

# Processing Metaphors: a Case Study on Song Lyrics

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SVEUČILIŠTE U RIJECI  
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ODSJEK ZA ANGLISTIKU

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**Processing metaphors: A case study on song lyrics**

Diplomski rad

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Rijeka, 2023

UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA  
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M.A. thesis

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this M.A. thesis is to provide an insight on how metaphors are processed. The first part of this thesis will include theoretical background on metaphors, particularly what they are, why they are used and what types of metaphors were identified. After that, the theories on how metaphors are processed will be discussed. There are several theories which will be mentioned. Moreover, the next part of this thesis revolves around two different analyses. The first one is an analysis of how metaphors found in song lyrics would be processed. The second one is an analysis of a survey where the participants described their process of understanding metaphors.

**Key words:** metaphors, processing, lyrics, song, analysis, case study

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## 1. Introduction – what are metaphors?

When a person is acquiring a new language, be it the mother tongue or a second language, they need to know certain things about the language in order to be able to correctly produce it. A person does not need to only know the vocabulary of the language, but also how the language system works. An important part of the language system and connected to the vocabulary of a language are metaphors. The question is, what are actually metaphors? According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a metaphor is an expression, often found in literature, that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object.<sup>1</sup> In other words, metaphors are used to describe something through similarities that it shares with something else. It should, however, be noted that metaphors are, although similar, not the same as simile. In similes, objects, people or phenomena are compared by using “like” or “as”. An example for simile would be “red like an apple”. On the other hand, metaphors are usually presented through a statement that has the form “x is y”, like for example “the mind is an ocean”.<sup>2</sup> However, the meaning of written down or uttered metaphors is not to be taken literally, but it should rather be compared to the literal meaning, like in the previously mentioned example, where of course the mind is not literally an ocean, but that it is mysterious in a way, and it contains a great amount of knowledge. When something is described as literal, it usually means that this is a one-to-one mapping of a word and its meaning, which means that it can be understood directly (Ritchie, 2013). Metaphors can, therefore, not be understood literally. Metaphors are, along with simile, the most commonly used figures of speech in everyday conversations.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Cambridge dictionary “metaphor”: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metaphor>

2 Example found at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metaphor>

3 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metaphor>

In some classical theories of metaphors, they were seen as a matter of language rather than a matter of thought (Lakoff, 1993). This meant, however, that this theory suggested that everyday language had no metaphors and metaphors were using mechanisms and concepts that were not part of the everyday language. Metaphors were then described as linguistic expressions which were more poetic and novel, and where a concept is used outside its conventional meaning in order to describe another concept which is similar (Lakoff, 1993). These classical theories were first seen as a fact, rather than a theory, but further research suggested that those theories on metaphors are false. Metaphors actually seem to be a crucial part of ordinary everyday language. There is still, however, the notion of literary metaphors, which is an extended branch of study of everyday metaphors. In his paper “The Conduit Metaphor” (1979), Michael Reddy suggests that even everyday language includes metaphors. Moreover, he also suggests that metaphors are a matter of thought and that the understanding of metaphorical expressions that people use is a reflection of everyday behavior. Metaphors are also a way of conceptualizing the world. Out of these suggestions about metaphors, a contemporary theory about metaphors has developed, as a contrast to the classical theories. The contemporary theory argues that not only can everyday language be metaphorical, but so can lexicon definitions and concepts used in grammar (Lakoff, 1993). Another difference between these two theories is in the fact that the classical theory suggests that only through the “literal” meaning does one get to the metaphorical one, while the contemporary one argues against this viewpoint.

### **1.1. Why are metaphors used?**

Moreover, a question that many researches have dealt with in regard to metaphors is why are metaphors used instead of saying something directly. John. R. Searle (1993) dealt with this question in his article “Metaphors”. Searle (1993) suggests that the reasons why metaphors are used is because there is not a literal expression that can explain or express exactly what is meant. With metaphors, the

meaning is conveyed through two different trains of thought. This means that in order to understand, for example, “*S is R*”, it needs to go through the meaning of “*S is P*” first (Searle, 1993). Therefore, in a way, it is difficult to paraphrase metaphors because if the metaphorical part of the utterance is not used, the semantic content that occurred when the hearer comprehended the utterance would not be reproduced (Searle, 1993). Thus, metaphors have a certain expressive power that is difficult to convey with utterances that have just a literal meaning. Moreover, Glucksberg and Keysar (1993) argue that metaphors are a necessary part of language, as they are used for making abstract concepts more comprehensive. Another reason why people would use metaphors instead of, for example, simile in order to describe something or someone is because metaphors make a stronger statement. Saying that something is “like” something else does not hold the same force as saying that something “is” something else. The usage of the word “like” implies that only some properties can be applied to the thing or person that is being described. Metaphors can also be used to shorten the amount of information that is being given, by using, for example, only one word instead of describing something in great detail. An example of this would be “my job is a jail” (Glucksberg and Keysar, 1993) where the word “jail” replaces all the reasons why one might think like that about their job.

Ortony and Fainsilber (1987) have also argued about the importance of metaphors when expressing feelings. As it was mentioned, metaphors can be used to describe things for which it is difficult to find words when only literal language is used. They can also help with describing the vividness of a situation or experience. Feelings and emotions can arguably fall into these categories. While it is easy to label an emotion with one term, like “sadness”, it is difficult to convey the actual feel of this emotion with literal language, as well as its intensity and quality, as this can vary on the situation and the person experiencing it (Ortony and Fainsilber, 1987). Metaphors can therefore be a great way of conveying these thoughts. In the same paper, Ortony and Fainsilber have conducted a



study based on this assumption, where the subjects had to describe how they felt when they had specific emotions and what they did in those situations. The results showed that the subjects used metaphors to describe emotions more than when they did for actions, especially if the emotion was of strong intensity. These results could then somewhat prove that metaphors are a great tool for describing intense emotions, since phrases and expressions in the literal language cannot fully convey the same.

## 1.2. Metaphorical concepts

In their book “Metaphors we live by”, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduce metaphorical concepts. They argue that metaphors are inherently part of everyday language as well as people’s thoughts and actions. The conceptual system of humans, which is related to how one thinks or acts, seems to be rooted in metaphors. This is reflected in the way that we speak about certain aspects of life. They suggest that conceptual metaphors can be seen in everyday language. An example of such a conceptual metaphor would be ARGUMENT IS WAR. When an argument is discussed, it is usually done so by using language that would otherwise describe war or a battle. This can be seen in examples like “I’ve never lost/won an argument with him” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), “Your claims are indefensible.” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and “He attacked every weak point in my argument. His criticisms were right on target.” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As seen, an argument is something that can be *lost* or *won*, it can be *defended*, *attacked* or *demolished*, and it can also be *shot down*. These are the types of conversations that could happen in everyday situations, yet they are fundamentally metaphorical. The concept of ARGUMENT is metaphorically structured, which results in the activity, thoughts and language to also be metaphorically structured. Accordingly, many other concepts can be explained and understood as “A is B”, which is again reflected in everyday conversation. Further examples that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provide are LOVE IS A JOURNEY, TIME IS MONEY and HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN. This can then be seen in expressions like: “This relationship has come

to an end, and we have decided to go our separate ways”, “You just wasted my time.” and “I am in high spirits, but he is feeling really low lately.”, respectively. This discovery of conceptual metaphors suggests that metaphors are, actually, an important part of everyday language and seem to be a base of how things around us are perceived. Moreover, the conceptual metaphors can also be described as mappings (Kövecses, 2002). This refers to systematic correspondences between the source and the target, where their conceptual elements correspond to one another. It can be said that the elements of the source are mapped onto the elements of the target. In the example of LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the source would be JOURNEY and the target would be LOVE. The mapping of this metaphorical concept would isolate certain elements of the source domain and then map them onto the elements of the target domain. In the case of LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the travelers that are on a journey become the lovers, the vehicle becomes the relationship, the distance covered becomes the progress that they have made in their relationship, the decisions about which way to go become choices about what to do in the relationship and so on (Kövecses, 2002). Some of the most common source domains would be: the human body, health and illness, animals, plants, heat and cold, light and darkness, and movement and direction. On the other hand, some of the most common target domains would be: emotion, desire, morality, thought, society, time, life and death, and religion (Kövecses, 2002).

### **1.3. Types of metaphors**

After understanding what metaphors are and why they are being used, it is also important to discuss what types of metaphors exist. Many linguists have worked on this classification, so several different types of metaphors can be identified. Some of the most common types of metaphors are dead or frozen metaphors and novel metaphors. A “dead” metaphor can be described as a metaphor that was once new, but has since become overly familiar to the users of the language that it had lost its effect and is almost not even regarded as a metaphor anymore (Lakoff, 1987). This transition of a metaphor losing

the metaphorical meaning and becoming a part of everyday speech can be called a “semantic shift”. Some of the most prominent dead metaphors are “the body of an essay”, “falling in love” and “hands of a clock”<sup>4</sup>. Novel metaphors are, on the other hand, metaphors that are currently considered new and are a great example of how creative a language can be. They can also be described as “poetic” and “imaginative” (Kronfeld, 1980)

Banaruee and colleagues (2019) have divided metaphors into two bigger groups: those that describe abstract concepts and those that describe concrete concepts. The concrete concepts can be perceived through our own perceptions of the world, while the abstract concepts cannot. Because of this, abstract concepts need to be used with a sort of tool in order to be understood, this tool mostly being a metaphor. A concrete concept can also be used in order to describe an abstract concept. In order to metaphorically describe an abstract concept, motion events are usually used. Motion events refer to any type of movement that describes an object’s path from one point to another. The reason why motion events are usually used is because they have a high degree of concreteness, and they are easy to imagine in a three-dimensional space (Banaruee et al., 2019). Some examples of those types of metaphors would be “grasp a concept” or “to run for an office” (Banaruee et al., 2019). Moreover, the second type of metaphors are, as previously mentioned, the ones that describe more concrete concepts. In these metaphors, a semantic feature of a typical member of the metaphorical class is ascribed to the topic of the metaphor (Banaruee et al., 2019). An example of such a metaphor would be “my heart is glass”, where the semantic feature would be “fragile, easily breakable”. This semantic feature can be applied to both “heart” and “glass”, where “glass” represents the typical member. These two types of metaphors are, therefore, distinguished by their levels of “abstractedness” as well as the mechanisms which are used in order to describe them.

