

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five main sections. The first section presents the background of the study. The second section outlines the research questions, followed by the third section, which states the objectives. The fourth section defines the scope of the research, and final section describes the significance of this study in theoretical and practical terms.

1.1. Background

Language is the main tool for humans to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs in everyday life. In theory, Halliday (1978) argued that language plays a central role in human interaction, allowing individuals to channel emotions, to share experiences, and to convey abstract ideas. This theoretical view emphasizes that language does not only function as communication tool, but also as cognitive instrument that enables humans to construct meaning and interpret their surroundings. In practice, language can be used both in orally and in writing, depending on the context and purpose of communication. In other words, language helps individuals not only to communicate, but also to understand and shape the reality around them.

In various types of communication, figurative language is one of the language elements that brings richness and depth. It does not stop at literal meanings. Instead, it carries symbolic and aesthetic layers that invite deeper interpretation. Wales (2001) noted that figurative language serves to create emotional and artistic effects, enriching communication beyond its literal boundaries. Supporting this perspective, Leech (1969) explained that figurative language adds rhetorical strength by making language more vivid, expressive, and persuasive.

One of the main forms of figurative language that helps people understand a concept, especially in song lyrics, is metaphor. Metaphors allow the listeners of songs to cause abstract ideas to become relatable experiences by connecting them to something tangible or familiar in everyday life. Yob (2003) proposed that metaphors are used to explore and understand concepts that are difficult to grasp, as the

comparison that occurs in metaphors that can provide a clearer meaning. In other words, metaphors involve many aspects of life, such as the experience of people's daily life, and also beautifying the phrase. Besides, it functions to help humans understand the world as a fundamental thinking tool.

In linguistic studies, particularly in the cognitive approach, metaphor is considered not only a rhetorical device, but also a basic mechanism in the way humans understand the world. This is the focus of cognitive linguistics, a branch of science that examines the relationship between language and cognition. Furthermore, Evans and Green (2006) explained that language has function as an arbitrary communication system and a reflection of deeper cognitive processes. Therefore, cognitive linguistics emphasizes that language reflects the way humans understand and shape the reality around them.

One of the main theories in cognitive linguistics that addresses the role of metaphors in the way humans think is the metaphor theory that was developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. This theory explained that humans understand abstract concepts by linking them to more concrete experiences rooted in the physical world. From a cognitive perspective, metaphors consist of two main elements, known as the source domain and the target domain. The source domain refers to something concrete and familiar in everyday human experience, while the target domain is the abstract idea being explained. In other words, metaphors follow the pattern "A is B," where A represents the target domain and B represents the source domain (Kövecses, 2002).

For example, in the expression "Time is money," the concept of time (target domain) is explained through money (source domain), which suggests that time can be "saved," "invested," or "spent" like money. Another example is "Life is a journey," where life (target domain) is compared to a journey (source domain), which illustrates that life has a direction, a destination, obstacles, and path changes, just like someone who is traveling.

Metaphors, as a form of figurative speech, are widely used in various fields, including music. Song lyrics often employ metaphorical expressions to describe emotional experiences, interpersonal relationships, or social phenomena in a more

concrete and relatable way. Lakoff and Turner (1989) explained that metaphors in poetry and song lyrics convey aesthetic devices and also a part of the human cognitive system that shapes the way we understand the world. As a form of artistic expression, music has the ability to convey complex meanings through metaphors, such as allowing listeners to connect the lyrics with their own personal experiences.

The use of metaphor in music allows songwriters to communicate complex feelings and ideas in a way that is more intuitive and easily accepted by listeners. Music provides a unique medium for metaphorical expression, as the combination of lyrical content with musical elements creates an emotionally engaging experience that enhances the impact of figurative language (Brackett, 2000). The performative nature of music, through rhythm, melody, and vocal delivery, adds layers of meaning that can reinforce or even transform the metaphorical messages embedded in the lyrics (Frith, 1996). This aligns with Macmillan's (1995) observation that humans can express their emotions freely through song lyrics. Furthermore, the repetitive structure inherent in musical compositions allows metaphorical concepts to be encountered multiple times through verses, choruses, and refrains, potentially deepening their resonance with listeners. As music genres and cultural trends evolve, patterns of metaphor usage also change, reflecting the social values and collective experiences of a generation. Amelia (2018) also argued that language, including figurative language such as metaphor, continues to evolve over time through its usage.

In contrast to metaphor theory, another concept that can be used to analyze meaning in language is image schema theory, as described by Saeed (2016). Image schema refers to basic mental patterns formed through human sensorimotor experience, such as movement, spatial orientation, and interaction with the environment. According to Saeed (2016), these patterns help people understand abstract ideas by linking them to familiar structures in everyday life. For example, the container schema describes concepts as bounded spaces that can be entered or exited, as in the phrase "stuck in memories." Meanwhile, the path schema interprets life or relationships as a journey, as seen in the lyric "I'm so glad our paths didn't cross," suggesting that human connections can be viewed as paths with meeting and parting

points. Thus, image schema theory allows for a deeper understanding of how meaning is shaped through bodily and cognitive experiences.

These theoretical perspectives on metaphor and image schema can be directly observed in various forms of artistic expression, especially contemporary music, such as R&B, indie pop, or alternative genres. As one of the most accessible and emotionally charged forms of language, song lyrics often serve as a platform for translating abstract experiences into relatable imagery. Among the artists who consistently apply these linguistic elements in her work is NIKI (born Nicole Zefanya), an Indonesian singer-songwriter who has gained international recognition through the 88rising music label.

NIKI's work has resonated particularly strongly with millennial and Gen Z audiences, who currently dominate Spotify's listening demographics. With over 15 million monthly listeners and hit songs such as "Lowkey" (665 million streams), "Every Summertime" (550 million streams), and "Backburner" (376 million streams), her music has achieved remarkable global reach. What makes NIKI's lyrics particularly compelling for linguistic analysis is not merely their use of figurative language as stylistic embellishment, but rather how she systematically employs cultural references, real-life experiences, and familiar imagery to construct deeper emotional meanings. A striking example is her song "Backburner," which has remained popular for three years since its release. At first glance, the title raises questions about why a love song would reference a stove burner. However, NIKI cleverly maps the concept of a backburner, something kept warm but secondary in priority, onto a romantic relationship where she serves merely as a backup option when her partner needs someone. This demonstrates how her metaphorical language emerges from concrete, everyday objects and experiences that listeners can immediately recognize and connect with emotionally.

