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A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of the Theme of Coronavirus Pandemic Represented in Two Selected American Rap Songs

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Abstract

Rap songs are a popular musical genre that deal with different social issues in society. They are considered an effective means to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In addition, rap songs also raise social awareness about various current events, and they play a major role in inspiring listeners and affecting them positively. This study is a Cognitive linguistic analysis of two selected American rap songs that deal with the theme of the Coronavirus pandemic. It aims to analyze the conceptual metaphors found in the two selected rap songs to show how they tackle the theme of the Coronavirus in America. It also highlights the different messages delivered to the audience through the lyrics to raise their health awareness and affect their attitudes positively. Thus, this research adopts the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to meet its

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Abstract

Rap songs are a popular musical genre that deal with different social issues in society. They are considered an effective means to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In addition, rap songs also raise social awareness about various current events, and they play a major role in inspiring listeners and affecting them positively. This study is a Cognitive linguistic analysis of two selected American rap songs that deal with the theme of the Coronavirus pandemic. It aims to analyze the conceptual metaphors found in the two selected rap songs to show how they tackle the theme of the Coronavirus in America. It also highlights the different messages delivered to the audience through the lyrics to raise their health awareness and affect their attitudes positively. Thus, this research adopts the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to meet its objectives. It explores the language of two selected American rap songs that commonly deal with the theme of the Coronavirus pandemic. The findings showed that American rappers were eager to reflect on the issue of the Coronavirus and deliver important messages to the audience through their lyrics. This is to control the spread of the virus and save people's lives.

Keywords: American Rap Songs, Conceptual Metaphors, Coronavirus.

1. Introduction

Coronavirus is a dangerous infectious disease that infects the respiratory system and leads to its destruction. With the outbreak of this epidemic, which began in 2020, there have been many deaths and infections around the world due to this virus. Additionally, since rap songs are widespread among a large segment of people in any society, reflecting different social issues and conveying moral lessons to the audience, this research deals with two American rap songs dealing with the theme of Coronavirus pandemic. It explores the conceptual metaphors used to tackle this theme in American society during the pandemic period. It also highlights the messages delivered to the audience to raise their health awareness and help them overcome the crisis safely. So, the current study employs the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to reach its goals.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study aims at:

- 1) analyzing the conceptual metaphors of two selected American rap songs to show how they reflect the theme of Coronavirus pandemic in American society.
- 2) investigating the different messages delivered through the lyrics of two selected American rap songs to raise the audience's health awareness and affect their attitudes positively in American society.

1.2. Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do the conceptual metaphors used in the two selected American rap songs reflect the theme of Coronavirus pandemic in American society?
- 2) In the two selected American rap songs, what are the directed messages that increase people's health awareness and affect their attitudes positively in American society?

1.3. What is a rap song?

Spitzer and Walters (2003) claim that “songs serve to unify groups of people and to move them to common action or help them express common emotions” (p. 7). So, Spitzer and Walters state that it is important to analyze songs’ lyrics because of their strong impact on people in society. According to John (2018), there is an interrelationship between language and music. He also states that the lyrics of songs are social discourse texts that reveal the relationship between language and socio-cultural context. Moreover, music can be examined from different socio-linguistic perspectives, and it is considered to be “an agent of radical sociocultural change” (p. 233). In addition, John (2018) states that since music exists in everyday’s life, it has various genres, such as 'reggae', 'rock', 'popular', 'rap', 'folk', 'country', and 'pop', and that it deals with different subject matters.

Focusing on rap music, a myriad of definitions illustrates that rap music is related to society. For example, “rap is a type of music in which the words are not sung but are spoken in a rapid, rhythmic way” (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.). In addition, rap music is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as “a type of music of African American origin in which rhythmic and usually rhyming speech is chanted to a musical accompaniment” (n.d.). Moreover, according to Dictionary.com (n.d.), the word ‘rap’, as a verb, means “to utter sharply or vigorously”, “to criticize sharply (slang)”, “to communicate a message”, and “to talk or discuss especially freely, openly”. As a noun, it means “talk designed to impress or convince”. Furthermore, the rap song is distinguished from other forms of songs by certain features, such as narration, signification, call-and-response, "playing the dozens", boasting and toasting (Cummings, 2002, as cited in Davis, 2011).

A rap song is a rich musical genre that appeals to a wide range of people in society. Thus, the current study analyzes the conceptual metaphors used to reflect the theme of Coronavirus pandemic in America. It also explores the delivered messages to raise the audience’s health awareness of the pandemic and limit its spread. That is why it is important to study rap music.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Review of Previous Studies

This section presents some of the previous studies that have been conducted in similar domains of research, such as song lyrics and cognitive linguistics. It identifies the similarities and differences between this study and the previous research presented here to fill a research gap. In addition, this section is divided into two parts: related studies on the lyrics of rap songs and related studies on conceptual metaphor theory.

