

Metaphor Meanings in Bruno Mars's Lyrics Through a Sociolinguistic Lens

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Abstrak - Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan metafora dalam lirik lagu Bruno Mars dari perspektif sosiolinguistik. Dengan berfokus pada empat lagu terpilih, yakni Just the Way You Are, Talking to the Moon, Grenade, dan Locked Out of Heaven; penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi, mengkategorikan, dan menginterpretasikan ekspresi metaforis guna mengungkap bagaimana metafora membangun makna, emosi, dan konteks sosial. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, data berupa teks lirik dikumpulkan dan dianalisis untuk mengklasifikasikan metafora ke dalam jenis ontologis, struktural, dan konvensional. [REVISION] Hasil analisis yang telah divalidasi menunjukkan adanya 31 ekspresi metaforis/figuratif dalam keempat lagu tersebut, yang terdiri atas metafora konvensional, struktural, ontologis, serta metafora hiperbolik. Distribusi frekuensi ditambahkan ke dalam tabel hasil untuk memperjelas kecenderungan jenis metafora dan kategori sosiolinguistik. Dari sudut pandang sosiolinguistik, metafora-metafora tersebut mencerminkan 31 temuan yang tersebar dalam 4 kategori: Gaya, Ragam, dan Genre; Bahasa dan Kesantunan; Bahasa dan Gender; serta Sosiolinguistik Etnografi. Just the Way You Are memuat 3 contoh Gaya/Ragam/Genre, 4 contoh bahasa dan kesantunan, serta 2 contoh bahasa dan gender. Talking to the Moon menunjukkan 5 contoh Gaya/Ragam/Genre serta unsur-unsur sosiolinguistik etnografi. Grenade memuat 4 contoh Gaya/Ragam/Genre dan 6 contoh bahasa dan kesantunan. Sementara itu, Locked Out of Heaven memuat 4 contoh Gaya/Ragam/Genre dan 1 contoh Bahasa dan Gender. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan metafora dalam lirik lagu Bruno Mars tidak hanya memperkuat dampak emosional, tetapi juga mencerminkan pola-pola sosiolinguistik yang memengaruhi cara pendengar menafsirkan makna.

Keywords: Metapora, Lirik Bruno Mars, Sudut Pandang Sociolinguistik

Abstract- This study examines the use of metaphor in the song lyrics of Bruno Mars from a sociolinguistic perspective. Focusing on four selected songs: Just the Way You Are, Talking to the Moon, Grenade, and Locked Out of Heaven, the research aims to identify, categorize, and interpret metaphorical expressions to uncover how they construct meaning, emotion, and social context. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, lyrical texts were collected and analyzed to classify metaphors into ontological, structural, and conventional types. [REVISION] The validated analysis reveals 31 metaphorical/figurative expressions across the four songs, consisting of conventional, structural, ontological, and hyperbolic metaphors. Frequency distribution tables are added to clarify the tendency of metaphor types and their sociolinguistic categories. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the metaphors are distributed across 31 instances across four categories: Style, Register, and Genres; Language and Politeness; Language and Gender; and Ethnographic Sociolinguistics. Just the Way You Are shows 3 instances of Style/Register/Genres, 4 of Language and Politeness, and 2 of Language and Gender. Talking to the Moon presents 5 examples of Style/Register/Genres and elements of Ethnographic Sociolinguistics. The grenade contains 4 Style/Register/Genres features and 6 Language and Politeness instances. Meanwhile, Locked Out of Heaven features 4 Style/Register/Genres and 1 Language and Gender instance. These findings indicate that the use of metaphor in Bruno Mars's lyrics not only strengthens emotional impact but also reflects sociolinguistic patterns that shape how listeners interpret meaning.

Keywords: Metaphor, Bruno Mars's lyrics, Sociolinguistics lens

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics investigates the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of language, analyzing how sounds, words, and sentences are organized and interpreted. Linguists also delve into



language variation and change, tracing the historical development of languages and examining how people evolve over time and across different social and cultural contexts, as a person's language abilities and linguistic knowledge evolve dynamically throughout their life (Reissner, 2025). Moreover, linguistics encompasses sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, historical linguistics, applied linguistics, and computational linguistics, each focusing on specific aspects of language and its interaction with other disciplines. In summary, linguistics offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the richness, diversity, and complexity of human language and its central role in shaping human cognition, culture, and society. Then, sociolinguistics explores how people talk and why. It is like a big puzzle, where we examine language and society to understand how people fit together. Imagine some people are in a big room with lots of folks talking. Each person might talk a bit differently depending on whom they are talking to or where they are from. Sociolinguistics covers a wide range of topics, including micro- and macro-level language variation and change, language planning, bilingualism, discourse, and pragmatics (Archer et al., 2024). Sociolinguistics also looks at how language changes over time and why. It is like watching a movie about how words and accents evolve over the years.