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4 <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/dead-metaphor> (accessed on July 20, 2023)

## **2. How are metaphors processed – theories**

One of the most important aspects of metaphors, if not the most important one, is the meaning of metaphors, i.e. what meaning the metaphor is trying to convey. However, in order to get to the meaning of the metaphor and understand what it represents, the metaphor needs to be processed first. The question of how metaphors are processed has been researched a number of times, and several theories on how metaphors are processed have been developed. This chapter will, therefore, provide an overview of these theories.

### **2.1. The “Indirect” and “Direct” View**

In the article “A Psycholinguistic Study of Metaphor Processing” (2011), Xiu Yu mentions that the comprehension of metaphors is just one part of the experience of understanding metaphors. Besides metaphor comprehension, there are three more components that help with the understanding of metaphors. These are recognition, interpretation and appreciation (Yu, 2011). Comprehension happens first, and it refers to the immediate process of creating meanings for utterances. This process happens mostly unconsciously, and it consists of an analysis of different linguistic information, which, together with the context of the utterance and general real-world knowledge, which allows people to understand the metaphorical utterance (Yu, 2011). Recognition refers to the identification of the products which are the result of comprehension. This means that the person that heard or read the utterance which was metaphorical and comprehended this utterance can recognize that it is metaphorical (Yu, 2011). Moreover, interpretation refers to the conscious understanding of a particular meaning, while appreciation refers to a certain judgment that the person has over a certain metaphor and its meaning and as such is not a necessary part of the process of understanding a metaphor (Yu, 2011). According to these components of metaphor processing, the metaphorical comprehension seems to be the one that was researched the most, as it is deemed crucial for understanding a metaphor. There are two “views”

that describe the processing of metaphors and the relationship between the literal and metaphorical meaning. Metaphorical comprehension can accordingly be “indirect” or “direct” (Yu, 2011). On one hand, the “Indirect” view suggests that metaphors are processed through three different stages. The first stage is processing the literal meaning first. This means that when a metaphorical utterance is presented, the literal meaning of it is assessed first. Once the literal meaning of the utterance can not be identified, then it is important to compare the literal meaning to the context of the utterance. After finding the context and identifying its differences with the literal meaning, the next step is to seek a metaphorical interpretation of the utterance to decode its actual meaning (Rohrer, 1995, as cited in Yu, 2011). On the other hand, the “Direct” view suggests that the literal and the metaphorical meaning are processed together and even share much structure (Rohrer, 1995, as cited in Yu, 2011). The “Direct” view is opposing the “Indirect” view and the theory that the metaphorical meaning is sought only after the literal meaning is rejected. A study by Glucksberg and colleagues (1990) suggests that a metaphorical utterance is recognized as such almost immediately. In their study, the participants were asked to determine if a statement was true or false. They were then presented with statements that were true, false and metaphorical. The “Indirect” view suggests that the literal meaning should be processed first, so as soon as they realized that the utterance cannot be processed literally, they should have recognized it as false. However, based on the time that it took them to make a decision, it could be argued that they recognized the metaphor, but were unsure if it is true, so the time that it took to classify them as false was longer (for example, the utterance “Some jobs are jails.”). Some other studies also suggest that people can understand and process metaphors just like they do with literal speech, which is by extracting information from the mental lexicon and identifying the relevant parts (Carroll, 2000, as cited in Yu, 2011).

## 2.2. Literal first hypothesis

Similar to the “Indirect” view, Brisard, Frisson and Sandra (2001) have in their article “Processing Unfamiliar Metaphors in a Self-Paced Reading Task” talked about the so-called “literal first hypothesis”. This hypothesis suggests that the metaphors literal meaning needs to be processed first before the figurative meaning can be elicited. It also suggests that the figurative meaning will not be searched for if the literal meaning can be applied. Therefore, if a metaphor truly does derive from its literal meaning first, then the processing time for metaphors is much longer than for non-metaphorical utterances. This research tests this hypothesis by making a direct comparison between the reaction times of hearing and processing metaphorical and literal expressions. In this research, only unfamiliar metaphors were used and investigated. A self-paced reading technique was used, which means that the reader moves through the sentence at their own pace (over a computer screen) which is then timed. The purpose of this research is to examine the differences and similarities in the processing of literal and metaphorical utterances and to do so with and without provided context (Brisard, Frisson and Sandra, 2001). The sentences were constructed on the base of “*An x is a y*”. An example of sentences used for this experiment is “*An oak is a tree...*” for the literal meaning and “*A friend is s tree...*” for the metaphorical one. The results indicate that, the comprehension of metaphors occurred slower than of their matched literal sentences. This, however, doesn’t necessarily prove the *literal first hypothesis*.

## 2.3. A two-stage processing model

In his article “Comprehension of metaphors: A test of the two-stage processing model”, Harris (1976) suggested that the processing of metaphors goes through two distinct stages. Since this is an older study it can be argued that the results of this study are not as relevant, however the theory is still being explored in newer research, as it was seen in the previously mentioned articles and their theories. The hypothesis of this study suggests that metaphorical sentences are comprehended in a two-stage process. It is first necessary to understand the literal meaning of the metaphor, and then use this

knowledge to construct the metaphorical meaning. This hypothesis was tested using latency to initiate a paraphrase as the dependent variable. If the metaphors required an additional level of processing to be understood, this would be seen in longer latencies to construct a paraphrase. There were 28 subjects of the study, and they were all speakers of the English language who were studying psychology. They were presented with 36 metaphorical quotations by William Shakespeare. For each metaphor, three other sentences were written; one of them containing a new metaphor, the other two expressing the meaning directly. They had to paraphrase these metaphors into contemporary language, and the latency to do so was recorded. The results suggested an insignificant difference between the time it took to process the metaphorical and non-metaphorical sentences, and therefore no evidence of the two-stage model was found.

#### **2.4. Substitution, comparison and attribution**

In his book “Metaphor” Ritchie (2013) mentioned several theories on how metaphors work and how they are processed. These would be the theories of substitution, comparison and property attribution. The model of substitution suggests that a metaphor is created when a word that seems to be unrelated to the topic is substituted for a word that expresses some attributes of the topic (Ritchie, 2013). An example of that would be the sentence “My neighbor is a pig”. This metaphor would then be processed by substituting the word “pig” for the word “dirty”, which is an attribute that both the neighbor and a pig possess. This means that, according to this model, in order to comprehend a metaphor, the hearer needs to substitute associated attributes for the metaphorical expression. The substitution theory can be used to explain nominative metaphors which are related to a certain attribute. However, other nominative metaphors, like “The world is a stage” cannot be explained with substitution, but rather by using comparison. The comparison model sees metaphors as implicit similes, where the “like” is omitted (Ritchie, 2013). This view is good for explaining metaphors that connect

two concepts which have similar attributes. An example of this would be that the metaphor “My neighbor is a pig” is an equivalent of “My neighbor is like a pig”. This means that the metaphor would be processed by comparing the attributes of both the topic and the metaphorical expression. When it comes to using the comparison theory on more complex metaphors, like “The world is a stage”, then a more complex process of identifying the common attributes is required. This means that other “tools” are needed in order to process a metaphor, like contextual cues. Moreover, Ritchie (2013) also mentioned the theory of attribution, which focuses on the attributes of the metaphorical word that are being given to the topic of the expression. It is important to look at those attributes in regard to their context. Taking as an example the already mentioned metaphor “My neighbor is a pig”, the processing of this metaphor and the identification of the attributes of the word “pig” would depend on the surround context. This means that if the context is emphasizing eating, the attributes would be that the person is eating more than they should or that they are eating in a sloppy manner. Similarly, if tidiness is part of the context, then the attributes would probably be that the person is messy and lives in unsanitary conditions. Some of the properties that can be identified using the attribution theory do not need to be actual properties of that word, but can also be properties that have been accepted culturally.

## **2.5. Property-matching**

In their article “Metaphor Processing, Psychology of” Gentner and Bowdle (2006) mention another view on how metaphors are processed. They describe metaphor comprehension as property-matching. This means that in order to understand a metaphor, it is necessary to find common properties between the literal and the figurative meaning. The interpretation of the metaphor would then be the result of those shared properties. Besides sharing properties with the literal meaning and highlighting them, metaphors also usually reveal new information about a certain topic. Moreover, there are two views that try to explain these two properties of metaphors. On one hand, a metaphor can be compared



to an analogy. Analogies are usually used to explain a more complex system by comparing it to something that is better known and easier to understand (Gentner & Bowdle, 2006). The information that an analogy conveys is usually information that is related to the original complex system. An example of an analogy would then be, “Electricity is like water flow.” (Gentner & Bowdle, 2006) where the water flow represents that electricity flows from one place to another. It does not mean that electricity would be wet and water-like. Accordingly, metaphors can be compared to analogies, since they also use comparisons between two occurrences and emphasize their common properties. On the other hand, metaphors can be compared to category statements. The idea behind this theory is that in metaphors the object being compared belongs to the same category as the base of the metaphor, which serves as their prototype example. The properties of the metaphorical category that comes from the base can then be attributed to the object of the metaphorical utterance (Gentner & Bowdle, 2006).