2.1.1. Related Studies on Rap Song Lyrics

Davis (2011) conducted an M.A. thesis that dealt with wealth in rap music from a semiotics approach. In this study, Davis analyzed eleven rap songs to identify the representation of wealth in the selected rap song lyrics. The study concluded that there are three main themes of wealth discussed in the lyrics, which are wealth that gains respect from other people, the relationship between money and the opposite sex, and richness as a symbol of "living the good life."

Verbeke (2016) explored in his PhD dissertation the factors influencing the use of non-standard vocabulary, such as colloquialism, slang, vulgarities, abbreviations, and borrowing in French rap music. The researcher analyzed a corpus of rap songs and focused on investigating the effect of diachronic, diatopic, gender and diaphasic elements on language variation in Francophone rap. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are utilized in this research. The findings showed that the performance of the *ego trip*, which is a specific rap genre, is the main reason for using non-standard language. Moreover, other factors including gender, location, and time have less impact on language variation.

John (2018) examined Asuquo's rap song *Boosit* by employing the critical stylistic approach and the modality and transitivity theories to show how it relates to Nigerian social, religious, and political conditions. The study illustrated that *Boosit* tackles the imperialism ideologies, feminism, and socio-political activism existing in Nigeria. In addition, the study declared that *Boosit* stresses the moral values and social responsibility of politicians to fight injustice.

Werner (2019) investigated in his research paper the language used in rap music through a corpus-linguistic analysis. The study examined the relationship between rap songs and African American English (AAE). A large collection of

American rap lyrics is analyzed, spanning 25 years (LYRAP corpus). The researcher compared hip-hop lyrics with lyrics from pop music (LYPOP corpus) in terms of morphosyntax (grammatical structures) and styling (the level of artistic expression). It is concluded that rap lyrics use some elements of African American English (AAE) to show linguistic 'realness', i.e., the street culture experiences. Nevertheless, this 'realness' varies according to the rapper's style and word choices. This indicated that the rap music genre is characterized by a distinguished linguistic identity that goes beyond mirroring the grammatical structures of AAE.

2.1.2. Related Studies on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Johansson (2016) examined the conceptual metaphors in Leonard Cohen's lyrics: *Here it is*, *Boogie Street*, and *A Thousand Kissed Deep*, which were released in the 2001 Ten New Songs album. The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) was applied in the analysis of the song lyrics. First, the source and target domains are identified. Then, the conceptual mappings between both domains are recognized. Lastly, the researcher concluded that the conceptual metaphors of **LOVE**, **LIFE**, and **DEATH** exist in the lyrics through the metaphorical expressions.

Lestari (2017), in his thesis, analyzed conceptual metaphors in song lyrics. The study examined the metaphorical expressions in *Green Day* lyrics to convey their meaning. The researcher adopted the theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) to examine the conceptual metaphors found in the lyrics. The findings showed that all metaphor types are found in the lyrics, especially ontological metaphors, which were used the most in the lyrics.

Chuyi (2020) investigated the use of conceptual metaphors in Taylor Swift's lyrics. This research employed the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to analyze the conceptual metaphors. The analysis revealed that the conceptual metaphors used are primarily categorized into two types, which are structural and ontological metaphors. Moreover, three sub-metaphors were employed to describe a love relationship. These metaphors are: **LOVE IS A JOURNEY**, **LOVE IS A GAME**, and **LOVE IS A HEART**. The findings showed that Swift used conceptual metaphor broadly in her lyrics to explain her emotions about her love relationship, which indicated that conceptual metaphor played a major role in Taylor Swift's lyrics.

This research differs from the previously displayed studies in some aspects. By searching for different studies carried out on rap songs, it was found

that even though there is a plethora of research that is conducted on song lyrics in general, only a few studies have tackled the language of American rap songs in relation to social context and global issues. Thus, this research applies the conceptual metaphor theory adopted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to identify the conceptual metaphors used in tackling the theme of the Coronavirus pandemic. It also sheds light on the messages delivered to the audience to raise their awareness of the issue.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative analysis approach. It focuses on analyzing the theme of Coronavirus pandemic in two selected American rap songs that were released in 2020. The data were collected through the internet after listening to the songs on the website www.youtube.com. Then, the lyrics were written down and added to two separate, numbered appendices at the end of this research. It is important to mention that the two rap songs ‘Coronavirus’ by Tom Macdonald (2020) and ‘Coronavirus (State of Emergency)’ by Dax (2020) were selected for analysis since they are among the most popular songs dealing with Coronavirus during that period. In addition, their lyrics are rich in conceptual metaphors that can be analyzed linguistically using the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The following part deals with the theoretical framework employed in the current research.

3.1. Cognitive Linguistics and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Evans and Green (2006) state that cognitive linguistics is a recent school of linguistics that arose in the 1970s within the new study area of cognitive science. It focuses on the relationship between language and the mind. It also aims to describe the mental processes that result in the acquisition, storage, production, and understanding of speech and writing. So, they assert that the main idea of cognitive linguistics is that language reflects patterns of thought.