Sociolinguistics explores how language varies and functions within social contexts, covering several key areas as outlined (Fauzan, 2021). It examines how people construct social meaning in interaction and views linguistic variation as a tool that both speakers and listeners actively use (D'Onofrio, 2020). It includes the study of style, register, and genre, which explain how individuals adjust their language to express identity, respond to different audiences, and fit specific communicative forms. Language variation examines differences in dialect, accent, vocabulary, and grammar across regions and social groups, as well as variation within a single speaker. The field also addresses language and gender, emphasizing that gendered communication patterns are shaped socially rather than biologically. Sociolinguistics explores the connection between language and the social settings where it is used (Johnstone, 2020). Additionally, language and politeness focus on how cultural norms guide respectful and appropriate speech. The integration of ethnography helps reveal how cultural practices influence communication and how language operates within particular communities. Finally, code-switching and code-mixing describe the flexible use of multiple languages or dialects in interaction, often influenced by context, topic, or social relationships. Together, these areas illustrate how language reflects and constructs social life.

Sociolinguistics encompasses several key areas that explain how language operates within society. It examines style, register, and genres to show how individuals tailor language to express identity and suit different contexts. Language variation highlights differences in accent, vocabulary, and grammar across regions, social groups, and even within a single speaker. Studies on language and gender view gender as a social construct shaped through cultural and interpersonal interactions, while language can also reflect social class through speaking patterns. Politeness is understood as a culturally informed linguistic practice that requires sensitivity to shared social norms. Ethnography and sociolinguistics together explore how cultural, social, and individual factors influence communication, including discourse patterns and bilingual development. Code-switching and code-mixing refer to the alternation or blending of languages, often influenced by audience, topic, and social relationships, and are commonly observed in multilingual contexts such as Singapore (Fauzan, 2021).

Language and metaphor are closely connected, as metaphor functions as an essential means for shaping our understanding of experience and conveying social meanings (Khalifah et al., 2026). It includes techniques like metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole. Metaphors are essential in cultural communication because they shape cultural narratives, identity formation, and social understanding (Revita et al., 2024). Metaphor is a distinctive linguistic phenomenon, pervasive in real-life communication (Shou et al., 2024). Metaphor compares two things by saying one thing is another, and similes compare two things using "like" or "as". Metaphors allow words to take on new meanings, enabling them to depict phenomena or ideas without existing lexical labels through the figurative transfer of an abstract sense to another domain (Forgács, 2022). Metaphors help us understand things in new ways by connecting them to what we already know. It makes our language more colorful and interesting, like adding paint to a picture or music to a song. Metaphors are like secret codes that make people's words more powerful and fun to listen to or read. Beyond its aesthetic function, metaphor also serves as a social and cultural resource that reflects the values, beliefs, and experiences of a speech community. In song lyrics, metaphors are not merely decorative linguistic devices but also represent social realities, interpersonal relationships, and cultural ideologies embedded within a particular context. Therefore, analyzing metaphors from a sociolinguistic perspective enables researchers to understand how language users construct meanings shaped by social experiences, cultural norms, and collective identities. This perspective is particularly relevant in popular music, where lyrics often serve as a medium for conveying social messages and emotional experiences to a broad audience.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as cited in Jati (Jati, 2020), metaphors can be categorized into three main types: conventional metaphors, mixed metaphors, and new metaphors. Conventional metaphors are widely used

and easily recognized in everyday communication because they rely on established conceptual frameworks, including ontological, orientational, and structural metaphors. Mixed metaphors occur when multiple metaphorical expressions appear within the same context, which may either complement each other or, if conflicting, create confusion. Meanwhile, new metaphors arise from individual creativity and are not part of the existing cultural or linguistic repertoire, reflecting the evolving nature of language as speakers generate novel ways to express ideas. Together, these types of metaphor highlight how metaphorical thinking shapes human cognition, communication, and cultural meaning-making. Although numerous studies have investigated metaphor in song lyrics, most have focused primarily on identifying metaphorical expressions and their conceptual meanings. Limited attention has been given to how metaphors function within sociolinguistic contexts, particularly in representing social themes such as love, friendship, equality, and interpersonal relationships in popular music. Furthermore, studies examining Bruno Mars' lyrics tend to emphasize stylistic, semantic, or literary aspects rather than exploring how metaphorical language reflects broader social values and communicative practices. Therefore, a sociolinguistic analysis of metaphors in Bruno Mars' songs remains necessary to deepen understanding of the relationship between figurative language and social meaning.