This approach to metaphorical expression aligns closely with cognitive linguistic theory, which posits that abstract concepts are systematically understood through concrete, bodily experiences. NIKI's journey from uploading YouTube covers at age 8 to performing at prestigious venues like Coachella (2022) and appearing on Jimmy Kimmel Live (2024) has been marked by consistent evolution in her songwriting

craft. She has become the first Indonesian artist to reach the Top 20 of the Global Spotify Chart, with her songs featured in international films and series, including Marvel's "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" and Disney's "Raya and the Last Dragon."

Her discography, spanning albums such as "Zephyr" (2018), "MOONCHILD" (2020), "Nicole" (2022), and most recently "Buzz" (2024), showcases her development as a lyricist who bridges Eastern and Western musical sensibilities while maintaining her distinctive voice. Her latest album, "Buzz" (2024), presents a narrative of emotional growth, heartbreak, love, and self-discovery, with lyrics that explore what NIKI herself describes as "radical acceptance" of life's uncertainties. The poetic nature of her lyrics, combined with themes that resonate deeply with contemporary audiences, makes this album a compelling subject for linguistic analysis.

While several previous studies have examined metaphorical expressions and image schemas in song lyrics, most of them focused on analyzing selected individual songs without exploring broader conceptual patterns across an entire album. Moreover, studies that combine both metaphor theory and image schema within a unified analytical framework, particularly in the context of contemporary popular music with complex emotional narratives, are still scarce. Until now, there has been no specific linguistic research that analyzes NIKI's Buzz album from this perspective. Therefore, this research addresses that gap by identifying metaphors through their source and target domains following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) framework, classifying these metaphors into image schema categories and subcategories based on Croft and Cruse's (2004) theory, and examining how the interaction between metaphors and image schemas constructs meaning throughout the album.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background described earlier, three research questions were formulated for this study as follows:

1. What are the sources and target domains used in metaphors found in the song lyrics of NIKI's *Buzz* album?
2. What are the image schemas found in the song lyrics of NIKI *Buzz's* album?

3. How do the meanings constructed from metaphors and image schemas through the song lyrics of NIKI's *Buzz* album?

1.3. Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, this study aimed to:

1. To explain the sources and target domains used in the metaphors found in the lyrics of NIKI's *Buzz* album.
2. To identify the image schemas found in the lyrics of NIKI's *Buzz* album.
3. To analyze the way meanings are constructed from metaphors and image schemas through the song lyrics of NIKI's *Buzz* album?

1.4. Scope of the Research

This research was limited to the analysis of metaphor and image schema found in the lyrics of the *Buzz* album by NIKI, released in 2024. The study focused on identifying the source and target domains present in the metaphors, as well as the types of image schemas that support meaning construction in the lyrics. The analysis was grounded in the cognitive linguistic framework, particularly drawing from the theories of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Croft and Cruse (2004).

The scope of this research did not include musical composition, production techniques, or visual elements such as album art or music videos. Instead, it emphasized the lyrical content as linguistic data, treating the lyrics as a form of metaphor and image schema that reflect the artist's emotional themes and conceptual patterns. The study analyzed the selected lyrics from the album that contain metaphorical and schema-based structures related to themes such as love, grief, identity, and self-reflection.

By narrowing the focus on the linguistic construction of meaning within the *Buzz* album, this study aimed at explains explore how metaphor and embodied cognition work together in the articulation of metaphor and image schema that construct meaning in popular music.

1.5. Significance of the Research

This research was expected to offer insights into the ways metaphor and image schema operate in song lyrics to represent emotional experiences and express

complex meanings. By examining NIKI's *Buzz* album through a cognitive linguistic perspective, the research highlighted how language in music serves as a form of artistic expression and a channel for communicating both personal and universal themes.

Theoretically, this research was expected to contribute to the field of cognitive linguistics by providing an in-depth analysis of how metaphor and image schema function in the context of contemporary song lyrics. Specifically, it offered a novel integration of both theoretical frameworks within a single analytical study, demonstrating their complementary roles in meaning construction. The research also aimed to enrich the existing literature by applying cognitive linguistic tools to analyze contemporary popular music that demonstrates sophisticated metaphorical complexity. This analytical approach added valuable insights into how universal cognitive patterns manifest in emotionally rich musical discourse that explores themes of personal growth, relationships, and identity.

Practically, the findings of this study may serve as a reference for students, educators, and researchers who are interested in the intersection between language, emotion, and music. The analytical framework developed in this research can be applied to similar studies of other contemporary artists or musical genres. Additionally, the study may provide insights for songwriters and music producers who seek to understand how linguistic choices contribute to emotional resonance and audience connection. It may also inspire future studies in related areas, such as cognitive semantics, popular discourse analysis, or language in media and performance, thereby expanding the scope of cognitive linguistic research into contemporary artistic expression.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contained several topics, such as a preview of related studies, the theoretical approach, the conceptual framework, and operational definitions.

2.1 Previous Studies

Previous studies have extensively explored the application of conceptual metaphor theory in song lyrics analysis, demonstrating the cognitive significance of figurative language in musical discourse. Research in this domain has predominantly followed Lakoff and Johnson's framework (1980) to examine how abstract concepts are conceptualized through concrete, embodied experiences. However, the scope, methodology, and theoretical integration of these studies vary considerably, revealing both contributions and limitations that inform the present research.

Several recent studies have examined conceptual metaphors in song lyrics, though with varying scopes and levels of abstraction. Istiqomah (2021) made a comprehensive attempt in her study of Kahitna's songs with the title "The Conceptual Metaphors in Kahitna Song Lyrics", identifying nine conceptual metaphors alongside the use of image schemas such as containment, path, and force. By combining metaphor theory with image schema analysis, this study demonstrated how love and relationships are conceptualized in Indonesian pop music. Nevertheless, its scope was limited to three selected songs rather than a complete album, which left questions about the consistency of metaphorical systems across larger artistic works.