3.2. Definition of Metaphor

According to Kövecses (2010), a metaphor is a figure of speech in which an entity is compared with another one. For instance, in the sentence ‘he is a lion’, the word ‘lion’ is a metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposed a metaphor theory that states that metaphors are extensive, not just in certain genres seeking to create an artistic effect. Additionally, they argued that metaphor is not only a matter of language but also of thinking and cognition.

The conceptual metaphor theory adopted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) affirms that metaphors are not just aesthetic devices, but a main constituent of the conceptual system of our minds. They claim that “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.5). They also state “our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (p.3).

Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that metaphors are conceptual because people not only speak in metaphorical terms but also think metaphorically. They also claim that the function of metaphor is to understand concepts rather than just to identify their poetic function. Metaphor is not only used by gifted people, but it also employed by ordinary people every day.

Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (1980), define metaphors as a cognitive system that involves conceptualizing one domain of experience in terms of another. They give examples of metaphorical expressions referring to the conceptual metaphor **TIME IS MONEY** as follows:

- a) You are *wasting* my time.
- b) How do you *spend* your time these days?
- c) You need to *budget* your time. (Lakoff and Johnson ,1980, pp.7-8)

From the previous examples, time is conceptualized in terms of money because of its high value. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider time to be a limited resource through the conceptual metaphor **TIME IS MONEY**. They state “we understand and experience time as the kind of thing that can be spent, wasted, budgeted, invested wisely or poorly, saved or squandered” (p.8). So, this research adopts the conceptual metaphor theory in the analysis of the selected two American rap song lyrics. The following section deals with the main aspects of the conceptual metaphor theory, which contribute to the conceptualization of meaning.

3.3. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is one of the disciplines in cognitive linguistics, which was started by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in (1980). They consider metaphor to be a conceptual tool and not just a decorative device. Moreover, for Evans and Green (2006), the conceptual metaphor theory is very significant in cognitive and social sciences. Therefore, this research

adopts the conceptual metaphor theory in the theoretical framework for the analysis of the two selected American rap songs. The next section discusses the major principles of the conceptual metaphor theory.

3.4. Conceptual vs. Linguistic Metaphor

For Lakoff and Johnson (2003), a metaphor means understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. For example, in the conceptual metaphors: **ARGUMENT IS WAR**, **LIFE IS A JOURNEY**, and **IDEAS ARE FOOD**, argument is understood in terms of war, life is understood in terms of a journey, and ideas are understood in terms of food. So, a metaphorical concept consists of two conceptual domains, A and B, in which one domain is understood in terms of the other.

Kövecses (2010) distinguishes between a **conceptual metaphor** and a **metaphorical linguistic expression**. He states that a conceptual metaphor is made up of two conceptual domains in which one is understood in terms of the other. Therefore, in the metaphorical expression, **LIFE IS A JOURNEY**, we depend on systematic knowledge about journeys to understand life. Moreover, Kövecses (2010) asserts that conceptual metaphors are composed of two domains, which are a **source domain** and a **target domain**. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are derived to understand another conceptual domain, while the target domain is the conceptual domain which is conceptualized through the source domain. Additionally, according to Lee (2001), the source domains are more concrete concepts, while the target domains are more abstract concepts. Thus, the target domain is life, and the source domain is a journey.

According to Kövecses (2010), metaphorical linguistic expressions are defined as linguistic expressions or words drawn from the source domain, that is, domain B. He gives examples of metaphorical linguistic expressions reflecting the conceptual metaphor **LIFE IS A JOURNEY**, such as:

- a) He's *without direction* in life.
- b) I'm *where I want to be* in life. (Kövecses , 2010, p.3)

Thus, in the previous examples, the expressions '*without direction*' and '*where I want to be*' are metaphorical linguistic expressions reflecting the conceptual metaphor **LIFE IS A JOURNEY**. Besides, Kövecses (2010) states that conceptual metaphors are **unidirectional** since the process of metaphorical conceptualization moves from the more concrete domain to the more abstract

one, or from the source domain to the target domain, which is known as the **unidirectionality** principle. The next section demonstrates the kinds of conceptual metaphors used in this research.

3.5. Kinds of Conceptual Metaphor

Kövecses (2010) classifies conceptual metaphors according to their cognitive function into three kinds, which are structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors.

3.5.1. Structural Metaphors

The cognitive function of structural metaphors is to make speakers understand the target domain through the structure of the source domain. For example, comprehending time in terms of physical objects, their motion, and their locations, such as “*Times are things*” (Kövecses, 2010, p.37).

3.5.2. Ontological Metaphors

Regarding ontological metaphors, Kövecses (2010) asserts that “their cognitive job seems to be to “merely” give a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and to bring about new abstract entities” (p. 38). Thus, through ontological metaphors, not clearly delineated abstract domains are conceptualized in terms of objects, substances, and containers. In addition, Kövecses (2010) adds that personification is considered to be a kind of ontological metaphor in which human characteristics are used to understand nonhuman abstract concepts. For instance, “*Life has cheated me*” (Kövecses, 2010, p.39).