## **2.6. A summary**

As seen, there are several theories that describe how metaphors are processed. They are, however, mostly based on the assumption that the literal meaning of a metaphor is processed first and then once the literal meaning cannot be applied, then the figurative meaning is elicited based on the similarities and differences between the literal meaning and the context. However, some other theories suggest that the metaphorical and figurative meaning are processed simultaneously and share structure. It is important to note that after reviewing the aforementioned theories and literature, the current understanding of the processing of metaphors largely depends on and is a combination of human’s cognitive abilities, linguistic skills, conceptual mappings, embodied experiences, contextual cues, culture and other relevant knowledge.

### **3. Research – an analysis of metaphors in song lyrics**

After providing an insight into the theoretical background of what metaphors and processing metaphors are, as well as data and theories from previous research, it is time to present the research that I have done on this topic for this thesis. The first part of the research takes a more qualitative approach, and it will provide data which is more descriptive. In this part of the research, a number of metaphors that can be found in song lyrics will be analyzed based on the previously mentioned theories, particularly the theory mentioned in Yu's article (2011) on the "Indirect and Direct view" of how metaphors are processed. The purpose of this part of the study is to provide an insight on how the processing of metaphors looks like based on the theories and to provide a certain pattern of metaphor processing, both of which will be important for the next part of the research, where several test participants explain their process of understanding metaphors. Song lyrics are used in this part of the research because songs are closer to the wider public than, for example, poems are. It is also a topic that is more modern and more relevant for today's society. Music is something that people are met with on a daily basis, be it at work, in a store or at home, so it is important to provide some research in this area. The songs and the metaphors that will be used in this research should be by an artist who also writes their own lyrics, in order for the lyrics and metaphors to be consistent. Therefore, for this research, the lyrics of the American singer and songwriter Taylor Swift will be used. The albums from which the analyzed songs come from are "folklore" and "evermore" (written in lower case). On these albums, each song tells a story, so a short summary of what each song is about will be provided before the analysis of the metaphors, in order to provide a broader context for the possible meaning of the metaphors. The titles of the songs are all stylistically written in lower case on their respective albums, and as such will be written in lower case in this research.

### 3.1. Happiness

The first metaphor that will be analyzed can be heard in the song “happiness” of the album “evermore”. The story that is presented in this song revolves around a relationship that is falling apart, however the person acknowledges the good parts of the relationship, despite the fact that now it is over. The lyric goes, “My eyes leak acid rain on the pillow where you used to lay your head”<sup>5</sup>. The metaphor that Swift uses in this lyric is “my eyes leak acid rain”<sup>5</sup>. According to the Indirect view on processing metaphors, the first step in understanding this metaphor is to assess and find its most literal meaning. In this case, the literal meaning would be “my eyes produce acid”. Of course, the meaning of this metaphor is not to be taken literally, so the next step is to find the context in the literal meaning and connect it to the metaphor. Therefore, the context could be “my eyes are producing something that can be compared to acid rain”. Moreover, it is now necessary to decide on the conflict between the literal meaning and the found context and to then identify the actual meaning. The context reveals that the eyes are producing something that can be compared to acid rain, so the actual meaning would be “I am crying/tears are falling out of my eyes”. On the other hand, in the Direct view, the literal and the figurative meaning are processed at the same time. This means that the previous three steps are combined into one, resulting in the meaning of the metaphor to be interpreted as “I am crying, but my tears feel like they are burning into my skin, almost like acid rain.” This way, the literal meaning of the metaphor is combined with the figurative one, and it reduces the literal meaning to a simile.

In the same song, Swift uses another metaphor in the lyric “Honey, when I’m above the trees I see this for what it is”<sup>6</sup>. The metaphor in this lyric is “when I’m above the trees”<sup>6</sup>. In the Indirect method, the literal meaning would be elicited first. In this case, the literal meaning would be “I am floating above a forest or trees and looking down”. Furthermore, it is necessary to find the context of the literal meaning which would be being above something, and it can be related to creating distance

5 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-happiness-lyrics> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

6 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-happiness-lyrics> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

between two things (like the trees and the person that is above the trees). Therefore, when combining the context with the literal meaning, the actual meaning would be that the person is distancing themselves from the situation, changing the point of view and looking at it in a more objective way. In the Direct method, the metaphor is processed without additional steps, so the metaphor can be understood as “as if I was floating above the trees, I need to distance myself from the situation to see it in a more objective way”.

### 3.2. Champagne problems

The next song whose metaphors will be analyzed is the song “champagne problems” of the album “evermore”. This song tells the story of a woman who shocks her partner and their family by turning down a marriage proposal<sup>7</sup>. The first metaphor that will be analyzed can be found in the lyric “Your Midas touch on the Chevy door”<sup>7</sup> with the metaphor being the “Midas touch”. Before being able to understand the figurative, but also the figurative meaning of this metaphor, it is necessary to also know a few things about history, particularly about Greek mythology. Midas was a greedy king of Phrygia who wished of the god Dionysus that everything he touches turns into gold as a reward for a good deed that he had done. What he did not take into account was that everything, including his food, drink and daughter would be turning into gold upon touch.<sup>8</sup> Nowadays, when this expression is used, it usually does not refer to greed, but rather to success and the ability to make money. Therefore, in order to properly understand this metaphor, a person also needs to have background knowledge on king Midas. Going back to the Indirect and Direct methods, in the Indirect method, the literal meaning would be identified first which is “You have a touch like Midas, so you turn everything you touch into gold”. Giving context to this statement results in the thought that “Your touch can make things feel like they are made out of gold”. Combining the literal meaning with the provided context reveals the actual

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7 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-champagne-problems-lyrics> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

8 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Midas%20touch> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

meaning, which is “You make things better, even something like an old Chevy seems like it’s made out of gold when you are there”. On the other hand, in the Direct method, the king Midas metaphor would immediately be understood as not literal, so the metaphor would be processed as “Just like how King Midas turned everything he touched into gold, your presence makes things around you seem better than they actually are”.

Moreover, the next metaphor that can be found in the same song is “Your heart was glass, I dropped it”<sup>9</sup>. This entire lyric could be considered a metaphor. The literal meaning would be that the heart was made out of glass and that the person was holding it in their hand, but dropped it. When finding the context of this metaphor, it can be concluded that the heart was not in fact made out of glass, but that it was almost similar to glass. The heart is compared to the glass because of its properties; glass is known to be fragile and to break easily. The narrator is also not literally holding the glass heart in her hand. The holding of the heart represents the trust and the love that the narrator’s partner gave to her, but that she ultimately betrayed and let go of. Therefore, the actual meaning of the metaphor would be “I emotionally hurt you with my actions”. The Direct method would be similar to finding the context in the Indirect method, so the meaning of the metaphor would be processed as “Your heart was fragile, and I broke it like glass. I hurt you with my actions after you put your trust in me.”

### **3.3. Tolerate it**

The metaphors that will be analyzed now can be heard in the song “tolerate it” of the album “evermore”. This song is about a relationship where one person loves the other dearly and does everything for them, while the other person does not seem to care for them, do anything for them or appreciate the things that the person is doing for them. The first metaphor can be found in the lyric “I

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9 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-champagne-problems-lyrics> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

made you my temple, my mural, my sky / Now I'm begging for footnotes in the story of your life”<sup>10</sup> and the metaphor that will be analyzed is “I’m begging for footnotes in the story of your life”<sup>10</sup>. Starting with the Indirect method, the literal meaning that can be interpreted from this metaphor is “You are writing a book about your life and I want you to write about me in the footnotes, at least”. However, looking at the context of the surrounding lyrics, it is an indication that the literal meaning is not the actual meaning, but rather that the person does not feel as an important subject in their partner’s life, like in a book. The person loves their partner and is willing to give them everything, but the partner does not seem to care. Moreover, the person seems to beg their partner to give them at least something, it can be as small as footnotes in a book. Therefore, the actual meaning of this metaphor would be “You don’t care about me at all, but give me at least something”. With the Direct method, the process of understanding the metaphor is similar. The metaphor would be processed as “I want to feel important in your life, but I know that I’m not, so I’ll settle for whatever you’ll give me” without looking at the literal meaning first.

Furthermore, another metaphor that can be found in the same song is in the lyric “Where's that man who'd throw blankets over my barbed wire?”<sup>10</sup>. According to the Indirect method, the literal meaning is elicited first and, in this case, the literal meaning is that the man was throwing blankets over barbed wire. It is then necessary to identify the context on why this metaphor was used. Blankets are warm, soft and cozy, and they usually make a person feel comfortable and safe. The usage of the image of “throwing a blanket over something” in this metaphor could be related to the properties of the blanket; the man was making her feel comfortable and safe with his love and behavior. On the other hand, barbed wire is known to have sharp edges or sharp points that can easily hurt a person. As a metaphor, barbed wire could represent a feeling of self-destruction, but it can also represent a person’s flaws. In accordance to the context, the actual meaning of the metaphor would then be “Where is that

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<sup>10</sup> <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-tolerate-it-lyrics> (accessed on June 19, 2023)

man who would comfort me and make me feel safe when I was feeling sad and self-destructive?” or even “Where is that man who would look past all my flaws and make me feel loved?”. Moving on to the Direct method, the metaphor would be processed as “You used to make me feel safe, and you would look past my flaws and mistakes, as if you were throwing a blanket over barbed wire, so what happened, what went wrong?” Moreover, besides the metaphor, another important stylistic choice that Swift uses in this lyric, that should be mentioned here in order to better understand it, is a rhetorical question. She is not actually asking where he is, as if he is lost, and she is trying to find him. It rather reflects her anger and desperation about the state of her relationship and the man’s behavior. It can be assumed that he was not always like this, so she is wondering what happened to him.