Nugraheny & Yuwita (2023) in "Conceptual Metaphor in SZA's song lyrics: A study of semantics" analyzed selected tracks from SZA's album *SOS* and uncovered patterns of metaphorical construction in themes of love and identity. However, the mappings were kept at a lexical level, such as "you = 9 to 5" or "I = weekend", rather than abstracted into broader conceptual metaphors. In addition, the study did not integrate perspectives from embodied cognition such as image schema theory.

Other research in the same year focused specifically on source and target domain mapping. In their article entitled *The Conceptual Metaphor Analysis in the*

Song Lyric "Is You" by Jay Chang (2020), Fadhila and Juanda (2023) examined five selected lines of the song using Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory. They identified three main target domains: romantic relationships, mental imagery or memory, and difficult relationships. Their findings demonstrated how concrete images such as "night sky," "sunshine," "melt," and "headache" were mapped onto abstract emotional experiences like love, longing, emotional transformation, and relational distress. While the study clearly illustrated how metaphor helps express complex emotions in song lyrics, it concentrated primarily on classifying source and target domains and did not extend the analysis into broader generalizations of higher-level conceptual metaphors or incorporate additional cognitive frameworks such as image schemas.

A similar classificatory approach was taken by Saputri (2023) in her analysis, "Conceptual Metaphors in Taylor Swift Lyric Song All Too Well (10 Minutes Version)." The study identified sixteen metaphors distributed across structural, ontological, and orientational categories. Contrary to the focus on structural forms, Saputri found a prevalence of ontological metaphors as the primary vehicle for emotional articulation. While the study maps specific linguistic expressions to their conceptual domains, such as TIME IS A JOURNEY, the analysis focuses heavily on the individual mapping of lyrics rather than an integrated synthesis of the overarching narrative's conceptual system.

More recently, Nasution et al. (2024) analyzed Lonestar's 'I'm Already There' by classifying metaphors into structural, ontological, and orientational types following Lakoff and Johnson's framework. Their study identified seven metaphorical expressions, with structural and ontological metaphors appearing in a balanced proportion as the dominant types. Unlike many previous studies that focus on a single dominant category, this research explicitly maps the linguistic expressions to their conceptual domains, such as by projecting concrete concepts like 'sunshine' or 'shadow' onto the abstract target domain of the father's presence. However, the analysis primarily focuses on individual metaphorical instances rather than synthesizing them into a broader, unified conceptual system of the song's narrative.

Regarding the similarities and the differences, three main limitations can be identified in previous research. First, most studies have focused on individual songs, preventing a systematic understanding of metaphorical patterns at the album level. Second, even when album-based studies have been attempted, the analyses often remained at a lexical or descriptive level without moving toward abstract conceptual metaphor frameworks. Third, the integration of conceptual metaphor theory with image schema theory has rarely been carried out, even though both frameworks are complementary in explaining how embodied cognition shapes abstract meaning. These gaps justify the present research, which analyzes an entire English-language album by NIKI, identifies conceptual metaphors alongside their sub-categories, and incorporates image schema theory to provide a fuller cognitive account of how love and life are represented in contemporary popular music.

This study addresses the identified gaps by analyzing NIKI's complete *Buzz* album through an integrated cognitive linguistic framework that combines conceptual metaphor theory with image schema analysis. By examining how sophisticated metaphorical language constructs meaning in contemporary English-language lyrics, this research provides deeper insight into the embodied dimensions of musical meaning-making and contributes to understanding cognitive patterns in emotionally complex popular music. In doing so, it extends the scope and theoretical sophistication of previous studies by moving beyond single-song analysis and offering a systematic account of metaphorical and schematic systems across a cohesive artistic narrative.

2.2 Theoretical Background

2.2.1 Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive linguistics is a modern approach to studying language that views language as an integral part of how the human mind works. Unlike generative grammar, which assumes that language has a specific module in the brain, cognitive linguistics argues that language is not a separate mental ability. Instead, language arises from general thought processes and is closely related to how we see, remember, categorize, and understand things.

Furthermore, there are three basic principles that form the foundation of cognitive linguistics. First, language is conceptual and not autonomous. This means that linguistic knowledge, which includes meaning and grammar, reflects broader cognitive abilities. Second, as Langacker (1987) explains, grammar functions as a tool for constructing meaning and organizing human experience, such as when humans choose the words “crawl” or “walk” to describe different movements. Lastly, linguistic knowledge emerges from the use of language. This means that language patterns are not innate but are learned and shaped through communicative experience, such as how children gradually understand when to use formal and casual sentences.

In cognitive linguistics, conceptual structure refers to the way the human brain organizes meaning into interconnected networks, called frames or domains. According to Fillmore (1982), to understand the meaning of a word completely, we need to know the entire conceptual context in which the word plays a role. As an illustration, when we hear the word “school,” our minds do not only envision a building but also activate a framework encompassing teachers, students, books, exams, and the learning process. Another example is how the word “hospital” immediately evokes a domain including doctors, nurses, patients, medications, and healing activities.

The most significant application of cognitive linguistic principles is seen in the analysis of metaphors and imagery schemes, which reveal the complexity of how the human mind processes meaning. In this framework, metaphors are not viewed as mere linguistic ornaments, but as fundamental cognitive mechanisms that enable the understanding of abstract concepts through concrete experiences. Expressions such as “time is money” demonstrate how abstract temporal concepts are understood through the more familiar domain of economics. As mentioned by Black (1962), the elements in a metaphor complement each other over time, so that a metaphor that initially feels foreign becomes reasonable and internalized in the cognitive system. This process connects two different domains and creates a flexible semantic zone.

Meanwhile, image schemas serve as the structural foundation for more complex conceptual understanding. Recurring patterns from physical bodily experiences such as “up-down,” “in-out,” or “balanced-unbalanced” form the cognitive basis for conceptualizing abstract phenomena such as social hierarchy (promotion),

emotional dimensions (touching the heart), or principles of justice (legal balance). This phenomenon aligns with Johnson's (1987) embodied cognition theory, which argues that abstract reasoning emerges from bodily experience, and Lakoff's (1987) theory of categorization, which states that categories in language are structured by prototypes and radial networks rather than classical definitions with fixed boundaries. Overall, cognitive linguistics demonstrates that language, cognition, and physical experience are intertwined in an integrated system, where metaphors and image schemas function as bridges connecting concrete and abstract domains, while also creating categorical flexibility that allows for the adaptation of meaning according to the context of use.

