex.

The findings of this study are consistent with several previous studies discussing metaphorical language in narrative media. Hesy and Hasan found that metaphorical expressions in the movie *Coco* frequently conceptualize abstract experiences through concrete domains in order to strengthen emotional and narrative meaning (Hesy & Hasan, 2023). Similarly, the *Wicked* soundtrack transforms abstract themes such as identity, emotion, morality, and freedom into concrete conceptual structures that audiences can emotionally interpret.

The findings also support Aisyah's study, which demonstrates that ontological metaphors frequently conceptualize abstract concepts as entities and objects (Aisyah, 2022). Likewise, Lourita's study on metaphorical expressions in Disney animated films argues that metaphors contribute significantly to emotional depth and thematic construction in narrative storytelling (Lourita, 2020). These similarities indicate that metaphorical language in musical and cinematic narratives functions as an important cognitive tool for organizing emotional and thematic meaning.

Overall, the metaphorical patterns found in the *Wicked* soundtrack demonstrate that metaphors function not merely as decorative language but as conceptual structures that shape audience understanding of identity, emotional conflict, morality, and liberation throughout the musical narrative.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated conceptual metaphors in selected song lyrics from the *Wicked* (2024) soundtrack using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The findings revealed three types of conceptual metaphors: ontological, structural, and orientational metaphors. Among these categories, ontological metaphors were the most dominant, indicating that abstract concepts, emotions, and experiences are frequently represented as concrete entities in the lyrics. The analysis also identified four major themes: identity, morality, emotion, and liberation/resistance. Identity and emotion emerged as the most dominant themes, demonstrating that the soundtrack primarily explores self-discovery, personal experiences, and emotional struggles throughout the narrative.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that conceptual metaphors in *Wicked* (2024) function not only as figurative language but also as cognitive and narrative devices that help construct meaning and enhance audience engagement with the story. The study contributes to the field of cognitive linguistics by extending conceptual metaphor analysis to musical film soundtracks and highlights the potential of song lyrics as authentic materials for English language learning. However, this research is limited to selected songs and focuses

solely on lyrical analysis. Future studies are encouraged to examine visual metaphors, cinematic elements, multimodal representations, audience reception, or comparative metaphor analyses involving other musical films and contemporary soundtracks.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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