### **3.4. Right where you left me**

The metaphors that will be analyzed now can be heard in the song “right where you left me” of the album “evermore”. The song tells the story of a girl who got broken up with and who is not able to move on from the break-up or to accept it, to the point where she is constantly thinking about the moment when the break-up happened. The entire song is written in a metaphorical way, where the girl is depicted to still be at the restaurant where the break-up happened and that she is unable to leave. The first metaphor can be found in the lyric “Help, I’m still at the restaurant”<sup>11</sup>. Starting the process of understanding this metaphor with the Indirect method, the literal meaning of this metaphor is that she is sitting in the restaurant, and she has been sitting there for years. Context cues are important in order to properly understand this metaphor. The context of this lyric and metaphor, as previously mentioned, is that the girl is in her head still at the restaurant and thinking about that moment which happened years ago, so it seems like she is still sitting in the same place and that she has not moved in years. Therefore, the actual meaning of the metaphor is “I still haven’t moved on from the break-up”. With the Direct method, the metaphor would be processed as “In my head, I am still at the restaurant that you left me

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11 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-right-where-you-left-me-lyrics> (accessed on June 20, 2023)

in. I cannot accept that we broke up, so I just stayed here.”. Another element of the lyric that should be analyzed in order to understand the metaphor and the song itself is the use of the word “Help” before “I’m still at the restaurant”<sup>11</sup>. This could suggest that the girl is aware of the fact that she is stuck in this reality and that she wants to move on, but she is unable to do so.

In the same song, Swift uses another metaphor that can be related to the previously mentioned context. The metaphor is in the lyric “If our love died young, I can’t bear witness”<sup>11</sup>. The literal meaning of this metaphor would be “Our love was found dead, but I can’t be a witness in court because I didn’t see who killed it”. Moreover, similarly to the previously analyzed metaphor, this metaphor revolves around the context of the girl still being attached to this relationship that “died” years ago and that she is unable to move on. This metaphor further suggests the delusion and denial that the girl is living in. She cannot be a witness to this death because she still has not accepted the fact that it happened. So the actual meaning of this metaphor would be “I have not accepted the fact that we are not together anymore”. With the Direct method, the metaphor would be processed as “We are not together anymore and our love “died” but I haven’t accepted that and in my head everything is perfect, and we are together, so I can’t be a witness to this murder, because in my head, it did not happen.”

### **3.5. Evermore**

The next metaphor that will be analyzed can be heard in the song “evermore” that can be found on the album of the same name. This song describes a feeling of depression and sadness, but it ultimately ends hopeful, that this pain would not last forever. The metaphor is in the lyric “I rewind the tape, but all it does is pause on the very moment all was lost”<sup>12</sup>. Starting with the Indirect method, the literal meaning of this metaphor is that the narrator is watching a videotape, but that it keeps pausing on this one specific section. Looking at the context, it can be assumed that the tape is being used to describe a person’s memories. Memories and thoughts can flood a person’s head, and it can feel like

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<sup>12</sup> <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-evermore-lyrics> (accessed on June 20, 2023)



watching a videotape. Videotapes also tend to pause if they are faulty, and they usually do not go past a certain point (the place on the tape where the error happened) which can then also be compared to the tendency to think about one specific moment and to not be able to get it out of the mind. Moreover, it can also be argued that in order to properly understand this metaphor, one should have the knowledge of how a videotape works. Accordingly, the meaning of this metaphor would then be “I am thinking about something a lot, and I am mostly focused on one moment”. The Direct method would process the metaphor as “I keep thinking about a situation and rewinding it in my head like a videotape, but I can’t move past this one moment when everything fell apart.”

Furthermore, another metaphor that will be analyzed from the same song is “Barefoot in the wildest winter”<sup>12</sup>. The Indirect method identifies the literal meaning first, so that would mean that the narrator is walking barefoot in winter. When analyzing the context of this metaphor, it could be argued that the wildest winter represents hardships, problems and the overall difficulty of life. Winter is usually the season which is the most difficult to endure. Going through those hardships barefoot could mean that it is a struggle and that it is painful, like it would be if a person were to walk barefoot during winter. Therefore, this metaphor can be interpreted as “struggling through the hardships of life”. With the Direct method the metaphor could be processed as “It is difficult to go through winter, so similarly, it is difficult to go through life as I am faced with suffering, problems and burdens, almost like I am walking barefoot in the snow.”

### **3.6. Mirrorball**

The metaphors that will be analyzed next are from the song “mirrorball” of the album “folklore”. The song centers on the comparison of Swift, and a mirrorball and it explains in what ways they are similar. The first metaphor can be found in the very title of the song and in the simple lyric “I’m a mirrorball”<sup>13</sup>. The literal meaning that is elicited for the Indirect method would be “I am the

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<sup>13</sup> <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-mirrorball-lyrics> (accessed on June 20, 2023)

disco ball that can be seen on ceilings of nightclubs” which is not the actual meaning of the metaphor. The context helps in providing more clarity as to what this metaphor means. A mirrorball is known for its reflecting properties, since it is a revolving ball that is covered in small mirrors. Light would usually be shined on the mirrorball, which would then reflect the light around the room. Similarly, the narrator can then “mirror” what other people are doing and how they are behaving, so she can become whatever they want her to be. Another property of the mirrorball that the narrator uses to compare herself to it is the fact that it is made out of multiple pieces, so similarly, when her heart is broken, it breaks into many pieces. This can also be observed in the lyric that comes later, which is “And when I break, it's in a million pieces”<sup>13</sup>. The metaphor of breaking into a million pieces is also not to be taken literally, but it is meant on a more emotional and psychological level. Moreover, like a glass mirrorball that seems to be broken into many pieces, and it cannot be “fixed”, she also sees herself as something that can never be the same again. The actual meaning would then be, “I can reflect your behavior and pretend to be someone that I am not”. With the Direct method, the metaphor would be processed as “Like a mirrorball, I am a reflection of the people around me. I can be whatever people expect me to be.”

Another metaphor that can also be heard in this song is in the lyric “Drunk as they watch my shattered edges glisten”<sup>13</sup> and the metaphor that will be analyzed is “my shattered edges glisten”. According to the Indirect method, the literal meaning can be interpreted as her having some shattered pieces in her possession and that these pieces glisten while some people are looking at them. However, with the context of the song and the image of being like a “mirrorball”, it can be argued that these shattered edges represent the bad things that have happened in her life and that have caused her pain, just like a shattered edge would, which is usually sharp, if handled incorrectly. However, the edges are also glistening, which could mean that they are shimmering. And if it is shining and shimmering, then it is also entertaining, and it is something that people enjoy looking at. Therefore, the actual meaning

could be processed as “My pain is their entertainment.” The Direct method would process the metaphor as “Shattered edges are flawed and broken, just like my life is. Shattered edges can also hurt, so I am hurt. Yet, they are watching and they are enjoying the show of my life falling apart.”

### 3.7. Exile

The next metaphors that are up for analysis can be heard in the song “exile” of the album “folklore”. This song tells the story of two lovers who see each other again after a break-up, where one person is in a new relationship. The first metaphor can be found in the lyric “You’re not my homeland anymore, so what am I defending now?”<sup>14</sup> with the metaphor being the usage of “homeland” and the notion of defending it. According to the Indirect method, the literal meaning is processed first, which would in this case be “You are a country that I live in, and I am a soldier defending this country”. However, this meaning is not accurate as a person cannot be a place, so it is necessary to look at the context of this lyric. Comparing a person to one’s homeland could mean that the person was very close to them, almost like home and as soldiers usually fight for their homeland she used to fight for her partner and for their relationship. It could be argued that she was trying to make the relationship work, but in the end they still broke up. Therefore, after looking at the context of the lyric, the meaning could be interpreted as “You were like home for me and I used to fight for you, but I don’t need to fight now anymore” so the actual meaning behind the metaphor in the lyric “You’re not my homeland anymore”<sup>14</sup> would be “We are not together anymore”. With the Direct method, the metaphor would be processed as “I used to fight for us, like I would for my homeland, but we are not together anymore, so there is no point in me fighting anymore.” which means that the literal meaning of the metaphor is processed together with the figurative one.