2.2.2 Conceptual Metaphor

Definition

A conceptual metaphor is a way of understanding one conceptual domain (abstract) in terms of another (more concrete). Proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) in *Metaphors We Live By*, this concept emphasizes that metaphors are not just linguistic expressions but are part of our conceptual system, which constructs how we think, reason, and act.

Structure

In this mapping process, two key domains are identified:

- Source domain: the concrete or familiar concept (e.g., journey)
- Target domain: the abstract concept we try to understand (e.g., life).
- Mapping: The mental link connecting the two domains

Example

A well-known example of a conceptual metaphor is TIME IS MONEY

- Source domain: Money
- Target domain: Time
- Mappings:
 - Spending money → Spending time
 - Saving money → Saving time
 - Wasting money → Wasting time

- Investing money → Investing time
- Linguistic expressions:
 - “You’re wasting my time.”
 - “She invested a lot of time in this project.”
 - “He doesn’t have time to spare.”
 - “I’m running out of time.”

These everyday expressions reflect the underlying conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, which shows how people conceptualize *time* (an abstract concept) through *money* (a concrete, measurable resource). This mapping demonstrates how everyday linguistic expressions are grounded in systematic cognitive structures, as emphasized by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). To illustrate how the two domains interact through systematic correspondence, the following figure presents the mapping of the metaphor TIME IS MONEY.

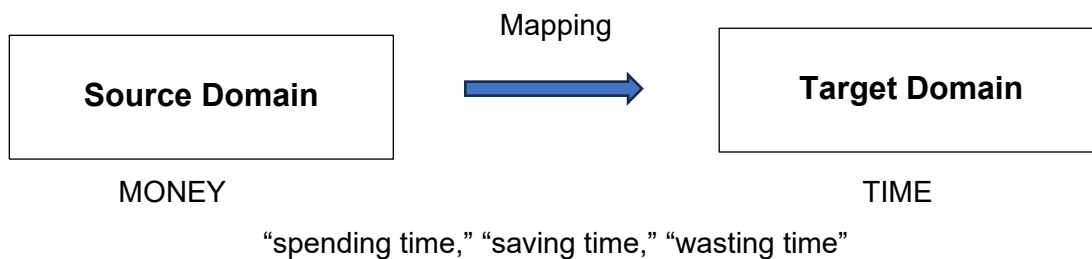


Figure 2.1 Mapping of the Metaphor “TIME IS MONEY”

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that metaphorical mappings are systematic. When one aspect of a source domain is projected onto a target domain, other related elements tend to follow consistently. This systematicity allows metaphors to be illustrated through diagrams or tables that show how elements correspond across domains. Kövecses (2002) further elaborates that conceptual metaphors involve structured correspondences between two domains. For instance, in the metaphor *LOVE IS A JOURNEY*, elements from the source domain “journey” are mapped onto the target domain “love,” such as lovers being travelers, the relationship as a vehicle, and shared goals as the journey’s destination. These correspondences are outlined in the table below, adapted from Kövecses (2002, pp. 6–7):

Table 2.1 Correspondences or Mapping of LOVE IS A JOURNEY

Source : JOURNEY	Target: LOVE
The travelers	The lovers
The vehicle	The love relationship itself
The journey	The events or experiences in the relationship
The distance covered	The progress made in the relationship
The obstacles encountered	The difficulties experienced
Decisions about which way to go	The choices or decisions in the relationship
The destination of the journey	The shared goal(s) of the relationship

This table illustrates how key elements from the domain of travel are projected onto the domain of romantic love. Thus, people talk about relationships using expressions such as *“we are at a crossroads,” “the relationship is going nowhere,”* or *“we’ve come a long way together.”* These metaphorical expressions are not decorative but reflect a deeper cognitive structure that shapes how we understand love as a shared journey toward a destination. As Kövecses (2002) explains, such metaphorical mappings reveal that metaphor is a powerful conceptual device that helps us make sense of abstract human experiences.

2.2.3 Image Schema

Definition

An image schema is a recurring, embodied mental pattern that arises from our physical and perceptual experiences in the world. They are pre-conceptual structures that are building blocks of our thought, derived from bodily experience and used to structure abstract reasoning. The term image schema was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and further formalized by Johnson (1987) in *The Body in the Mind*. According to Johnson, image schemas are dynamic patterns grounded in bodily experience that help structure conceptual understanding.

Croft and Cruse (2004) identify seven major categories of image schemas, each with distinct sub-types, that are crucial for comprehending how meaning is constructed in language, particularly in metaphorical expressions.

Categories

Space Schema

The Space Schema represents one of the most fundamental cognitive structures, grounded in human bodily orientation and spatial awareness, which are later extended metaphorically to abstract ideas (Croft & Cruse, 2004). This schema encompasses various orientational patterns that structure how humans conceptualize abstract experiences through spatial relationships. Within this schema, Croft and Cruse (2004) identify several key sub-types:

- **Up-Down.** This sub-schema reflects vertical orientation, deeply rooted in our experience of gravity. "Up" is consistently associated with positive states, progress, improvement, or increased control (e.g., "feeling up," "rising in love," "spirits lifted"). Conversely, "Down" corresponds to negative emotions, decline, depression, or lack of control (e.g., "feeling down," "falling apart," "sinking into despair"). This binary opposition allows for a straightforward metaphorical mapping of verticality onto emotional or existential states.
- **Front-Back.** Derived from our body's inherent asymmetry and directionality, this sub-schema organizes space relative to an observer's frontal and rear orientation. "Front" is typically associated with the future, direct engagement, or forward progression (e.g., "moving forward," "facing challenges," "the path ahead"). In contrast, "Back" relates to the past, avoidance, or being left behind (e.g., "looking back," "turning one's back," "leaving something behind"). This provides a fundamental framework for temporal and relational conceptualizations.
- **Left-Right.** This sub-schema refers to the lateral orientation relative to the body's midline. While less universally associated with inherent value than Up-Down, it is crucial for spatial differentiation and can metaphorically represent choices, opposing sides, or different paths (e.g., "a crossroads with options left

and right," "swinging from left to right on an issue"). It helps delineate distinct, often contrasting, spaces or options.