3.5.3. Orientational Metaphors

According to Kövecses (2010), the function of orientational metaphors has to do with human spatial orientations; for example, front-back, in-out, up-down, etc. The cognitive function of orientational metaphor is to conceptualize target domains coherently in our conceptual system. So, it is called “coherence metaphor” (p. 40). An example of an orientational metaphor is **MORE IS UP**, in which the concept **MORE** has the characteristic of an upward direction, which is reflected in metaphorical expressions such as “*Speak up, please.*” Moreover, the opposite refers to a downward direction, as in **LESS IS DOWN**, and this metaphorical concept is expressed in examples like “*Keep your voice down, please*” (p. 40).

Thus, the three types of conceptual metaphors mentioned have different cognitive functions in meaning conceptualization. So, this research explores

them to understand the meaning of the two selected American lyrics and meet its goals. The next section discusses the analysis of two selected American rap song lyrics using the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

4. Analysis and Results

This part tackles the analysis of two selected American rap songs reflecting the theme of Coronavirus pandemic. It is classified into two sections. The first section deals with the cognitive linguistic analysis of the first American rap song: '*Coronavirus*' by Tom Macdonald (2020), and the second section deals with the cognitive linguistic analysis of the second American rap song, '*Coronavirus (State of Emergency)*' by Dax (2020), showing its negative impact on American society.

4.1 Cognitive Analysis of the First American Rap Song '*Coronavirus*' by Tom Macdonald.⁸

In '*Coronavirus*', Tom Macdonald discusses the negative repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic on people in America, conveying a powerful message of unity and cooperation to overcome this crisis safely.

At the beginning of the song, Tom Macdonald inquires about Coronavirus and discusses its impact on people in American society. In lines 2-3, the metaphorical expressions "**now, everybody in America is hidin**" and "**People start to panic**" are derived from the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS IS A SCARY GHOST**. It is an ontological metaphor in which the source domain is a scary ghost and the target domain is Coronavirus. Macdonald shows that people take shelter to protect themselves from the virus. They save food from the markets to avoid starvation.

In line 8, the metaphorical expression "**It's not the sickness that's scary**" alludes to the conceptual metaphor **SICKNESS IS A SCARY GHOST**. It is an ontological metaphor in which the source domain is a scary ghost and the target domain is sickness. Here, Macdonald states that violence will spread everywhere if there is no food and if people get hungry. This threatens people since they will be more afraid of the violence than of the pandemic itself.

In line 13, Macdonald says that the government is not trustworthy and that it is lying to people. He states that people are dying because of the virus. In the metaphorical expression "**There's no vaccines and medication made that can fight it**", Coronavirus is regarded as a fierce and deadly enemy that cannot

⁸ See *Appendix 1* for the lyrics.

be defeated. It refers to the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY ENEMY**. It is an ontological metaphor where the source domain is a deadly enemy and the target domain is coronavirus. This metaphor reveals the serious situation nowadays. The virus is a deadly enemy because one cannot kill what one cannot see.

Additional conceptual metaphor can be derived from the latter metaphorical expression, which is **MEDICINE IS A FIGHTER**. It is an ontological metaphor where the source domain is a fighter and the target domain is medicine. Moreover, based on the previously mentioned metaphors, the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE** is derived. It is a structural metaphor where the source domain is a battle and the target domain is Coronavirus period. Then, Macdonald asks people to pray to God and ask Him for safety.

In lines 17–18, Macdonald describes the economic collapse during this difficult period in America. He states that people are afraid, and they try to protect themselves by wearing masks and gloves whenever they go. So, the metaphorical expression "**sanitise our hands, this will pass/ It's a bug, stay inside, you'll be fine**" stands for the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS IS AN INSECT**. It is an ontological metaphor where the source domain is an insect and the target domain is Coronavirus. Macdonald compares the virus to an insect to reveal that it is very trivial. The directed message, here, is that people should sanitize their hands, stay at home, and minimize their contact with people.

In line 19, the metaphorical expression "**Til we're trapped there for months**" is drawn from the conceptual metaphor **A PANDEMIC IS A TRAP**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is a trap and the target domain is a pandemic. This metaphor shows the hard life of the Americans because of the Coronavirus.

Another metaphorical expression is reflected in line 22, which is "**They're closing all the stores down**". It reflects the conceptual metaphor **LESS IS DOWN**. It is an orientational metaphor in which the source domain is down and the target domain is less. In this metaphor, all the stores shut down because people are very afraid in their homes. After that, Macdonald states that people are looking for a shelter to escape from the virus. This meaning is referred to in line 23 through the metaphorical expression "**We're headin' for shelter**", which is derived from the conceptual metaphor **SURVIVAL IS A**

SHELTER. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is shelter and the target domain is survival.