The research aims to identify metaphors that reflect social themes such as love, friendship, and equality, and to highlight how these metaphors function sociolinguistically to convey deep emotional messages in Bruno Mars's songs. It further examines the types of metaphors used, the meanings they convey in a sociolinguistic context, and the ways they mirror broader social perspectives. The challenges in analyzing metaphors and sociolinguistic elements in his lyrics arise from the varied interpretations listeners may hold, making it difficult to reach a universal understanding of meaning. Additionally, individuals from different social groups may interpret metaphors differently based on their cultural backgrounds or levels of linguistic awareness. Another issue is that the metaphors and sociolinguistic features may not fully represent the lived experiences of all listeners, particularly regarding power dynamics or inequities within relationships. Despite these challenges, this study is expected to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics by demonstrating how metaphorical language in popular music reflects social meanings and cultural values. The findings may also enrich discussions on the relationship between language, society, and artistic expression, while providing insights for future researchers interested in metaphor studies, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistic investigations of contemporary music.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the use of metaphors in the lyrics of selected Bruno Mars songs. A qualitative descriptive approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore linguistic phenomena in natural contexts and to interpret meaning beyond the surface level of the text. Qualitative research encompasses a range of theoretical perspectives, conceptual frameworks, and methodological practices used to generate knowledge within the social sciences and humanities (Galuppo & Benozzo, 2024). The data of this study consist of lyrical excerpts containing metaphorical expressions taken from four selected songs. The songs were selected purposively for their popularity and the richness of metaphorical expressions related to social themes such as love, relationships, personal experiences, and emotional expression. These themes were considered relevant to the study's sociolinguistic focus because they reflect social values and interpersonal communication that are commonly represented in contemporary popular music.

The data were collected through documentation techniques that make implicit information observable and provide verifiable evidence (Kuorikoski, 2024), including downloading, transcribing, and close reading of the official song lyrics. The lyrics were obtained from officially published sources to ensure data authenticity and accuracy. Repeated readings were conducted to familiarize the researcher with the textual content and to identify potential metaphorical expressions within their linguistic and contextual environments. The researcher then identified and extracted metaphorical phrases based on established linguistic and conceptual metaphor frameworks. The analysis employed textual analysis, focusing on how metaphors function in the lyrics to construct meaning, emotion, and social context. The metaphors were categorized according to their types, such as structural, ontological, and conventional metaphors, and examined in relation to broader sociolinguistic factors. The analysis followed several stages. First, metaphorical expressions were identified within the lyrics. Second, the identified expressions were classified according to the metaphor categories proposed by Lakoff and Johnson. Third, each metaphor was interpreted in light of its context and sociolinguistic relevance. Finally, the findings were compared and synthesized to reveal recurring patterns and themes across the selected songs.

This included considering how cultural narratives, social values, and listeners' shared experiences shape the interpretation of metaphorical expressions. Contextual interpretation was also used to understand how each metaphor reflects the songwriter's communicative intentions and resonates with audiences. To ensure analytical

rigor, the researcher applied integrative reading, categorization, and interpretation. This process allowed patterns to emerge organically from the data while maintaining alignment with relevant sociolinguistic theories. The findings were then synthesized to illustrate how metaphorical language in the songs contributes to the expression of identity, emotion, and social meaning. To enhance the credibility of the analysis, the researcher employed theoretical triangulation by comparing the findings with relevant theories of metaphor and sociolinguistics. This approach helped ensure that the interpretations were grounded in established academic frameworks and reduced the possibility of subjective bias during data interpretation.

