

## **THE USE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN EXPRESSING LOVE IN SONG'S LYRICS TITLED "BEST PART" BY DANIEL CAESAR FEATURING H.E.R.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research explores how conceptual metaphors are used to express love in the song's lyric titled "best part" by Daniel Caesar featuring *H.E.R.* the source and target domain that refers to a lover or describe a lover is the main goal of this research. This research uses descriptive qualitative approach. From the analysis, six conceptual metaphors were identified, each comparing a partner or significant other with essential or comforting elements, those are coffee, sunshine, a star, the best part of a movie, and Tylenol. These conceptual metaphors convey or expresses love by highlighting the singer's deep emotional connection, appreciations, and reliance to their partner. They emphasize how the partner or significant other brings meaning, joy and support to the singer's life. The findings also show that conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in simplifying abstract emotions, building more relatable and impactful lyrics for the listener.

**Keywords:** Conceptual metaphor, Lyrics, Love

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is one of the most important parts in human daily life, whether it is in the form of spoken or written. Language serves as a tool for expressing emotions, and we also emotionally reflect on the language that we and others employ. A combination of words that creates phrases, clauses and sentences to convey a message or meaning. Literature is a uniquely human activity, born of man's timeless desire to understand, express, and finally share experiences. (Pickering & Hoepfer, 1981) Sometimes it is difficult to express something, this is where metaphor often used by people in order to easily express what they want to express.

A metaphor is a means to explain an idea or concept by comparing it to another, more understandable idea or concept. Conceptual metaphor is a way of communicating or expressing a difficult concept with another concept that is more concrete. Conceptual metaphor works by creating parallels of the concept that want to understand with another idea that is familiar and concrete. Conceptual metaphors were separated into two domain, targets and sources. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008) Target domain is the concept being explained by another concept that's more concrete and familiar and source domain is the concept used to explain the target domain. For example the metaphor "Life is a Journey" the target domain in this metaphor is "Life" and the source domain is "a journey" in this metaphor we can explain the abstract concept life is full of good and bad time, learning

from experience, and in the end it is not the destination that is remembered but the process just like a journey.

They not only employed in literary or poetic work but also in everyday language, forming the way people communicate and comprehend ideas. The use of conceptual metaphors focuses on the flexibility and creative cognitive in human mind and language, as an individual and culture create new metaphors to explain experiences. In short, conceptual metaphors is a pathway that link the abstract and the concrete influencing the cognitive mind and linguistic.

Literary works are produced by individuals who wish to share their ideas with others using spoken and written language. (Amalia & Juanda, 2021) and a song is a literary work displayed with melodies and accompanied by instruments. (Fadhila & Juanda, 2023) Songs are produced by individuals who wish to share ideas or experiences to others that are displayed with melodies and instruments. One of the most common things that singers and songwriters express in their songs is Love.

Love according to The American Psychological Association (APA) is a complex emotion that involves tenderness, affection, a keen awareness of another's reactions, and finding joy in their presence. The person that gives the emotion of love can range from parents, siblings, someone with whom you have a relationship, and etc. Love is all different, love toward your parents is different from the love toward your siblings, love toward girlfriend/boyfriend or wife/husband is different and so on. Expressing your love toward others can be done in many ways from physically to verbally.

In lyrics, metaphor is a device used rhetorically to convey a message or emotion more creatively and uniquely (Nugraheny & Yuwita, 2023). Deeper meaning can be conveyed by using metaphors by comparing them to others, allowing song-writer to express and convey the song more effectively by using another concept that the listener can understand easier.

Studying conceptual metaphors in song lyric can help us understand the deeper meaning or emotion the song tries to convey. Metaphors can be used to explain experiences, feelings, and concepts. Investigating song's meaning through the employed conceptual metaphors help with connecting us to the lyrics deeper and to help a more significant emotional musical experience.

Daniel Caesar, born 5 April 1995 in Oshawa, Ontario, is a singer and songwriter. Following the independent success of two critically acclaimed EPs, *Praise Break* (2014) and *Pilgrim's Paradise* (2015), Caesar released his debut album *Freudian* in August 2017, which was also met with high praise. On June 28, 2019, Daniel followed up with his second studio album, *Case Study 01*, which achieved both commercial success and critical acclaim.

"Best part", one of the songs in his debut album "Freudian", featuring *H.E.R.*, a Filipino-American singer, songwriter and composer, according to Genius is a beautiful yet simple love song that expresses the deep appreciation the singer feels for their partner. This song is perfect for this research as this song is already about how valuable the significant other is to the singer.