In line 24, Tom Macdonald states that people will not forget the Coronavirus pandemic period because it is like war. This idea is shown through the metaphorical expression **"It's a war now they'll always remember"**, which refers to the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS WAR.** It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is war and the target domain is Coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, in lines 25–26, the expression **"We're locking all our doors down/We're sticking together"** refers to the conceptual metaphor **UNITY IS POWER.** It is a structural metaphor where the source domain is power and the target domain is unity. Macdonald, here, directs a message to his audience to cooperate and face the virus bravely.

In lines 46–49, the metaphorical expressions **"We're up against an enemy that doesn't have a face / There's no bombs we can drop/ There's nowhere we can aim. There's no soldiers to stop with a tank at the gates"** allude to one conceptual metaphor, which is **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS STRUGGLE.** It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is struggle and the target domain is Coronavirus pandemic. Macdonald, in these expressions, reveals to what extent the Coronavirus causes people to suffer.

Lastly, he advises the American people to turn back to God and ask Him to make them able to overcome the pandemic period. This meaning is referred to in line 53 through the metaphorical expression **"We sit inside our rooms and we pray"**, which reflects the conceptual metaphor **PRAYER IS A WEAPON.** It is an ontological metaphor where the source domain is a weapon and the target domain is prayer. Thus, Macdonald ends this song by directing a message to his audience that resorting to God is the only weapon in their hands to fight the Coronavirus.

Table (1) Conceptual Metaphors in 'Coronavirus' by Tom Macdonald (2020)

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Cognitive Function
CORONAVIRUS IS A SCARY GHOST	a scary ghost	Coronavirus	ontological
SICKNESS IS A SCARY GHOST	a scary ghost	sickness	ontological
CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY ENEMY	a deadly enemy	Coronavirus	ontological

MEDICINE IS A FIGHTER	a fighter	medicine	ontological
CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE	a battle	Coronavirus period	structural
CORONAVIRUS IS AN INSECT	an insect	Coronavirus	ontological
A PANDEMIC IS A TRAP	a trap	a pandemic	structural
LESS IS DOWN	down	less	orientational
SURVIVAL IS A SHELTER	a shelter	survival	structural
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS WAR	war	Coronavirus pandemic	structural
UNITY IS POWER	power	unity	structural
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS STRUGGLE	struggle	Coronavirus pandemic	structural
PRAYER IS A WEAPON	a weapon	prayer	ontological

Table (1) shows that most of the conceptual metaphors in the ‘*Coronavirus*’ song describe the virus as a scary ghost and a deadly enemy that needs to be fought. This is clearly shown in the use of source domains as a scary ghost and a deadly enemy. This description of the virus is because we are fighting an enemy that does not have a face, and this is not something easy at all. Moreover, sickness is described as a scary ghost, medicine is described as a fighter, and, finally, prayer is described as a weapon. This reflects the fierce battle that is going on during the pandemic period.

4.2. Cognitive Analysis of the Second American Rap Song ‘*Coronavirus (State of Emergency)*’ by Dax.⁸

Dax, in this song, presents the theme of the Coronavirus pandemic and its negative impact on people’s lives in America. He tries to raise people’s awareness to get rid of this virus.

In lines 1-2, Dax states that he feels like he is imprisoned during the Coronavirus period. So, he compares the quarantine to a prison from which he

⁸ See *Appendix 2* for the lyrics.

cannot escape. This is referred to in the metaphorical expression "**This quarantine is got me feeling like / I'm locked in a prison**" which alludes to the conceptual metaphor **A QUARANTINE IS A PRISON**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is a prison and the target domain is a quarantine. After that, in line 3, Dax claims that the Coronavirus kills many victims, which is reflected in the metaphorical expression "**I got coffins for these beats, they better stay at a distance**". It refers to the conceptual metaphor **A DISEASE IS DEATH**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is death and the target domain is a disease. Through this metaphorical concept, Dax guides people by stating that keeping a social distance is essential for survival.

In lines 4-5, the metaphorical expressions "**Went to Costco for some tissue, they said two was the limit/I saw a granny try to grab 'em, I had to fight her to get it**" allude to one conceptual metaphor, which is **SURVIVAL IS WAR**. This is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is war and the target domain is survival. Dax, here, describes the fact that people become crazy in the markets because of the lack of supplies. They have to fight to get their basic needs met, which clearly shows the state of fear the Americans had at that time.

In lines 7-11, Dax describes people's struggle on the American street. The metaphorical expression "**No supplies, no food, next the worlds going cannibalistic**" shows how the shelves are empty in the grocery stores. It refers to the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS FAMINE**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is famine and the target domain is coronavirus pandemic. It shows people's great suffering from a shortage of food that leads to their death.

Dax, then, compares the state of a quarantine to a popular movie starring Macaulay Culkin to describe his loneliness. This idea is reflected in the metaphorical expression "**The quarantine Macaulay culkin', this a movie we all home alone**", which reflects the conceptual metaphor **A QUARANTINE IS LONELINESS**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source is loneliness and the target domain is a quarantine. It shows that people feel as if they were imprisoned during the quarantine. Another metaphorical expression used is "**I remember getting sick wasn't shit**" which is derived from the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS SHIT**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is shit and the target domain is coronavirus pandemic. Dax reassures people, through this metaphor, that the situation is not

that bad. He states that the virus is something trivial and that they can get rid of it by following precautionary hygiene measures.