The next metaphor that can be heard in this song is in the lyric “I can see you starin', honey, like he's just your understudy”<sup>14</sup>. The metaphor is the usage of the word “understudy” to describe someone,

<sup>14</sup> <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-exile-lyrics> (accessed on June 20, 2023)

similarly to how previously “homeland” was used. With the Indirect view, this metaphor would be processed through the literal meaning first, so it could be processed as “You are an actor and my new partner is your understudy in a play”. However, it is important to now look at the context. In order to properly understand this metaphor, it is important to note what an understudy is. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an understudy is “an actor who learns the parts of other actors in a play, so that he or she can replace them if necessary, for example if they are ill”.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, by comparing the new partner to an understudy, it could be argued that the partner is seen as just a replacement for the previous one and that the relationship is something that will only last temporarily. It could also be said that the previous partner sees the new one as just a copy of himself and that he is better than the new partner, since he would in this metaphor be the “main actor” that the “understudy” is replacing. This metaphor can also be related to the chorus of the song, where one lyric is “I think I've seen this film before, and I didn't like the ending”. Both of these lyrics relate to the film/theater industry and the notion of acting. Moreover, the actual meaning of the metaphor would be “I can see you staring at him, like he is just your replacement.” The Direct view would process the literal meaning with the figurative one, so it could be processed as “You are looking at my new partner, and you think of him as just your understudy, like is just your replacement”.

### **3.8. Peace**

The next song whose metaphors will be analyzed is called “peace” of the album “folklore”. This song seems to be from Swift’s point of view, where she sings to her lover, and she worries that their relationship could never be peaceful (due to her fame and previous “scandals”). The first metaphor can be heard in the lyric “And you know that I’d (...) sit with you in the trenches”<sup>16</sup>. According to the Indirect view, the literal meaning is processed first, which would in this case be that Swift and her lover

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15 Cambridge dictionary “understudy” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/understudy> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

16 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-peace-lyrics> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

are soldiers taking part in a war, and they are sitting together in the trenches. However, the context could suggest that the trenches represent hardships. It is also important to understand what trenches are. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a trench is “a deep hole dug by soldiers and used as a place from which they can attack the enemy while being hidden”.<sup>17</sup> Being in the trenches is, therefore, mostly connected to wars and hiding from the enemy. Using the concept of “sitting in trenches” in this lyric could mean that she is willing to go through hard times with her partner and that she will support him and be there for him no matter how difficult things get. Therefore, the actual meaning of the metaphor would be “I will be there for you even in your worst times”. With the Direct view, the metaphor would be processed as “You know that I would be there with you as if we were sitting in the trenches during a war; even when you are having a difficult time, I am there for you.”

Furthermore, the next metaphor that will be analyzed is found in the lyric “I’d give you my sunshine, give you my best, but the rain is always gonna come if you’re standin’ with me”<sup>16</sup>. The metaphors would be the usage of the words “sunshine” and “rain”, which is also a contrast often used in writing to show the difference between the good and the bad<sup>18</sup>. Starting with the Indirect method, the literal meaning is elicited first, which would in this case be that she is giving him literal sunshine, however whenever they are standing together, rain somehow starts falling. The literal meaning is not the actual meaning here, since Swift is not talking about controlling the weather, so it is important to look at the context of the metaphor and the lyrics. As previously mentioned, “sunshine” and “rain” usually represent two opposites. On one hand, “sunshine” usually represents happiness or pleasure<sup>19</sup>, so in this case it could describe the best parts of a person (as it is suggested in the lyric “give you my best”<sup>16</sup>). On the other hand, “rain” would represent sadness or negativity<sup>20</sup>, but also, as it is the case in

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17 Cambridge dictionary “trench” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trench> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

18 <https://genius.com/20415877> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

19 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sunshine> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

20 <https://symbolismandmetaphor.com/rain-symbolism-meaning/> (accessed on June 21, 2023)

this lyric, it could represent dark and bad moments in a person's life. Furthermore, the context could also suggest that the bad moments are connected to Swift's fame and her status, so that their relationship could never be "normal". The actual meaning of this lyric and the metaphors would then be "I can give you the best of me, but loving will come with a cost, as there will always be bad moments due to my fame and reputation.". The Direct view would process the literal and the figurative meaning simultaneously, which would be "I will give you my sunshine, which is the best of me, but being with me will always bring you bad moments that feel like rain, so I could never give you peace."

### 3.9. The Lakes

The metaphors which will be analyzed next are heard in the song "the lakes" of the album "folklore". The content of this song relates to a sort of escapism – similarly to how poets used to escape to the lakes (in this case, to Lake District) to have peace and quiet and to avoid the public, Swift writes about her own desire to escape to the lakes and run away from her previous life<sup>21</sup>. The first metaphor that will be analyzed is in the first lyric of the song, "Is it romantic how all my elegies eulogize me?"<sup>21</sup>. The metaphors in question are the usages of the terms "elegies" and "eulogize". Starting with the Indirect method, where the literal meaning is found first. The literal meaning here would be that Swift is writing elegies, and that these elegies have the purpose of eulogizing her. The literal meaning is here, unlike with the other metaphors that have previously been analyzed in this research, close to the actual meaning, but it cannot be fully literally interpreted. To understand the metaphor, it is important to understand what elegies and eulogies are. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an elegy is "a sad poem or song, especially remembering someone who has died or something in the past"<sup>22</sup>, while a eulogy is "a speech, piece of writing, poem, etc. containing great praise, especially for someone who recently died or retired from work"<sup>23</sup>. Considering these explanations, the meaning of "elegies" in this

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21 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-the-lakes-lyrics> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

22 Cambridge dictionary "elegy" <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/elegy> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

23 Cambridge dictionary "eulogy" <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/eulogy> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

context could refer to the sad songs that she wrote about her past relationships and lovers, i.e. the songs that talk about the “death” of her relationships. She has also written songs about the decline of her own reputation and status, which she has also compared to death. So, it could be argued that she has previously written her own “elegies”. Moreover, saying that these songs “eulogize” her could then mean that with these songs she has paid tribute to herself and has also embraced herself more, becoming more aware of her life and the situations that she has been put through. It could be argued that in order to properly understand this metaphor, Swift’s previous discography should be known. Therefore, the actual meaning of this metaphor would then be “Is it romantic how all my sad songs help me love myself more?”. With the Direct method the metaphor would be processed as “I wrote some elegies, which are in this case the sad songs that I had written, and these elegies seem to be like a tribute to me and to my life, almost like a eulogy.” Another way that this metaphor could be interpreted is that the eulogies represent the public scrutiny that she has faced in the past, which resulted in a seeming “death” of her career<sup>24</sup>. These “elegies” still had to have mentioned some of her achievements, so in a way, they would “eulogize” her.

The next metaphor that will be analyzed can be found in the lyric “A red rose grew up out of ice frozen ground with no one around to tweet it”<sup>21</sup>, with the metaphor being the first part of the lyric (A red rose grew up out of ice frozen ground). According to the Indirect method, the literal meaning is processed first, and here the literal meaning seems obvious – a red rose grew up out of ice frozen ground. However, the context helps with understanding the actual meaning of this metaphor. As previously mentioned, this song revolves around the idea of escaping the everyday life and going somewhere where the public will not pry. A red rose could represent something beautiful that happened in her life that the public was not aware of (in this case, it was the start of a new relationship). This

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24 <https://pagesix.com/2019/03/06/taylor-swift-hit-rock-bottom-after-kim-kardashian-called-her-a-snake/> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

imagery of a red rose in this lyric could also be connected to the most common symbolic usage of a red rose, which is love, relationship and commitment<sup>25</sup>. This could then furthermore confirm that the red rose represents a new love. The “ice frozen ground” could in this case represent the previously mentioned public scrutiny that she has faced in the past, where most people declared their hate for her and where her career was put on hold<sup>24</sup>. This imagery of a rose growing out of frozen ground is, therefore, used as it is difficult for anything to grow out of ground that is frozen, let alone a rose, just like how for her, it seemed difficult to find love while a large amount of people hated her. Taking all of this into consideration, the actual meaning of this metaphor would then be “I fell in love amid all this public scrutiny and no one even knew”. The Direct method suggests that the literal and figurative meaning are processed together, so the metaphor would be understood as “Like a red rose growing out of ice frozen ground, I have found love when everyone seemed to hate me and my career seemed to be over and no one was around to go on Twitter and tweet about it, because no one knew about it.”

### **3.10. Coney Island**

The next song whose metaphors will be analyzed is the song “coney island” of the album “evermore”. This song, similar to some previous songs which were analyzed in this research, tells the story of a relationship that had ended, and it conveys a feeling of loss and nostalgia<sup>26</sup>. The first usage of a metaphor is in the lyric “And do you miss the rogue who coaxed you into paradise and left you there?”<sup>26</sup>. With the Indirect view, the literal meaning is processed first. The literal meaning here is that a rogue or a criminal has persuaded the speaker to come with them to paradise or heaven and then abandoned them there. It can immediately be assumed that the speaker was not actually taken to heaven by a rogue, but rather that the usage of the term “rogue” and the notion of “leaving someone in paradise” is to be understood figuratively. It is important to note what a rogue actually is. According to

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25 <https://www.bloomandwild.com/the-meaning-of-roses> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

26 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-coney-island-lyrics> (accessed on June 22, 2023)



the Cambridge Dictionary, a “rogue” is “a person, organization, or country that does not behave in the usual or acceptable way”<sup>27</sup>. However, it can also describe a person “who behaves badly but who you still like”<sup>26</sup>. This means that this person would cause trouble and break rules, but the speaker refers to them in an endearing way. This could be the case in this lyric, where the “rogue” is a description for a former lover, so the speaker has at some point seen them in a loving way. Moving on to “paradise”, since this is a story of a relationship that ended, it could be said that the “paradise” represents the very relationship that the two former lovers were once in. It could then be concluded that the relationship had its good moments and that the speaker saw it as sort of paradise or heaven. However, the “rogue” ended then this relationship, symbolically abandoning the speaker in this paradise. It could also be argued that the rogue seemed to have known that the relationship would not last, since he is a “trouble-maker” and since another definition for going rogue is “to start behaving in a way that is not normal or expected, especially by leaving your group and doing something dangerous”. So, by describing the former lover as a rogue, he is not only a person who behaves in an unacceptable way, but he is also someone who is known for leaving. Therefore, the actual meaning of the metaphor would be “Do you miss this deceiving person who persuaded you into entering a relationship with them and then broke-up with you?”. With the Direct view, this figurative meaning is processed together with the literal one, which would here be “I was like a rogue, I did some bad things and I deceived you into thinking that we will have a future together, so you gave in but in the end I abandoned you.”