Previous studies have examined metaphors associated with music and song lyrics, making a review of this research essential to avoid duplicating material and interpretations. For this study, the author reviewed several relevant works on metaphor to provide a comprehensive foundation for the analysis.

Selvia and Heriyati (2024), The study reveals that Justin Bieber's song "Holy" employs various conceptual metaphors, particularly abstract characteristics and orientation types, which convey hidden meanings and intentions through spatial and forceful imagery, enhancing the emotional depth of the lyrics.

Fadhila and Juanda (2023), identifying three target domains: Romantic Relationships, Mental Imagery or Memory, and Difficult Relationships. These metaphors enhance emotional expression and create vivid imagery within the song's lyrics.

Vinh (2024) analyses conceptual metaphors of "Happiness" in George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun," revealing how various source domains enhance the song's emotional depth and reflect cultural perceptions of happiness, illustrating the significance of metaphor in lyrical interpretation.

Based on all the previous research mentioned, their study focuses on the benefit of the metaphors to the songs by enhancing and creating a deeper meaning to the lyrics. The study focus is what differs it from earlier studies in this area. The types of metaphors and their meaning that the target domain refers to a significant other or lover. Only one song of Daniel Caesar's "best part" as different songs have different context that may change the metaphors explaining the significant others.

The problem in this study is to explore and analyze the use of metaphor in song lyrics that describes a significant other or a lover in the song "best part" by Daniel Caesar. This involves questions about how Daniel Caesar employs conceptual metaphors in his work, what meanings he intends to convey through these metaphors, and how the use of conceptual metaphors in the musical context influences the understanding and experience of the listeners.

This study aims to understand better how language and art intersect and how love toward a significant other or a lover is shown in the contexts of song lyrics. And also uncover the message that describes a love toward a lover and how conceptual metaphors communicate them.

That research implies that our comprehension of language, art and communication will be improved significantly. This research also gives new perception in how we see and understand music and how conceptual metaphors enhance the song for the listener. This also can be used by singer and songwriter that wish to use conceptual metaphor in describing or explaining their love toward a lover.

## **METHODS**

This study uses descriptive qualitative method as the data is presented in words and not in numerical data. Lodico et al. explained that qualitative has several characteristics. Those are: qualitative studies are carried out in natural settings, researcher pose broad questions with the purpose of exploring, interpreting, or understanding social contexts, and the data are presented in narrative form or using words rather than numbers (Ndruru, 2024). This method allows the researcher to explore the metaphors employed in the song.

Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) asserts that nonliteral language is fundamental to human comprehension and expression. (Vicente, 2020) singer and songwriter are able to express more abstract concept by utilizing metaphor in the lyrics of their songs. Metaphor allowed them to express abstract concept like love.

Love can be conceptualized as four factors that collectively could explain love in all its form: attraction, connection or resonance, trust, and respect. (Tobore, 2020) it

suggests that when these four factors present and balanced, love will thrive but if one of these factors are missing love tends to weaken or change other form of feeling.

The research object in this research is the song's lyric, the lyric is taken from the genius website. Song lyrics serve as a unique artistic expression and communication (Nugraheny & Yuwita, 2023). The lyric allows the researcher to analyse the conceptual metaphors employed within the song and displaying the data making it easier to described and explained the metaphors and how these metaphors express love.

The subject of this research is the song "best part" written and sing by Daniel Caesar and *H.E.R.* Ashton Dumar Norwill Simmonds or known as Daniel Caesar is a rhythm and blues singer-songwriter born in Canada, known by his soulful and gospel infused sound with thirty five million monthly listener in *Spotify*, his brand of rhythm and blues born from his faith and religion as he is a son of a pastor. Gabriella Sarmiento Wilson or also *H.E.R.* as her stage name, is also a rhythm and blues singer-songwriter known for her vocal range, enigmatic persona, and intimate ballads with eleven millions of monthly listener in *Spotify*.

This research began by choosing the correct song, a love song about a significant other or partner. "Best part" by Daniel Caesar featuring *H.E.R.* was chosen as the song. Best part is a simple, though beautiful love song about the intensity with which the singer values their partner (Genius, 2017.).

This song also one of the most popular song written and singed by Daniel Caesar that have been listened more than one billion time in just one platform, *Spotify*. The song popularity is important for researching as the song have gained significant attention and audiences, indicating the song cultural and social significance. its popularity also part of the reason the song is relevant to study.