- **Near-Far.** This sub-schema conceptualizes proximity or distance, both physically and abstractly. "Near" represents intimacy, connection, accessibility, or immediate relevance (e.g., "we are close," "near to my heart," "the day is near"). Conversely, "Far" indicates emotional distance, disconnection, difficulty, or abstractness (e.g., "growing apart," "far from reach," "distant memories"). It highlights degrees of closeness or separation in various domains.
- **Center-Periphery.** This sub-schema focuses on the distinction between a central, often crucial or core, element and its surrounding, less essential, or less intense periphery. It helps delineate areas of focus, importance, or influence (e.g., "at the heart of the matter," "on the fringes of society," "peripheral thoughts that fade away"). This provides a structure for understanding relative importance and inclusion/exclusion.
- **Contact.** This sub-schema involves the experience of direct physical or conceptual touch and connection between two entities. It can signify immediate interaction, a bond, or the cessation of distance (e.g., "in contact with reality," "losing contact with loved ones," "a gentle touch that connects us"). This fundamental experience of connection underpins many relational metaphors.

Container Schema

The Container Schema conceptualizes bounded spaces and the fundamental distinction between "inside" and "outside" (Johnson, 1987; Croft & Cruse, 2004). This schema is extensively used in language to understand abstract concepts such as emotions, mental states, and psychological experiences as enclosed or bounded entities. It defines a conceptual boundary that separates an internal region from an external one, and its various aspects include:

- **Containment.** This refers to the general concept of something being held or enclosed within a boundary. It frames abstract notions like emotions or thoughts as spaces that can contain or be entered (e.g., "trapped in sadness,"

"lost in memories," "swallowed by despair"). This provides a basic understanding of being encompassed or limited.

- In-Out. This sub-schema emphasizes movement across boundaries, signifying entry into or exit from a defined space or state. It describes emotional or psychological transitions (e.g., "coming out of depression," "falling into love," "bursting with joy," "stepping out of your comfort zone"). It highlights dynamic shifts between states
- Surface. This sub-schema refers to the outer layer or visible boundary of the container. Metaphorically, it can represent superficial aspects, external appearances, or the point of interaction (e.g., "on the surface, everything is fine," "scratching the surface of the problem," "a polished exterior").
- Full-Empty. This sub-schema describes the state of the container's interior regarding its capacity. It is frequently applied metaphorically to emotional states, mental capacity, or internal resources (e.g., "my heart is full," "feeling empty inside," "a mind full of ideas," "running on empty").
- Content. This sub-schema refers directly to the substance or what is held within the container. In abstract terms, this can be thoughts, feelings, or experiences that occupy a mental or emotional "space" (e.g., "the content of her dreams," "unpacking the contents of my mind," "carrying the emotional content").

Scale Schema

The scale schema, also referred to as the source-path-goal schema, structures experiences as movement from an origin, through a trajectory, toward a destination (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This schema provides a natural narrative framework for conceptualizing life events, relationships, and personal development as journeys with clear starting points, processes, and objectives.

Expressions such as "moving forward in life," "taking the right path," or "reaching a crossroads" demonstrate how abstract life experiences are understood through concrete journey metaphors. In the context of song lyrics, this schema often appears in narratives about personal growth, relationship progression, and life transitions, providing listeners with familiar structural patterns to understand complex emotional journeys.

Force Schema

The Force Schema reflects bodily interactions involving pressure, movement, and resistance, encompassing various dynamics of power and influence (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Johnson, 1987). This category is particularly relevant for analyzing emotional expression in music, as it captures the physical dimensions of psychological experiences and internal struggles. Derived from our constant interaction with physical forces, its various sub-types delineate different ways in which forces operate:

- **Balance.** This sub-schema describes a state of equilibrium where opposing forces are equally distributed, leading to stability. Metaphorically, it represents emotional or relational stability, fairness, or harmony (e.g., "finding balance in life," "maintaining equilibrium in a relationship," "a balanced argument"). It signifies a state of resolution or controlled tension between opposing elements.
- **Counterforce.** This sub-schema refers to a force exerted in direct opposition to another, often with the intention of resisting, neutralizing, or overcoming the initial force. It highlights a struggle or conflict where one force acts against another (e.g., "fighting against the current," "resisting temptation," "a counter-argument"). This sub-type captures the dynamic of opposition and struggle.
- **Compulsion.** This sub-schema signifies an experienced force that pushes or drives an entity in a particular direction, often against its will or inclination. It implies an irresistible internal drive or external pressure (e.g., "compelled to leave," "driven by passion," "pulled into a relationship," "an urge to confess"). It illustrates the feeling of being pushed or drawn by an external or internal power.
- **Restraint.** This sub-schema describes a force that holds back, suppresses, or controls movement, action, or expression. It implies a limitation or inhibition, either internal or external (e.g., "holding back feelings," "bound by duty," "under strict restraint," "self-control"). This sub-type conceptualizes the act of preventing or limiting freedom of action or expression.
- **Enablement.** This sub-schema represents a force that provides the necessary conditions or assistance for an action or event to occur. It implies a facilitative power that allows something to happen (e.g., "supported by friends," "finding

strength to continue," "love enables me to grow"). It highlights the empowering aspect of a force.

- **Blockage.** This sub-schema refers to a force that physically or conceptually prevents movement or action along a path. It implies an obstacle, resistance, or an impediment that hinders progress (e.g., "hitting a wall," "ideas blocked," "feeling stuck," "an impenetrable barrier"). This sub-type illustrates the experience of being hindered or stopped.
- **Diversion.** This sub-schema signifies a force that redirects an entity from its original path or intention. It implies a change in course or focus due to an external influence or internal shift (e.g., "distracted by worries," "life took a different turn," "diverted from my goals"). This sub-type captures the idea of being sidetracked or led astray.
- **Attraction.** This sub-schema describes a force that draws two or more entities towards each other, whether physically or conceptually. It implies a pull, allure, or magnetic quality that brings things together (e.g., "an undeniable attraction," "drawn to the light," "the magnetism between us"). This sub-type represents the compelling power of drawing elements closer.