The next metaphor can be found in the lyric “Sorry for not winning you an arcade ring”<sup>26</sup>. The metaphor in question is the notion of “winning someone an arcade ring”. With the Indirect view, the literal meaning would be processed first. In this metaphor, the literal meaning is that this couple went to an arcade and one person is apologizing for not winning their former lover an arcade ring (which they probably really wanted to have). It is then important to look at the context of this lyric. This lyric and

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<sup>27</sup> Cambridge dictionary “rogue” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rogue> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

the image of an “arcade ring” can be related to the setting of the song, which is the famous amusement park Coney Island in New York City. Coney Island could describe a setting which is fun and colorful, which is in contrast to a mournful feeling of a relationship ending. Similarly, an arcade ring implies that the ring was obtainable in an arcade game, again a place that is usually associated with a fun and playful energy. However, since the arcade ring was not won, it could be argued that this is a symbol of the relationship ending. The speaker might also regret not giving their partner a symbol of their love, even something as invaluable as an arcade ring<sup>28</sup>. Their partner, on the other hand, perhaps would not mind getting an arcade ring, as long as it is something that was given to them by their lover and the value does not matter. Another way that this lyric could be interpreted is that the speaker’s partner wanted things that the speaker deemed insignificant, like the arcade ring, which seems like an insignificant object. This might also be the reason why the relationship ended, and the speaker regrets not giving significance to those things and making their partner happy<sup>28</sup>. The actual meaning of this metaphor could then be, “I’m sorry for not showing you how much I loved you.”. With the Direct view, this metaphor could be processed as “I’m sorry for not showing you how valuable you are to me, even with something as invaluable as an arcade ring.”.

### 3.11. Willow

The next song that will be analyzed is the song “willow” of the album “evermore”. This song tells the story of falling in love despite the hardest efforts not to do so. The first metaphor can be found in the title of the song as well as the lyric “Life was a willow, and it bent right to your wind”<sup>29</sup>. The metaphors in question are the terms “willow” and “wind”. With the Indirect method, the literal meaning is processed first. In this case, the literal meaning would be that the speaker was living as a willow and that she was bending in the wind. However, it is necessary to look at the context to properly process

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28 <https://genius.com/21614011> (accessed on June 22, 2023)

29 <https://genius.com/Taylor-swift-willow-lyrics> (accessed on June 23, 2023)

this metaphor. Swift here compares her life to a willow. A willow is a type of tree which usually has long, thin and fragile branches that are hanging towards the ground. Because of this, they bend whenever it is windy, but they don't break. The willow does not have a choice in whether it will bend and swing in the wind, it is bound to happen due to its shape and characteristics. Similarly, Swift saying that she "bent to his wind" like a willow could mean that she had no control over falling in love with this person, it was something that was meant to happen, just like a willow bending in the wind. Moreover, one of the most common types of willows is the "weeping willow". They are called weeping willows because their branches droop to the ground like tears<sup>30</sup>, so by comparing her life to a willow, Swift suggests that her life was filled with melancholy and sadness, that is until she met her partner, bending to his wind and falling in love. Therefore, the actual meaning of this metaphor would then be "My life was sad and lonely until I met you and fell in love with you". With the Direct method, the literal and figurative meaning would be processed together, so it would be understood as "My life was like a willow, almost like a weeping willow, sad and melancholic until I met you. Just like a willow has no control over bending in the wind, I had no control over falling in love with you."

The next metaphor is in the lyric "Lost in your current like a priceless wine"<sup>29</sup>. Although this lyric also uses simile, the metaphor that will be analyzed here is the notion of losing oneself in someone's current, which will then be compared to the wine, as it is important information for understanding the metaphor. According to the Indirect view, the literal meaning is processed first, in this case that she got lost at sea, in the current, which is not the actual meaning of the metaphor. It is important to next look at the context in order to properly understand this metaphor. This song revolves mostly about falling in love and not having much control of it, which is here compared to a feeling of being lost in a current and sinking to the bottom of the sea. When one gets caught in a current, especially if it is a strong one, it is difficult to swim out of it as it is pulling the person under. She has

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<sup>30</sup> <https://genius.com/21577229> (accessed on June 23, 2023)

perhaps tried to break out of the current, i.e. she has tried to not fall in love, however his current was too strong, and it pulled her under, which means that she fell in love. She is afterwards comparing the sinking in the current to priceless wine. This could be a reference to how expensive wines would be carried on ships which were taking trips across the oceans. However, if those ships end up sinking, the wine would, obviously, sink with the ship. The wine would then be lost to the sea and while it is sitting on the ocean floor, it would also undergo extensive aging<sup>31</sup>, making them very rare, which results in its high price once it is recovered, essentially making it priceless<sup>32</sup>. She, therefore, compares falling in love to the wine that gets lost in the current, but this experience makes it ultimately better. The actual meaning would then be, “I tried to fight against it, but I ended up falling in love with you, which was the best thing that could have happened to me.”. With the Direct view, both meanings are processed together, so the metaphor could be understood as “Like in a current, I lost myself in you and fell in love, which changed me for the better, like wine changes at the bottom of the ocean, making it priceless.”.

### **3.12. Conclusion of this research**

The purpose of this part of the research was to analyze metaphors in song lyrics on the basis of Yu’s article (2011) and the theory of the “Indirect and Direct view” and to provide an insight on how this processing would look like. Most of the metaphors that Swift has used and that have been analyzed in this paper relate to human emotions and can be seen as the types of metaphors which describe an abstract concept. In some of the metaphors, the metaphorical concepts that were suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) can be observed. Those would be LOVE IS WAR (“You’re not my homeland anymore, so what am I defending now?” - exile; “And you know that I’d (...) sit with you in the trenches” - peace), LOVE IS A JOURNEY (“Lost in your current like a priceless wine” - willow) and

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31 <https://genius.com/21577595> (accessed on June 23, 2023)

32 <https://www.palatexposure.com/wine-articles/cellared-sea-wines-lost-ocean-centuries/> (accessed on June 23, 2023)

LOVE IS A PATIENT (“If our love died young I can’t bear witness” - right where you left me). All of these metaphorical concepts relate to love, which seems to be a common theme in most of the metaphors that were analyzed here. The metaphors were analyzed through the stages that were suggested with the “Indirect” view first, which is through literal meaning first, then finding the context and concluding the metaphorical meaning through the differences and similarities between the literal meaning and the context. When looking at the context of some metaphors, it is important to note that some background knowledge was needed in order to understand it properly (for example, the myth of Midas for the song “champagne problems” or the story of sunken ships and priceless wines for the song “willow”). Although written down it seems lengthy, the process of understanding a metaphor happens in a matter of seconds, if the hearer of the metaphor has the proper general knowledge and knows the context. The method of the “Direct” view seems to process the metaphor faster. Although, this part of the research does not conclude how metaphors are exactly processed (i.e. if one view is right and the other is wrong), it does provide an insight of how metaphor processing looks like based on those views. The “Direct” one, also seems to make more sense, as the literal and metaphorical meaning are compared immediately. It could be argued that going through the literal meaning first in order to get to the metaphorical one, seems to be almost like an extra step that does not contribute much, as the metaphors are easily recognized as such. The “Direct” method, therefore, seems to be the one more likely used when processing a metaphor.

## **4. Research – a survey on the processing of metaphors**

In the second part of the research, a survey is conducted where the subjects of the survey explain their process of understanding a metaphor. The metaphors that are used can also be found in song lyrics, since this was the topic of the previously conducted research. In this survey, the participants were presented with 6 metaphors found in song lyrics. The songs that were used are in Croatian, since the participants are all native speakers of Croatian, which means that no additional proficiency tests were needed. Using Croatian songs and lyrics also did not introduce additional variables that would be needed like if it were in English, such as the level of proficiency or the age of acquisition. Once the participants have read the lyrics, they were asked to describe the process of how they got to the meaning of the metaphor. This case study takes a qualitative approach as there are not many participants and the focus will be on their answers and interpretations. The research question that this study will try to answer is “What process do people go through when trying to understand a metaphor?”. The hypothesis for this research question would be that the students will mostly describe the process of understanding the metaphors through the Direct method/view. This means that the participants will probably process the metaphorical meaning together with the literal one. This research will then also provide an insight into whether the participants will elicit the literal meaning first, reject it and only then look for the figurative one or not, considering the fact that this is the most popular theory on how metaphors are processed.

### **4.1. Participants**

There were 10 participants of this study, with all of them being university students. Most of them are students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies, while one participant studies at the Faculty of Economics and Business. Moreover, 60% of the participants are students of the English language and literature as well as another major (German language and literature, Croatian language

and literature or Philosophy). Other participants study History, Art History, Economics or Early and Preschool education. Eight participants are between the ages of 18 and 25, while two participants are between the ages of 25 and 30. Moreover, 7 of the participants are female students and 3 are male. Most of the participants are currently on their third year of their bachelor studies (50%), 30% are first year master students and 20% are second year master students.