By selecting popular song, this research makes sure that the analysis is based on the music or song that has wide cultural and social relevance, giving us a vision into how conceptual metaphors are employed in music that have a huge impact on society and to individuals. The lyric is carefully sourced from leading platforms including official music websites and streaming platforms ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the lyrical content.

With an existing lyric, this research conducted a thorough and systematic examination of the lyric composition of the song. This in-depth analysis aims to see the use of conceptual metaphors that expresses love towards a lover and how does the metaphors express love and what does the metaphors describe the lover in the song.

The data analysis process begins with identifying conceptual metaphors employed in the song's lyric. Conceptual metaphors are often conveyed through phrases or expression which creatively draw parallels between two different concepts. For example, the phrases "love is fire" or "love is a plant" is examples of conveying abstract or complex ideas by using conceptual metaphor.

This research isn't only studying conceptual metaphors employed in the song but conceptual metaphors that expresses love. The conceptual metaphors need to have the target directly or indirectly refers to a loved one or a significant other, in order to make sure the target is inferred towards a lover, a love song is chosen.

After all the metaphors is understood, the research is continued by interpreting their meaning and how it's an expression of love towards the partner. As the song used for this study is about expressing love then the context of the song is already predetermined that is a love themed song. Important to understand that the meaning of

these conceptual metaphors is varied by the thematic of the song, Daniel Caesar artistic intent, and the emotional resonance the song evokes to the listener.

From the meaning of the conceptual metaphors, the researcher will describe how they expresses love and how they enrich the lyrics. Last, conclusion of the studied metaphors can be made, how does conceptual metaphors in expressing love and how does the conceptual metaphors help the song.

## **RESULTS**

From the analysis done to the song lyric, there are 6 conceptual metaphors in the song that referring or conveying a message to a significant other or partner using another concept. These are the conceptual metaphor employed in the song “best part” by Daniel Caesar:

1. “You're the coffee that I need in the morning” (Line 8)  
Target: “you”  
Source: “coffee”
2. “You're my sunshine in the rain when it's pouring” (Line 9)  
Target: “You”  
Source: “sunshine”
3. “You know that I see it, I know you're a star” (Line 14)  
Target: “you”  
Source: “star”
4. “If life is a movie, know you're the best part, ooh” (Line 16)  
Target: “You”  
Source: “The best part”
5. “You're my water when I'm stuck in the desert” (Line 25)  
Target: “You”  
Source: “Water”
6. “You're the Tylenol I take when my head hurts” (Line 26)  
Target: “You”  
Source: “Tylenol”

## **DISCUSSION**

1. **“You're the coffee that I need in the morning”**

**Target: “you”**

**Source: “coffee”**

In this data the target is “you” referring to the singer partner or significant other, meanwhile the source is “coffee”, meaning the target “you” is being describe by the source “coffee”. The source in this data is being given the context by “that I need in the morning”.

This metaphor is implying that the partner of the singer “you” is like or is his coffee, a beverage that not only taken by people in order to “wake up” or to restore energy

because the high caffeine the beverage has in them but also love by people for their taste and uniqueness to the point of having their own community that enjoy coffee in all parts of the globe. In this particular metaphor is given context by the rest of the line in the lyric, “that I need in the morning” tell us the listener that the coffee is not just a drink that sometime the singer consumes but “I need” here make the source “coffee” to be more of a must and always be consumed to start the day explained by the phrase “in the morning”.

After learning every aspect of the source “coffee” is used in order to describe the target “you” it can be concluded that the singer wish to convey or express that his partner or significant other as someone that the singer enjoy not just because of how “you” restore his energy just like a coffee but also from all of type of “coffee” she is his favourite one, to the point he need it every single morning to start his day. A must to have every single morning that he could never get bored by, she is the one that he always loves and there is no day the he doesn’t love her.

In expressing love sometime just saying “I love you” isn’t enough, showing how you needed your partner in your life sometime is better than just telling your partner “I love you” as it shows that she is more than a person you go on dates but also part of your life that you want to and can’t live with. Expressing that your partner has become an important part of your life is an effective way to express your love, the need of your partner presence in your life. That’s why this conceptual metaphor not only to describe the partner or significant other but also expressing his love to her by showing her how important she is in his life.

This metaphor allowed listener to understand how important the singer partner or significant other is to him. By using the concrete concept of “coffee” the listener can understand how the singer abstract love towards his partner.