In lines 12-14, Dax discusses the fact that people now feel panic if they just catch the seasonal flu. The metaphorical expression illustrating this meaning is **"Now we panic when we cough, sneeze, or feel like we got any type of sinus"** which refers to the conceptual metaphor **CATCHING FLU IS A STATE OF PANIC**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is a state of panic and the target domain is catching flu. Dax, here, shows the global state of fear from the virus at that time. Then, Dax directs a message to his audience, through which he advises them to pray to God to bring this crisis to an end. The metaphorical expression **"What we do now? Only option is to pray"** alludes to the conceptual metaphor **PRAYER IS A WEAPON**. It is an ontological metaphor in which the source domain is a weapon and the target domain is prayer. This metaphor reflects the powerful role that resorting to God plays in our lives.

Another message directed by Dax, in line 15, to his audience is that we should keep a reasonable social distance from people to protect ourselves from the virus. The metaphorical expression **"If you don't wanna be six feet under, stay six away"** refers to the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY DISEASE**. It is a structural metaphor in which the source domain is a deadly disease and the target domain is coronavirus. There is a stress on the importance of medical awareness in fighting the pandemic.

In lines 20-21, Dax compares the Coronavirus pandemic to a stronger person than the devil. This meaning is alluded to in the metaphorical expression **"This is way more deadly than the flu/ Way stronger than the devil"**. It refers to the conceptual metaphor **CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY PERSON**. It is an ontological metaphor in which the source domain is a deadly person and the target domain is Coronavirus.

Finally, in line 25, Dax directs a message of awareness to his audience that they should unite with each other to fight the virus. The metaphorical expression **"And corona is the enemy"** stands for the two conceptual metaphors **CORONAVIRUS IS AN ENEMY** and **CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE**. The first metaphorical concept is ontological, in which the source domain is an enemy and the target domain is Coronavirus, whereas the second conceptual metaphor is structural, in which the source domain is a battle and the target domain is Coronavirus period. In these two

conceptual metaphors, Dax tells people that we are all in this together. So, he delivers a message of awareness to his audience that they should stay at home and take the virus seriously to save their lives.

Table (2) Conceptual Metaphors in ‘Coronavirus (State of Emergency)’ by Dax (2020)

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Cognitive Function
A QUARANTINE IS A PRISON	A prison	a quarantine	structural
A DISEASE IS DEATH	death	a disease	structural
SURVIVAL IS WAR	war	survival	structural
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS FAMINE	famine	Coronavirus pandemic	structural
A QUARANTINE IS LONELINESS	loneliness	A quarantine	structural
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS SHIT	shit	Coronavirus pandemic	structural
CATCHING FLU IS A STATE OF PANIC	a state of panic	catching flu	structural
PRAYER IS A WEAPON	a weapon	prayer	ontological
CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY DISEASE	a deadly disease	Coronavirus	structural
CORONAVIRUS IS A DEADLY PERSON	a deadly person	Coronavirus	ontological
CORONAVIRUS IS AN ENEMY	an enemy	Coronavirus	ontological
CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE	A battle	Coronavirus period	structural

Table (2) illustrates that the conceptual metaphors used in the ‘Coronavirus (State of Emergency)’ song mainly depict Coronavirus as famine, shit, a deadly disease, and a deadly enemy that has to be defeated. This idea is

reflected in the use of the source domains famine, shit, a deadly disease, and a deadly enemy. Additionally, the quarantine is compared to a prison since the Americans feel isolation and loneliness at home. Lastly, Dax states that prayer to God is the weapon to overcome the Coronavirus.

To sum up, table (3) reveals the conceptual metaphors found in the two selected American rap songs representing the theme of Coronavirus pandemic. It classifies conceptual metaphors according to their cognitive function into structural, ontological, and orientational, in addition to their frequency and percentage.

Table 3: Conceptual Metaphors in the Two Selected American Rap Songs (Theme of Coronavirus Pandemic)

Rank	Conceptual Metaphor Function	Frequency	Percent%
1	Structural	15	60%
2	Ontological	9	36%
3	Orientalional	1	4%
Total		25	100%

According to Table (3), it is shown that **structural** metaphors are the most frequently used type of conceptual metaphors tackling the theme of Coronavirus pandemic. They represent **60%** of the total percentage. Then, **ontological** metaphors represent **36%** of the conceptual metaphors found. Lastly, **orientational** metaphors are the least used type of conceptual metaphors, representing only **4%**. This signifies that American songwriters rely mainly on structural metaphors to conceptualize and understand abstract concepts related to global social issues such as the Coronavirus pandemic in America rather than using ontological or orientational metaphors.