## **4.2. Methodology**

This survey was conducted via Google forms. The participants were first presented with a consent form that they have all agreed to and afterwards filled in demographic questions. After that, they were presented with six metaphors that can be found in Croatian songs, and they were asked to try and explain the process of how they got to the meaning of the metaphors. They were also advised to try and write down their stream of thought while explaining how they understood the metaphor. The responses are measured based on the previously mentioned theories and are compared to the patterns that were observed in the previous research (chapter 3 of this paper)

## **4.3. Results**

The first metaphor that the participants were presented with was from the song “Libar” by Croatian singer Gibonni. The lyric is “U libar svojih dugova upiši mene”<sup>33</sup>, which can be translated to “Write me down into your book of debts”. Two of the participants have described the process of understanding the metaphor by looking at the literal meaning first. The first participant said that they imagine the sentence in their head based on the literal meaning and then get to the actual meaning through the context and the general knowledge. The second participant took a similar approach to the processing of this metaphor by analyzing the words and their meanings individually (specifically the word “libar”) and after that making a connection between the author and the meaning of “libar”, saying that they imagine that the author is almost like a part of this book. Moreover, this participant also

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33 <https://tekstovi.net/2,153,6176.html> (accessed on August 10, 2023)

looked at the context of the next lyric in order to come to conclusions about this metaphor. After looking at the context and connecting it to the literal meaning, they concluded the metaphorical meaning. In this case, they understood the metaphor as the author sending a message to their lover and that the author seemed to have bought their love somehow and that he owes his lover. Moreover, the other eight participants took to a more Direct approach to the processing of this metaphor. This means that they explained their process of understanding this metaphor by comparing the literal meaning to the metaphorical one immediately. One person has, for example, compared “libar” to a book which symbolizes something permanent and even something that was made official. Most of the participants also mentioned that the author owes the other person something, whether it was emotionally or socially. One participant also suggested that the author did not give the other person something that they were supposed to give. One participant implied that the author could owe an apology, while another participant suggested that this debt is almost like a promise, that the author will be there for the person that he is singing to. It was also suggested that the book could represent all of the past mistakes. All of the participants also mentioned that it is first necessary to understand the word “libar” and to compare it to the context of the metaphor. This means that they have relied on context cues and general knowledge in order to understand and process this metaphor. For this metaphor, it can be argued that most participants processed it directly, without looking at the literal meaning first and then rejecting it.

The next metaphor that the participants were presented with was from the song “Nisi više moja bol” again by the singer Gibonni. The lyric with the metaphor is “Sad ajmo pomoći tišini da nas pretvori u kap kiše”<sup>34</sup> which would translate to “Now let’s help the silence to turn us into a raindrop”. Compared to the previous metaphor, this one is more abstract, as silence is something that is difficult to imagine, as well as is turning someone into a raindrop. This metaphor is, therefore, not something that could be considered embodied experience, making it more difficult to conceptualize and understand.

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34 <https://tekstovi.net/2,153,6176.html> (accessed on August 10, 2023)



Accordingly, many of the participants said that they had difficulties with trying to process this metaphor. Three of the participants were, therefore, not sure what the meaning of the metaphor was. The remaining seven participants have provided some explanation, although not as detailed as for the previous metaphor. One participant mentioned how this was a metaphor which is difficult to imagine and to even try and understand literally. They also mention that further context is needed in order to understand this metaphor. The other participants which have tried to provide a meaning for the metaphor have connected silence to a feeling of peace and serenity, while they connected rain to something small and imperceptible, as well as something fleeting and temporary. Most of these participants have used comparison between the literal meaning of words and their supposed metaphorical ones in order to understand the metaphor. This means that they have applied the Direct method in order to process this metaphor.

The next metaphor that the participants were presented with was from the song “Jesen u meni” by the band Parni Valjak. The lyric and metaphor was “Jesen u meni caruje, a u tebi proljeće”<sup>35</sup> which can be translated as “Autumn rules in me, while you have spring inside yourself”. Compared to the previous metaphor, the participants found this one to be much easier to understand and less abstract. All of the participants have used comparison to process this metaphor. They were comparing the attributes of the metaphorical expressions to human emotions. They immediately understood autumn as representing something bad, sad, gray, melancholic, somber and gloomy, while they compared spring to something colorful, happy, joyous and filled with life. It can be argued that the images of autumn and spring are often seen as two opposites, similarly to how summer and winter would be, which is a phenomenon that can be observed in nature, making it an experience that a person would be very familiar with and part of general knowledge. This is something that the participants noticed right away, so they attributed the characteristics of these two seasons to the singer and the person that he is singing

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35 <https://genius.com/Parni-valjak-jesen-u-meni-lyrics> (accessed on August 11, 2023)

about. The participants agree that the singer is, therefore, feeling sad, almost like he is wilting away while the other person is doing good and feeling happy. Three participants have also made the observation that the two different seasons could represent that the two people have different personalities, that they are like two things that do not connect or go together. The interpretation of this metaphor can also be seen as a form of conceptual mapping, since the attributes of autumn and spring are mapped onto the singer and his lover. Moreover, all of the participants also seemed to have used the Direct approach when processing this metaphor. Not one participant has indicated that they went through the literal meaning of the metaphor first, which would in this case be that the two people have literal autumn and spring inside of them. All of the participants processed the literal meaning and the metaphorical one simultaneously.

The next metaphor that the participants were presented with was from the same song as the previous metaphor, which is “Jesen u meni”. The metaphor is in the lyric “Ni sunce ne može kroz oblake”<sup>36</sup> which can be translated to “Not even the sun can shine through the clouds”. This lyric also comes directly after the previous one in the song, so it could be said that these two lyrics are connected. Two of the participants have gone through the Indirect approach when processing this metaphor. They both first imagined the picture of the sun not being able to shine through the clouds and after that they compared it to the context of the song, and the general symbolism of the sun and clouds, before finally reaching the overall meaning of the metaphor. They interpreted the literal meaning first, and while the literal meaning can still work and it makes sense, they understood the metaphorical meanings behind it. This metaphorical meaning would then be that the clouds represent a sad person and that nothing seems to make them happy. Moreover, the other eight participants have, as with the previous metaphors, used a more Direct approach in the processing of this metaphor. This means that they did not go through the literal meaning and imagine this lyric as how it would actually happen in nature. Three participants

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36 <https://genius.com/Parni-valjak-jesen-u-meni-lyrics> (accessed on August 11, 2023)

mentioned the characteristics that are usually associated with the sun and clouds, so this would be their symbolism. They explained that the sun mostly represents something good, positive or joyous, while the clouds represent something bad, negative or sad. This is similar to the previous metaphor of the difference between autumn and spring, and it can also be observed in nature, so it is something that is generally known. Moreover, all of the participants understood that there is a comparison of two different situations that is being conveyed with this metaphor. However, the overall interpretation varies from one participant to another. One participant said that not even the happiest person is immune to problems and sadness. Another participant said that it could mean that the person is too closed off for anyone to come to them. Another interpretation was that sometimes an obstacle cannot be overcome even with the greatest of efforts. All in all, the participants understood this metaphor as clouds representing something bad and the sun representing something good, and interpreted it by using the Direct method.

Moreover, the participants were then presented with the fifth metaphor, which was from the song “Kamo odlazi svjetlo” by the Croatian band The Animatori. The lyric that the participants had to analyze was “Već bježi svjetlost od nas, i kamo ide, ne znamo ni mi”<sup>37</sup>. This can be translated to “The light is already running away from us, and we don’t know where it is going”. Two of the participants have again opted for going through the literal meaning first. In the case of this metaphor, they imagined the scene as how the literal meaning would look like. The first participant thought of it as people standing in the dark and watching the sunlight getting away from them. After going through the literal meaning first, this participant has then deducted that the sunlight is not to be taken literally and therefore looked for a metaphorical one. They had understood the light as a representation of hope. The second participant had a similar image in their head, where there were two people walking down the street, but the light was running away from them. After that, the participant mentioned additional

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<sup>37</sup> <https://cuspajz.com/tekstovi-pjesama/pjesma/animatori/kamo-odlazi-svjetlo.html> (accessed on August 12, 2023)

context, which is in this case the usual association that one might have when hearing the word “light” (“svjetlost”). Light can be associated with something positive like hope, happiness or even love. With this symbolism decoded, this participant then explains that this metaphor could then mean that the people are losing hope or maybe even themselves. Moreover, the other eight participants took a more Direct approach when processing this metaphor, which means that they did not mention that they went through the literal meaning first, but rather interpreted it through associations. Six of the other participants also mentioned the symbolism of light when describing the metaphor. They explained it as being a metaphor for good feelings, happiness, innocence and, again, hope. This means that they all connected this to something positive, and it can, again, be related to real-life experiences where light usually brings something good. Most of them also then understood this metaphor as losing something positive in your life (whichever trait they chose). One participant provided the meaning of light as being something good in one’s life that can come at unpredictable moments. Another participant mentioned that this metaphor could represent a loss of innocence early in life, while another described it as a depiction of life as a journey into the unknown. The light would in the case of the latter interpretation represent something that is known and familiar, and its absence would then represent the unknown. All in all, this metaphor was also processed in a mostly Direct way.