## **2. “You’re my sunshine in the rain when it’s pouring”**

**Target: “You”**

**Source: “sunshine”**

The target in this data is the same with the data above which is “you” and the source is “sunshine”. This mean “you” here is being describe again by using the concrete concept “sunshine. And also, context “in the rain when it’s pouring” is used to explain the source “sunshine”

This metaphor implying that the target “you” is like the source, “sunshine”. Sunshine is the sun’s light or direct rays that brightens or illuminate the day, gave warm to everything it touches and give many benefits to the body and mind. Sunshine also a sign of a good weather as the light is not blocked by any cloud or to say that the sky is clear. The rest of the lyrics “in the rain when it’s pouring” in this data gave context that even when it is raining and pouring the presence of “sunshine” change a bad day to a good day, gave warm when its supposed to be cold because of the rain, and bright when rain comes with dark cloud that darken the day.

From all aspect of “sunshine” analyses It can be concluded that the singer wishes to convey that “you” in this conceptual metaphor is his “sunshine” where she illuminates him with light changing his bad day into good day no matter how bad the day is. The source of warm when it’s supposed to be cold and just like sunshine, she has considerable impact toward his body and mind.

One of the ways to express love to your lover is to tell how much of an impact the person is, in your life by expressing gratitude and acknowledging their positive impact.

In a relationship, you want to be useful or have positives impact to your partner, this thought also bring an overthinking phase that you or your partner can think that they the only one benefiting in the relationship and only be a burden to their partner, by telling your partner that they are indeed have an positive impact eases their mind from overthinking and also strengthens the relationship by fostering appreciations, give a sense of connections and deepening connections.

This concept metaphor allows the listeners to understand how impactful the singer's partner is to him. By using the concrete concept of "sunshine" make the singer can convey how impactful his partner, an abstract concept with just using "sunshine" as substitute rather than to elaborate that could take a long time and not necessarily easier to comprehend by listener.

**3. "You know that I see it, I know you're a star"**

**Target: "You"**

**Source: "Star"**

The target in this conceptual metaphor is once again "you" and the source in this data is "star". This mean that "you" is being describe or explain using the source which is "star" with the context given in this line is "You know that I see it" it gives more information of the source.

This conceptual metaphor implying that the target "you" is his "star". Star is a beautiful luminous light, star can mean something that colored the dark knight with beautiful spark of light, making the black sky that have nothing to see into something beautiful that make our vision glued to it or it can mean that the star is the only light that paint when the sky turns dark. But star also can mean dream, or something that a person wishes to achieve. The rest of the line in the data "you know that I see it" give context that the singer is trying to reassure his partner that she is a star.

Given all the aspect of the source "star" mentioned, it can be concluded that the target "you" as in the singer partner or significant other is as beautiful as the "star", filling his life with stars making it more beautiful than ever before and that the singer trying to convey that the partner is part of his dream that he's trying to achieve. given the context "you know that I see it" the conceptual metaphor is likely to be used by the singer to reassure his partner.

Reassuring your partner is a way to express your love in the same time to show how much you value your partner. In showing how much, you value your partner give the feeling of being valued by the receiving end that strengthens the trust and communication between the couple. Giving reassurance to your partner allow them to love you without any pressure rather than trying to be the better and give more when they already perfect and have given all the love you need. With a clear mind from the both parties will make the relationship to get stronger with more love rather than hate toward each other.

This conceptual metaphor allow listener to understand that the singer also view her partner like a star and reassuring the partner that she always seen in the positive way and she know this but keep denying it. Using the source "star" allow the singer to convey to the listener of how he sees the partner.

**4. “If life is a movie, know you're the best part”**

**Target: “you”**

**Source: “Best part”**

The target in this conceptual metaphor is once more “you” and the source of this metaphor is “Best part”. This mean that the target “you” is being describe using the source “Best part”. This data also has context place in front of the conceptual metaphor “If life is a movie” that give more meaning or to specify the source.

This conceptual metaphor implies that the target “you” in here is the “best part” in his life. Best part can be understood in numerous way corresponds with what is the thing that the best parts refers to, for example the best part in food mean the tastiest part of the food, in song the best part mean part of the song that sticks out the most by the listener, and in movie the best part can mean section of the movie that amaze the watcher the most or the most remembered part of the movie. Given the context “if life is a movie” another conceptual metaphor then it can be understood that the best part in this metaphor is about the best part of movie that to refer to life.

After knowing what aspect of the source “best part” could mean in describing the target “you”, the singer partner. It can be concluded that the singer wishes to convey that if life is seen as a movie, a story recorded by camera, then she is the best part. The partner is part of the singer life and she is the part that the singer amaze and remember the most or to say that she is the best thing that ever happened in the singer life.