5. Discussion

After conducting the analysis, it is concluded that the two selected American rap songs mirror the Coronavirus pandemic in American society. In this research paper, the first research question proposed is concerned with how the used conceptual metaphors in the selected American lyrics reflect the theme of Coronavirus in America. In the two selected American songs '*Coronavirus*' by Macdonald (2020) and '*Coronavirus (State of Emergency)*' by Dax (2020),

structural metaphors are the most frequently used type of conceptual metaphors, representing **60%** of the total percentage. This signifies that Americans rely mostly on structural metaphors in understanding abstract ideas and demonstrating how people feel panic from the Coronavirus in American streets. Then, **ontological** metaphors represent **36%** of the metaphors, denoting that American songwriters depend less on more delineated concepts or personification. Lastly, **orientational** metaphors represent only **4%** of the total percentage, which shows that metaphors related to spatial orientation are the least used type of conceptual metaphors in dealing with Coronavirus in America.

In the two selected American songs '*Coronavirus*' by Macdonald (2020) and '*Coronavirus (State of Emergency)*' by Dax (2020), some examples of **structural** metaphors include: **CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE, CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS WAR, SURVIVAL IS A SHELTER, A QUARANTINE IS A PRISON, CATCHING FLU IS A STATE OF PANIC, CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS SHIT** and **UNITY IS POWER**. Through these conceptual metaphors, the American rappers consider Coronavirus period to be a battle, Coronavirus pandemic to be war, survival to be a shelter, quarantine to be a prison, catching flu to be a state of panic, Coronavirus pandemic to be shit, and unity to be power. These metaphors highlight the fact that the Coronavirus period is a war-like battle that requires the solidarity of all Americans. They also show the miserable condition of people in America during the pandemic period. Regarding the **ontological** metaphors, some of the examples mentioned in the analysis are: **CORONAVIRUS IS A SCARY GHOST, CORONAVIRUS IS AN ENEMY, CORONAVIRUS IS AN INSECT, MEDICINE IS A FIGHTER,** and **PRAYER IS A WEAPON**. Again, these conceptual metaphors consider Coronavirus to be a scary ghost, an enemy, and an insect. In addition, they consider medicine to be a fighter and prayer to be a weapon. Thus, American rappers embody the virus in different forms to make the idea clearer to the audience. Finally, there is only one example of an **orientational** metaphor existing in the lyrics, which is **LESS IS DOWN**. It reflects the idea that the shortage of food supplies in the street markets is a dangerous situation that Americans have to deal with seriously.

The second research question suggested is concerned with the directed messages to the audience to increase their health awareness of the Coronavirus pandemic in America. According to the analysis, it is noted that different

messages are commonly tackled in the two songs ‘*Coronavirus*’ by Macdonald (2020) and ‘*Coronavirus (State of Emergency)*’ by Dax (2020). These messages are alluded to through the conceptual metaphors: **CORONAVIRUS PERIOD IS A BATTLE**, **CORONAVIRUS IS AN INSECT**, **UNITY IS POWER**, and **PRAYER IS A WEAPON**. Through these conceptual metaphors, the American rappers deliver to their audience the idea that Coronavirus period is a fierce battle that they can face with awareness and courage. They also reassure people that Coronavirus is a trivial virus, like an insect, that can be fought by following precautionary measures. In addition, another message is referred to, which is unity is power that can help in defeating the virus. The rappers, here, advise the Americans to be one hand and stick together to eliminate the virus. Then, they end their lyrics by stating that praying to God is a powerful weapon that can be used to fight the pandemic.

6. Conclusion

In short, the current research has explored two selected American rap songs representing the theme of Coronavirus pandemic. It applied the conceptual metaphor theory adopted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to show how they reflect the theme of Coronavirus pandemic in American society. It also highlighted the different messages delivered to the audience to raise their health awareness and help them overcome the crisis. So, it is concluded that American rappers use rap songs as a powerful tool through which they can discuss different social issues, deliver messages, and guide people effectively through their lyrics. Thus, the utilized theoretical framework has proved to be adequate in reflecting American society and achieving the goals of the research.

7. Recommendation for Further Research

Further research is required to analyze song lyrics dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic in other cultures. In addition, more research is needed to explore the language of other musical genres, for example, rock, reggae, jazz, or popular songs, to show how they tackle different social issues in their lyrics.

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American Lyrics used for Analysis

Appendix (1)