Unity/Multiplicity Schema

The Unity/Multiplicity Schema stems from our fundamental experience of perceiving discrete entities as forming a coherent whole, or conversely, of a whole being composed of distinct parts (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Johnson, 1987). It addresses how we conceptualize the relationship between "one" and "many," underpinning our understanding of groups, relationships, and the cohesive sense of self. This schema highlights the various ways entities combine or separate:

- **Merging.** This sub-schema describes the process by which multiple distinct entities combine or blend together to form a single, integrated whole. It implies a loss of individual distinction in favor of a unified entity (e.g., "two hearts merging into one," "the merging of different cultures," "our thoughts merged").
- **Collection.** This sub-schema refers to a group or aggregate of individual entities that are brought together, often without losing their individual identities entirely. It emphasizes the act of gathering separate items into a cohesive set

(e.g., "a collection of memories," "a crowd of people," "gathering my scattered thoughts").

- Splitting. This sub-schema signifies the process by which a coherent whole divides or breaks apart into multiple distinct parts or entities. It implies a fragmentation or separation from a unified state (e.g., "a relationship splitting apart," "dividing responsibilities," "a fractured mind").
- Iteration. This sub-schema refers to the repetition of a single action, event, or element, which creates a sense of continuity or accumulation. It highlights the recurrence of something, often over time (e.g., "repeating the same mistakes," "a cycle of pain that iterates," "thoughts looping endlessly").
- Part-Whole. This sub-schema captures the fundamental relationship between components and the larger entity they constitute. It focuses on how individual elements contribute to or form a greater structure (e.g., "a part of me still loves you," "every piece fits into the whole story," "an integral part of my identity").
- Mass-Count. This sub-schema differentiates between entities conceived as an undifferentiated mass (non-countable, like "water" or "happiness") and those conceptualized as discrete, countable units (like "cups of water" or "moments of happiness"). This distinction influences how we quantify and perceive abstract concepts (e.g., "so much love," "a few tears," "an abundance of joy").
- Link. This sub-schema refers to a connection or relationship between two or more entities, signifying a bond, a causal chain, or a line of communication. It represents what joins distinct elements together (e.g., "an unbreakable bond between us," "a chain of events," "linking past and present").

Identity Schema

The Identity Schema is a complex image schema that arises from our embodied experience of recognizing and distinguishing entities, understanding sameness and difference over time and across various contexts (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Johnson, 1987). It is crucial for conceptualizing self-recognition, personal consistency, and the unique characteristics that define an individual or entity. This schema helps us understand what makes something that thing and not another, especially in the face of change.

- **Matching.** This sub-schema refers to the process of comparing two or more entities to determine their similarity, equivalence, or fitness. It highlights the recognition of sameness or congruence between different items or ideas (e.g., "we were a perfect match," "the pieces matched perfectly," "his actions didn't match his words").
- **Superimposition.** This sub-schema involves the conceptual act of placing one image, idea, or concept directly over another to observe their similarities, differences, or the emergence of a new composite. It suggests an overlay of perceptions or meanings (e.g., "superimposing my past fears onto the present," "her dreams superimposed with reality," "seeing one image over another").

Existence Schema

The Existence Schema is fundamental to our most basic understanding of what is real and present versus what is absent or nonexistent (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Johnson, 1987). It stems from our embodied experience of presence and absence, emergence and disappearance. This schema provides the underlying cognitive framework for conceptualizing being, non-being, presence, and absence in both the physical and abstract realms.

- **Removal.** This sub-schema describes the process of taking away, eliminating, or causing something to cease to exist or be present from a given space or state. It highlights the act of making something absent (e.g., "removed from my life," "erasing the pain," "taking away all hope").
- **Bounded Space.** While related to the Container Schema, in the context of Existence, "Bounded Space" here specifically refers to the defined area or context within which something exists or does not exist. It delineates the boundaries of being or reality for a particular entity (e.g., "existing only within these four walls," "my world is bounded by your presence," "life within its set boundaries").
- **Cycle.** This sub-schema refers to the concept of events or conditions repeating in a continuous circular pattern, implying recurrent existence, appearance, and disappearance. It suggests a never-ending loop of being and non-being or

transformation (e.g., "the cycle of life and death," "a never-ending cycle of heartbreak," "seasons cycling through").

- **Object.** This sub-schema conceptualizes the existence of a distinct, unified entity that can be perceived, interacted with, or conceived as a coherent unit. It emphasizes the tangibility or conceptual reality of something (e.g., "an object of desire," "a tangible memory," "seeing the problem as a clear object").
- **Process.** This sub-schema conceptualizes existence as a dynamic, ongoing series of changes, actions, or developments, rather than a static state. It highlights the continuous nature of being or becoming (e.g., "the process of healing," "life is an ongoing process," "growing through the process").

Table 2. 2 Examples of Common Image Schemas

Image Schema	Based on	Example in Language
CONTAINER	Our experience of inside/outside	"He's in trouble." / "She's out of danger."
SCALE	Moving from one place to another	"Moving from one place to another." / "She's on the road to success."
FORCE	Physical equilibrium	"Try to keep your balance." / "He's mentally stable."

These image schemas originate from the body's sensory and motor experiences, which shape how people understand abstract ideas. For example, the scale schema, based on physical movement from a starting point to a destination, provides the cognitive foundation for conceptual metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

2.2.4 The Connection Between Conceptual and Image Schema

Image schemas work in close conjunction with conceptual metaphors to create coherent patterns of meaning. While metaphors establish correspondences between source and target domains, image schemas provide the underlying structural framework that makes these mappings possible.

- Image schemas are basic cognitive structures that shape how we perceive and experience the world.
- Conceptual metaphors build on these schemas to form abstract concepts.

For instance, LIFE IS A JOURNEY is structured by the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL (scale schema) image schema, which comes from our bodily experience of moving through space toward a destination. In addition, image schemas provide the embodied foundation, and conceptual metaphors use that foundation to build abstract concepts that can be seen in the visual representation below.