By telling that your lover is the best thing to happen in your life is an effective way in expressing your love, as it appreciates your lover as someone that is special not just one of the good things but the best and also it expresses love by showing how important the significant other is to his life. Telling your lover this not only convey love but also reinforces the significance they have in our live that will lead to a deeper connection between the couple. The feeling that you’re significant will allow you to love your partner more as you become certain that your partner view you not just the person they live with or to go on dates with, but part of their life.

This conceptual metaphor allows the listener to know that the singer thought that she is the best thing that could happen to his life. Without using a long line of words, the lyrics able to convey such abstract and meaningful message by using the metaphor.

**5. “You're my water when I'm stuck in the desert”**

**Target: “You”**

**Source: “water”**

The target in this conceptual metaphor is “you” and the source of the metaphor is “water”. Meaning that “you” here is being describe or explain by “water” and the context “when I’m stuck in the desert” give more meaning or to specify the source of the conceptual metaphor.

This conceptual metaphor implies that “you” here is like “water”. Water is something that every living being in this planet needed to consume in order to live another day, not just to survive but drinking water when thirsty give you the feeling of happiness as the thirsty is gone for some time. Not all water in this planet drinkable and good for the body for example sea water contain enough salt that it will only make you more dehydrated more than before you drink the sea water and dirty water will host many bad diseases that will only harm you. The context “when I’m stuck in the desert” that “you” here mean the perfect “water” not originated from a place that only make him thirstier



and clear from all diseases. The context “when I’m stuck in the desert” give context that “water” here always presence and relieve the thirstiness when it needed the most.

From the aspect of the source “water” that could explain or describe the target “you”, it can be concluded that “you” is the water that the singer drink and used for everything else that needed to live another day. The context “When I’m stuck in the desert” mean allow the source to explain the target “you” as someone that always there in time of need, just like water to someone that stuck in a desert,

This is also an expression of love by telling the significant other how important she is in the singer life and how the significant other saved the singer life just like “water” in a hot temperature place like the desert. The conceptual metaphor here explain that the singer is trying to convey that she is the reason he keeps on going in life even when everything is not working as the singer wanted it and going against the singer.

This metaphor allow listener to understand the concept of importance of a significant other by using a more comprehensible concept “water”.

#### **6. “You’re the Tylenol I take when my head hurts”**

**Target: “you”**

**Source: “Tylenol”**

The target in this conceptual metaphor is “you” and the source in this metaphor is “Tylenol”. In this data additional information is given for the context of the source, that information is “I take when my head hurts”.

Tylenol is a brand medication that functions as pain reliever and fever reducer. One of the functions of Tylenol to reduce headache. Tylenol, in this metaphor can represent medicine in general as Tylenol is the most commonly use across the United State and Europe. Medicine is created to cure specific illnesses that people have, and even to prevent complications of the symptom that the patients gave. The additional information “I take when my head hurts” give context to source that the medicine is the correct one in treating what the singer had, a headache.

After knowing what aspect could be taken from the source “Tylenol” in order to describe or explain the target “you”, it can be concluded that the target “you” or the singer partner as a cure that cure his headache or in this case his problems. The context “I take when my head hurts” show that the singer partner here prefers her more than other in order to solve his problems, to relieve the stress he has from all the problems or to prevent complications, his problems becoming larger, than other people in his life.

This also an expression of love by showing or telling how much does the significant other is needed in their life, by using the source “Tylenol” it expresses the singer’s need of the significant other in his life as she is a medicine that cures all of his problem. In expressing love using the same words or the same way over and over again can lead to misunderstanding that you are insincere, using metaphor to express love by showing how important they are in your life allow your significant other to understand how important and your view of them. But in this conceptual metaphor rather than something that the singer needs to survive or to start the day with, this one show that his partner can be a cure to every problems or stress that the singer had.

This metaphor allows the listener understand quickly the deeper meaning of the conceptual metaphor as the source uses “Tylenol” a medicine that mostly known people.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the lyrics of the song “best part” by Daniel Caesar featuring H.E.R. There are 6 conceptual metaphors that expresses love towards a significant other. Every conceptual metaphor employed expresses love mostly by telling how the singer need them in their life, how much of a positive impact does their partner have to them and reassuring their partner that they value them not just as a person they live with or to go on dates with but a part of their life. Conceptual metaphors have in song have helped to convey more deeper meaning or message but in the same time uses less words as song have limited of words in the lyrics in order have the wanted duration for the song. Conceptual metaphors also make it easier for listener to understand or relate to the song as it uses a more concrete concept that most people understand or experience.

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