'Coronavirus' by Tom Macdonald

1. I don't know what to think about this virus
2. It started in China, now everybody in America is hidin'
3. There's no groceries, 'cause people start to panic and buy it
4. The shelter empty, the ones who plenty, already stockpiling
5. Y'all making memes, think it's funny?
6. Wait a week 'til the riots
7. Wait a month 'til the only way to eat is be violent
8. It's not the sickness that's scary, it's all the people who're violent
9. The government's lyin', they're trying to keep us calm through the sirens
10. We know it's for real
11. And now all the pharmaceutical giants don't have the cure that they can sell you
12. So now everyone's dying
13. There's no vaccines and medication made that can fight it
14. I guess it's time to pray to God, we can't rely on the science
15. And everyone around me in a mask and some gloves
16. The stock market crashed, and the banks 'bout to bust
17. Tell us "sanitize our hands, this will pass
18. It's a bug, stay inside, you'll be fine"
19. 'Til we're trapped there for months
20. It's a ghost town
21. We're in this together
22. They're closing all the stores down
23. We're headin' for shelter
24. It's a war now they'll always remember
25. We're locking all our doors down
26. We're sticking together
27. It's a ghost town
28. This a pandemic, but we don't listen to the news
29. 'Cause they lied to us for years so how we know that this the truth?
30. And most of us are young enough to think that we're immune
31. So we just pass it on to people who won't survive it like you
32. It's either worse than they're telling us or it's nothing at all
33. Then tell us leaving our homes is actually breaking the law
34. The conspiracy theories all sound like facts, that's for sure
35. But the fact is, we're trapped on this planet called Earth
36. It's a ghost town

37. We're in this together
38. They're closing all the stores down
39. We're headin' for shelter
40. It's a war now they'll always remember
41. We're locking all our doors down
42. We're sticking together
43. It's a ghost town
44. We're hoping for the best but we're preparing for the worst
45. There's one thing we're not scared of: it's hard work
46. We're up against an enemy that doesn't have a face
47. There's no bombs we can drop
48. There's nowhere we can aim
49. There's no soldiers to stop with a tank at the gates
50. There's no cure that we've got or a pill we can take
51. There's no food, it's been bought
52. The truth is we're afraid
53. We sit inside our rooms and we pray
54. It's a ghost town
55. We're in this together
56. They're closing all the stores down
57. We're headin' for shelter
58. It's a war now they'll always remember
59. We're locking all our doors down
60. We're sticking together
61. It's a ghost town

<https://youtu.be/QPhe>

Appendix (2)

'Coronavirus' (State of Emergency) by Dax

1. This quarantine is got me feeling like
2. I'm locked in a prison
3. I got coffins for these beats, they better stay at a distance
4. Went to Costco for some tissue, they said two was the limit
5. I saw a granny try to grab 'em, I had to fight her to get it
6. Everybody turning animalistic
7. No supplies, no food, next the worlds going cannibalistic
8. Going crazy we all stuck on our phones
9. The quarantine Micaulay culkin', this a movie we all home alone
10. I remember when corona was beer and not a man made virus
11. I remember getting sick wasn't shit
12. Now we panic when we cough, sneeze, or feel like we got any type of sinus
13. What we do now?
14. Only option is to pray
15. If you don't wanna be six feet under stay six away
16. Stay home, hide your kids, wash your hands, be safe
17. It's like a greyhound bus and it's stopping in every state
18. Ain't it funny?
19. Shit is viral
20. This is way more deadly than the flu
21. Way stronger than the devil, even he couldn't empty the church pews
22. Just know
23. We're all part of the remedy
24. We're on the same team
25. And corona is the enemy
26. Stay home
27. Be safe
28. And look out for check

<https://youtu.be/EcLu2etbx6w>

تحليل معرفي لغوي لأغنيتين مختارتين من الراب الأمريكي تمثلان موضوع جائحة فيروس كورونا

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المستخلص:

تعد أغاني الراب نوع موسيقي شائع يتعامل مع قضايا اجتماعية متنوعة في المجتمع، فهي تعتبر وسيلة فعالة للتعبير عن الأفكار والمشاعر والتجارب المختلفة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعمل أغاني الراب أيضا على رفع الوعي المجتمعي حول مختلف الأحداث الجارية، كما أنها تلعب دورا كبيرا في إلهام المستمعين و التأثير عليهم من خلال قوة الكلمات و الإيقاع الموسيقي المميز. يقوم هذا البحث على التحليل المعرفي اللغوي لأغنيتين مختارتين من الراب الأمريكي تمثلان جائحة فيروس كورونا. و يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الإستعارات المفاهيمية الموجودة في أغنيتي راب أمريكيتين مختارتين لإظهار كيفية تناولهما لموضوع جائحة فيروس كورونا في أمريكا. و يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على الرسائل المجتمعية الهادفة التي يتم توجيهها إلى الجمهور من خلال كلمات الأغاني، وذلك من أجل رفع الوعي الصحي و التأثير على السلوك العام تجاه الفيروس بشكل إيجابي. وبالتالي، يتبنى هذا البحث نظرية الإستعارة المفاهيمية التي أعتمدها لأكوف وجونسون عام (1980) من أجل تحقيق أهدافه. و تظهر النتائج أن مغنيي الراب الأمريكيين حريصون على تناول قضية فيروس كورونا في المجتمع الأمريكي في كلمات أغانيهم، كما أنهم حريصون على توجيه رسائل توعية هامة للجمهور بطرق الوقاية المختلفة من هذا الفيروس، وذلك من أجل السيطرة على انتشار الفيروس و إنقاذ حياة الناس خلال تلك الفترة العصيبة.

الكلمات الدالة: الراب الأمريكي، الإستعارة المفاهيمية، فيروس كورونا