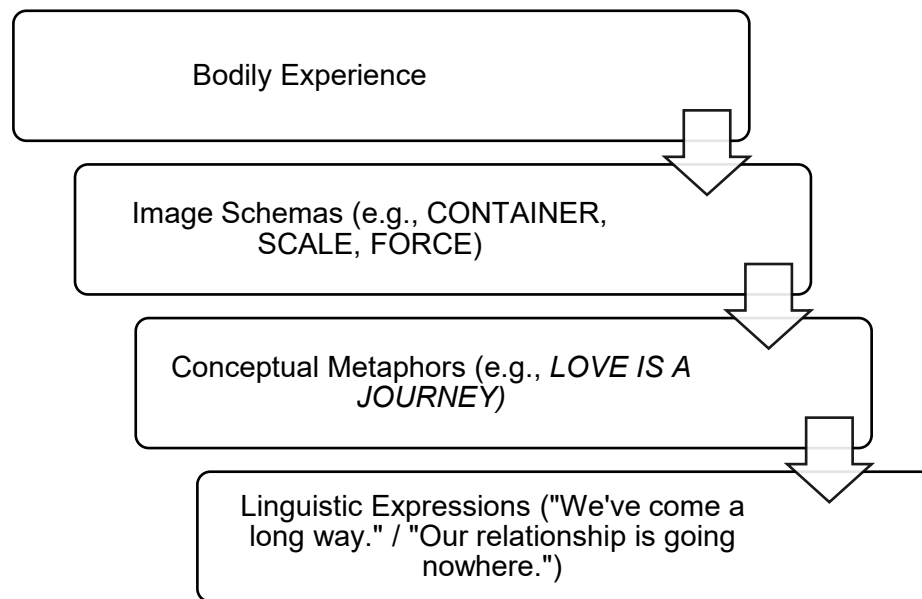


Figure 2.2 Visual Representation of Conceptual Metaphor and Image Schema

In Figure 2.2, the connection shows that image schemas serve as the embodied foundation, while conceptual metaphors use that foundation to build abstract understanding. Both work together to create coherent patterns of meaning in language, particularly in metaphorical expressions. Another example is the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY relies on the scale schema to organize how romantic relationships are conceptualized through travel experiences.

Table 2.3 Selected Image Schemas for Lyrical Analysis

Schema Category	Key Sub-schemas	Typical Expressions	Relevance to Music
Space	Up-down, Near-far	"feeling up," "growing apart"	Emotional states, relationships
Scale	Path	"moving forward," "crossroads"	Life journey, personal growth
Container	In-out, Containment	"lost in thoughts," "coming out"	Mental states, psychological experiences
Force	Balance, Compulsion, Blockage	"finding balance," "hitting a wall"	Internal conflicts, emotional dynamics
Unity/Multiplicity	Part-whole	"a part of me still loves you"	Relation of individual elements to whole identity or relationship
Identity	Matching	"we were a perfect match"	Self-recognition, commonality in relationships.
Existence	Removal	"erasing the pain"	Loss, forgetting, elimination.

This comprehensive approach to image schema analysis allows for systematic examination of how embodied cognition structures metaphorical expression in NIKI's lyrics, while maintaining theoretical depth and analytical precision. By utilizing the seven major categories of image schemas as classified by Croft and Cruse (2004), this research effectively captures the most cognitively significant and frequently occurring patterns in emotional and personal discourse, making this robust framework

particularly suitable for analyzing contemporary song lyrics that deal with themes of love, identity, and self-discovery.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study examined how metaphor and image schema were employed in NIKI's Buzz album to express emotional experiences and construct meaning. The research drew on two complementary cognitive linguistic frameworks that revealed how abstract concepts are understood through embodied experience, uncovering the systematic cognitive patterns that allow songwriters to communicate complex internal states to global audiences.

The first framework is Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which posits that metaphor is a fundamental cognitive process rather than mere decoration. This theory explains how abstract target domains are systematically understood through concrete source domains. The study identified cognitive mappings that structured metaphorical expressions, revealing how NIKI's emotional themes were conceptualized through familiar, physical domains.

The second framework is Image Schema Theory, utilizing Croft and Cruse's (2004) classification. These schemas are recurring dynamic patterns of perceptual interactions that give coherence to experience. The study analyzed seven major categories: Space, Container, Path, Force, Unity/Multiplicity, Identity, and Existence, which provided the embodied structures supporting metaphorical mappings.

The analytical process utilized NIKI's Buzz album as primary data. Metaphorical expressions were identified following Lakoff and Johnson's mapping principles, while underlying image schemas were analyzed using Croft and Cruse's classification. This integrated approach enabled holistic analysis of cognitive patterns in contemporary lyrics, revealing how NIKI constructed meaning to express themes of love, identity, and personal growth. The conceptual framework is visually represented in the figure below.