Finally, the last metaphor that the participants were asked to interpret was from the song “Budi moja voda” by the band Laufer. The lyric that they were presented with was “Budi moja voda, ja sam sada vatra, izgorjet ću”<sup>38</sup>. The translation of this lyric is “Be my water, I am now fire, and I’ll burn out”. Most of the participants have processed this metaphor directly, however, one has once again described it by using the literal meaning and its imagery first. In the case of this metaphor, this participant described that they imagined a meadow on fire. A big wave of water then suddenly appears and puts out the fire, saving the meadow. The participant then explains that this imagery helps them get to the

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38 <https://tekstovi.net/2,913,15218.html> (accessed on August 12, 2023)

actual meaning of the metaphor, which would in this case be that one person is looking for safety in another person. Moreover, another participant has also used imagery for the description of their understanding of the metaphor, although this one might not be something expected. This participant mentioned that they associated this metaphor with the puzzle-solving video game “Fireboy and Watergirl”<sup>39</sup>, since this game revolves heavily on these two elements. This interpretation can be related to personal experiences and culture, because this was a popular game among children in the early 2010s. While imagining this scene, the participant then drew conclusions about the meaning of this metaphor, saying that one person is helping another with overcoming their difficulties, which is in a way also similar to how the game works. Other participants have taken a more Direct approach. They have processed this metaphor based on their general knowledge and associations. One participant has mentioned the symbolism of fire and how it could represent something that can hurt, as well as the symbolism of water as something that calms and soothes the pain. They then connect this to the meaning of the metaphor being that one person needs another to calm them down. Three other participants have also mentioned this metaphor could refer to calming down, that one person is feeling a strong sense of ‘burning out’ and that they need someone to comfort them. Other participants have also mentioned that the singer/author needs emotional support, which can be romantic, but does not necessarily need to be, and that they need somebody to ‘fix’ them. The overall agreement between the participants is that one person is going through a difficult time and that they need someone else to get them through it.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to try and answer the question of how people process metaphors, with the hypothesis being that they would mostly process them in accordance to the Direct view. After looking at the results of this study, it could be argued that several types of metaphor processing can be

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39 <https://www.fireboynwatergirl.com/?p=page&id=1> (accessed on August 12, 2023)

identified. Most participants have described their process of understanding these metaphors as simultaneous processing of the literal and figurative meaning, which is in correlation to the Direct view, as mentioned in Yu (2011). However, while this was the most common way of processing metaphors among the participants, two of them have consistently used a different method. They have used literal meanings and imagery as the first step to understanding the metaphor and after rejecting the literal meaning, they looked at the context to reach the metaphorical meaning. This type of processing also correlates to the Indirect view mentioned in Yu (2011), as well as the Literal first hypothesis in Brisard, Frisson and Sandra (2001) and the Two-stage processing model in Harris (1976). While the results of this study confirm the hypothesis, it also suggests that there is not just one specific way of processing metaphors that would be considered the 'correct' one, but that there are several, and they can vary from person to person. This is also in correlation to the theories mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, as the processing of these metaphors has in many ways depended on the contextual cues, general knowledge, conceptualizations and embodied experiences.

#### **4.5. Limitations of the study**

This study also has several limitations. The first limitation that should be mentioned is the small number of participants. In this study there were only 10 participants as there was a bigger focus on the quality of the answers rather than their quantity. It is also important to note that there is a large number of theories that explore the processing of metaphors, which have not been mentioned in this thesis, and have, therefore, not been included in the analysis of this research. Moreover, there were also only six metaphors that the participants had to analyze, which means that there was less information to work with.

#### **4.6. Directions for further research**

Taking into consideration the limitations of this study, further research can be conducted based on this study and this topic. Research with more participants and more metaphors can be conducted in order to broaden this pilot study and give perhaps more conclusive results. This study could then also be more quantitative. More theories on how metaphors are processed could also be implemented in further research, in order to see how and if metaphors are processed in those ways. Another aspect that could also be explored in further research is the analysis of metaphors in other languages, since here the focus was on Croatian metaphors. The focus can also be not only on metaphors that can be found in song lyrics, but also poetry and other types of literature forms. Another direction for further research would be to analyze the process of understanding metaphors that people tend to use every day and to try and conclude why they use them.

## 5. Conclusion of this thesis

The purpose of this thesis was to provide an insight on what metaphors are and how they can be processed. Metaphors are an important part of the language system. They can be explained as expressions that describe a person or object based on similar characteristics that they have with another person or object. A metaphorical expression would then look almost like facts would, since the pattern for a metaphor is usually “x is y”. However, even though they look like definitive statements, metaphors are not to be taken literally, but should be compared to the literal meaning. Although past theories suggested that everyday language and metaphors do not overlap, newer studies suggest the opposite. Metaphors are actually a part of everyday language and are usually used because the meaning that they are conveying is difficult to explain by using only the literal language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also suggest that everyday language is fundamentally metaphorical, as many experiences are described through metaphorical concepts. Metaphors are also important for expressing feelings, especially those that are difficult to understand and seem more abstract.

Similarly, there are several types of metaphors, and, as suggested by Banaruee and colleagues (2019), one of those types are metaphors that describe abstract concepts, like the previously mentioned feelings or other phenomena. The other group would be metaphors that describe concrete concepts. Metaphors could also be divided into “dead”, which lost their metaphorical effect due to being overused, and “novel” or new metaphors.

Moreover, the processing of metaphors is another important question that researchers have dealt with. It is an important, but also an interesting area of research and several different theories have been developed. It mostly comes down to two different views. One suggests that the literal meaning is processed first, and once it cannot be identified, a metaphorical meaning will be searched for. The metaphorical meaning can then be identified thanks to the surrounding context. This theory is



suggested in Yu (2011) with the Indirect view, in Brisard, Frisson and Sandra (2001) with the Literal first hypothesis and in Harris (1976) with the Two-stage processing model. The other view, however, suggests that the literal and metaphorical meaning are processed together and share structure, as suggested in Yu (2011) with the Direct view. A similar view can be found in Gentner and Bowdle's (2006) property-matching theory where in order to understand a metaphor, it is important to identify common properties between the literal and metaphorical meaning. This is also mentioned by Ritchie (2013), who argues that substitution, comparison and attribution of the metaphorical expression and the topic.

These theories and two different views were then tested on two kinds of research. The first one was an analysis that I have carried out, taking a more descriptive and qualitative approach. It was an analysis of song lyrics and metaphors that were found in them. They were all songs written by the American singer and songwriter Taylor Swift. The purpose of this analysis was to provide an insight of the two most prominent views on how metaphors are processed (referred to as the Indirect and Direct view, as suggested by Yu (2011)). With this analysis, it was easy to see the patterns of how a metaphor would be processed based on these theories, which will be important for the next part of the research. What is also important to note is that some metaphors also require additional knowledge in order to be understood properly, which this analysis provided. This analysis also provided an insight on metaphors in lyricism, what types of metaphors are usually used, how they are used and what they describe. It could be argued that this is in correlation with the types mentioned at the start of this thesis – the metaphors are novel, they mostly describe concepts which are abstract, like emotions, and some show patterns of metaphorical concepts.

The second research, which is also the final part of this thesis, was another analysis, but this time a survey and opinions of other people were used. For this research, a survey with ten participants,

all of which are college students, was conducted. The participants were presented with six different metaphors that can be found in Croatian song lyrics, and they were asked to describe their process of understanding those metaphors. The result suggested that both of the previously mentioned and analyzed theories were implemented when the participants were processing the metaphors. Most of the participants have processed the metaphorical meaning together with the literal one, which is a method of processing that was suggested with the Direct view. However, two of the participants have used a more Indirect approach, by understanding the literal meaning of the metaphors first and only then looking for the metaphorical one. These results could imply that there is not just one correct theory on how metaphors are processed and that the others are wrong, but rather that there could very well be several different ways of how a metaphor can be processed.

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## 7. Appendix

Google form survey

### Procesuiranje metafora

Pozdrav svima i hvala što sudjelujete u ovom istraživanju. Provodim ovo istraživanje u sklopu svog diplomskog rada te mi svojim sudjelovanjem pomažete u završavanju ovog studija.

Cilj ovog istraživanja je napraviti uvid u to kako se procesuiraju metafore. U ovom ćete istraživanju bit će vam ponuđene metafore iz hrvatskih pjesama te jedino što morate napraviti je objasniti proces kojim ste došli do značenja metafore. Samo je 6 metafora, tako da anketa ne traje dugo, a puno mi pomažete.

Također je važno napomenuti da je ovo istraživanje potpuno anonimno i da se vaši osobni podaci neće dijeliti s drugima te će se koristiti samo u svrhu ovog istraživanja.

Hvala unaprijed :)

Razumijem implikacije ovog istraživanja i pristajem sudjelovati u ovom istraživanju. \*

Da

Ne

#### Demografska pitanja

Opis (po izboru)

Dob \*

manje od 18

18-25

25-30

30+

Spol \*

- muško
- žensko
- ne želim se izjasniti
- Ostalo...

Što studiraš? \*

Ili ako si studirao/studirala napiši što si studirao/studirala?  
Ako nisi studirao/studirala napiši "/"

Tekst dugog odgovora

Trenutačna godina studiranja / \*

Ili ako više ne studiraš Najviša završena godina studiranja

- prva godina preddiplomskog
- druga godina preddiplomskog
- treća godina preddiplomskog
- prva godina diplomskog
- druga godina diplomskog
- ne studiram

U libar svojih dugova upiši mene. \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

Sad ajmo pomoći tišini da nas pretvori u kap kiše. \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

Jesen u meni caruje, a u tebi proljeće \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

Ni sunce ne može kroz oblake \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

Već bježi svjetlost od nas, I kamo ide, ne znamo ni mi \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

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Budi moja voda, ja sam sada vatra, izgorjet ću \*

Tekst dugog odgovora

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