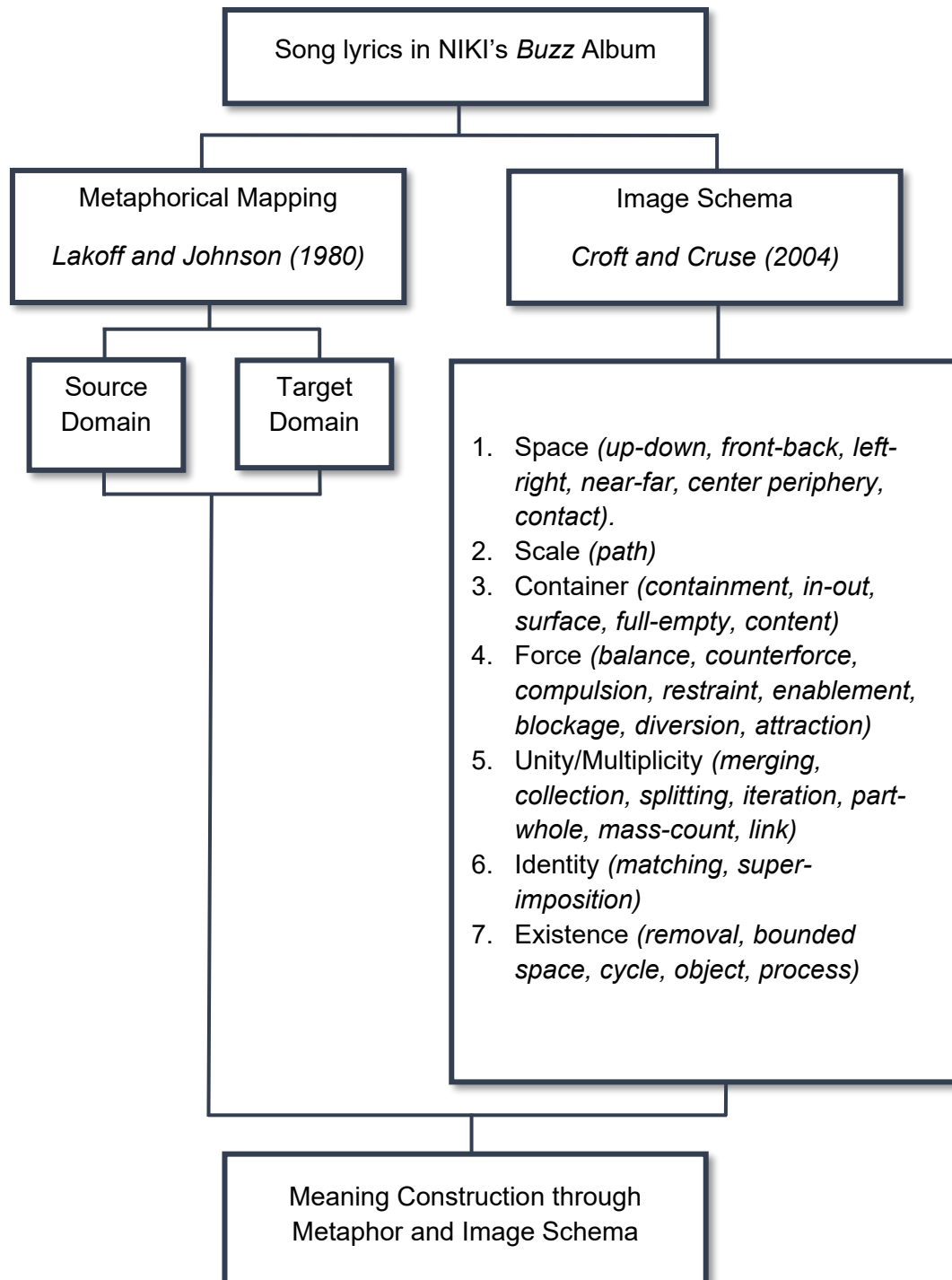


Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework

2.4 Operational Definitions

This section presents the operational definitions of key terms used throughout this study. These definitions are derived from theoretical perspectives and are adapted to the context of metaphor and image schema analysis in song lyrics.

Metaphor

In this research, metaphor is defined as a cognitive-linguistic mechanism through which people understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. Following Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are not only figures of speech used for artistic decoration, but are deeply embedded in human thought and reveal systematic conceptual mappings between domains. For instance, expressions like "She broke my heart" conceptualize emotional pain through the physical experience of breaking, demonstrating the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONAL PAIN IS PHYSICAL DAMAGE.

Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive Linguistics is a theoretical approach in language studies that analyzes linguistic phenomena as manifestations of general human cognitive processes. Operationally, this approach can be identified through three main characteristics: (a) the use of frame and domain concepts to analyze meaning structures, (b) the application of prototype theory in linguistic categorization, and (c) the analysis of metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism rather than a linguistic ornament. In research, Cognitive Linguistics is implemented through analytical methods that connect language structure with physical experience, mental conceptualization, and cultural context, with a focus on how speakers use construal operations to form and convey meaning.

Source Domain

The source domain refers to the more concrete conceptual structure that is mapped onto the target domain in a metaphor. According to Kövecses (2002), source domains often originate from physical, spatial, or embodied experiences such as movement, journeys, or containers. In the metaphor "Time is money," *money* serves as the source domain through which time is understood as something that can be

"spent," "saved," or "wasted." In this study, identifying source domains helps reveal how NIKI structures abstract emotional experiences using familiar physical and experiential concepts.

Target Domain

The target domain is the more abstract conceptual area that is understood through the metaphor. It typically includes experiences such as love, sadness, personal growth, or life transitions. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe, the function of metaphor is to make these less tangible domains more accessible by aligning them with structured source domains. In this research, the target domains are the central emotional and thematic concerns conveyed in NIKI's lyrics, including love, heartbreak, identity, and personal relationships.

Image Schema

Image schemas are fundamental, recurring dynamic patterns of sensorimotor experience that form the embodied basis for more complex concepts and metaphors (Johnson, 1987). These are pre-conceptual structures, such as patterns of movement, containment, or force, rooted in our bodily interactions with the world but abstractly extended to understand complex phenomena in language and thought. For instance, the CONTAINER schema underlies expressions like "stuck in memories," where the mind or an emotional state is conceptualized as a bounded space from which one may or may not escape.

Following Croft and Cruse's (2004) comprehensive classification, which synthesizes foundational works in cognitive linguistics (e.g., Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Clausner & Croft, 1999), this study utilizes seven major categories of image schemas to analyze NIKI's lyrics. These categories are: Space, Scale, Container, Force, Unity/Multiplicity, Identity, and Existence, each comprising specific sub-types that detail their conceptual structure. These schemas collectively provide the robust embodied foundation that enables the metaphorical mappings observed in lyrical expressions, allowing for a deep understanding of personal and emotional discourse.

Metaphorical Mapping

Metaphorical mapping refers to the systematic correspondence between the source domain and the target domain in conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, in the metaphor "Love is a journey," each element of the source domain (road, destination, obstacles) corresponds to elements in the concept of love (relationship progress, shared goals, challenges).

NIKI's *Buzz* Album

NIKI's *Buzz* Album refers to the music album titled "*Buzz*" released by Indonesian-American singer-songwriter Nicole Zefanya (NIKI) in 2024. Operationally, this album can be defined as a collection of musical works consisting of a number of tracks with the following characteristics: (a) English-language lyrics that explore personal and emotional themes, (b) a musical style that blends elements of R&B, indie pop, and soul with contemporary production, and (c) a conceptual narrative that reflects NIKI's life journey and artistic growth. In the context of cognitive linguistic research, this album serves as a textual corpus that can be analyzed to identify the use of metaphors, imagery schemes, and conceptual structures in the expression of contemporary popular music lyrics.

Song lyrics

Song lyrics in this research refer to the verbal component of the *Buzz* album by NIKI (2024), treated as linguistic and artistic text. The lyrics are analyzed not only for their artistic content but also as cognitive expressions that reflect personal and emotional experiences through metaphorical and schematic language. The analysis focuses on how these lyrics function as vehicles for expressing abstract concepts through systematic metaphorical patterns, rather than examining their musical or rhythmic properties.