To strengthen the theoretical classification, the data were rechecked by distinguishing metaphor from other figurative expressions. An expression was categorized as a metaphor when it showed a cross-domain mapping, for example, when love, beauty, longing, or sacrifice was conceptualized through another domain, such as heaven, the moon, stars, pain, or physical risk. Expressions that mainly overstated intensity were not treated as pure metaphors; they were identified as hyperbolic metaphors only when the exaggeration still contained a metaphorical mapping. This step was added to avoid classifying ordinary hyperbole or general figurative language as metaphor.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers analyze four songs by Bruno Mars, such as *Just the Way You Are*, *Talking to the Moon*, *Grenade*, and *Locked Out of Heaven*. This section examines the types of metaphors found in the lyrics and explores their sociolinguistic significance. The analysis is conducted using the metaphor classification framework proposed by (Jati, 2020) and (Fauzan, 2021), which provides a systematic basis for identifying and interpreting metaphorical expressions within their cultural and linguistic contexts. This approach helps reveal how the metaphors in these songs convey emotional themes, reinforce cultural meanings, and shape listeners' understanding of the lyrical messages. Metaphor research has undergone major shifts in its perspectives, as metaphor was once regarded simply as a creative and marked form of language use (Julich-Warpakowski & Pérez Sobrino, 2023). Before presenting the detailed interpretation, the findings are summarized quantitatively to clarify the distribution. The table also reflects the revised classification in which several lines previously treated simply as metaphors are now identified more precisely as hyperbolic metaphors because their dominant function is exaggeration with metaphorical mapping.

Table 1. Revised Distribution of Metaphor Types

Type of metaphor / figurative metaphor	Operational distinction used in revision	Frequency	Percentage
Conventional metaphor	A commonly recognized metaphorical expression used to express admiration, love, distance, or spiritual fulfillment.	9	29.0%
Structural metaphor	One concept is structured through another conceptual domain, such as love as a journey, sacrifice, or emotional force.	7	22.6%
Ontological metaphor	Abstract emotions or relationships are treated as entities, objects, states, or locations.	8	25.8%
Hyperbolic metaphor	Exaggerated expression with metaphorical mapping; marked separately to avoid confusion with pure metaphor.	7	22.6%
Total		31	100%

Table 2. Frequency of Metaphor Types by Song

Song	Conventional	Structural	Ontological	Hyperbolic metaphor	Total	Percentage of corpus
Just the Way You Are	3	1	3	2	9	29.0%
Talking to the Moon	3	2	2	0	7	22.6%
Grenade	0	2	3	5	10	32.3%
Locked Out of Heaven	3	2	0	0	5	16.1%
Total	9	7	8	7	31	100%

Table 3. Distribution of Metaphors by Sociolinguistic Category

Sociolinguistic category	Just the Way You Are	Talking to the Moon	Grenade	Locked Out of Heaven	Total	Percentage
Style, register, and genre	3	5	4	4	16	51.6%
Language and politeness	4	0	6	0	10	32.3%
Language and gender	2	0	0	1	3	9.7%
Ethnographic sociolinguistics	0	2	0	0	2	6.5%
Total	9	7	10	5	31	100%

Table 4. Relationship between Metaphor and Social Phenomena

Song	Dominant metaphor cluster	Related sociolinguistic phenomenon	Interpretive implication
Just the Way You Are	Beauty, admiration, acceptance	Gendered romantic compliment and politeness norms	Metaphors construct beauty as socially valued and communicate affirmation without direct criticism.
Talking to the Moon	Distance, moon, calling	Emotional isolation and culturally shared symbols of longing	Metaphors connect private loneliness with public cultural imagery of night and distance.
Grenade	Pain, risk, sacrifice	Unequal emotional labor and relational reciprocity	Hyperbolic metaphors dramatize the imbalance between devotion and lack of return.
Locked Out of Heaven	Heaven, paradise, spiritual feeling	Intimacy, desire, and gendered discourse of fulfillment	Metaphors frame love and intimacy as transcendence and personal completion.

1. Just the Way You Are

Data 1: *"Oh, her eyes... make the stars look like they're not shinin'"*

The lyric is better classified as a hyperbolic metaphor rather than a pure conventional metaphor. The comparison between her eyes and the stars maps beauty to brightness, while the phrase also exaggerates the degree of admiration. This reflects style, register, and genre because the imagery represents poetic and expressive language.

Data 2: *"Her hair... falls perfectly without her trying"*

A structural metaphor portrays her natural beauty as effortless. This again relates to style, register, and genre, emphasizing descriptive and emotive expression.

Data 3: *"When I see your face... there's not a thing that I would change"*

The conventional metaphor uses the face to symbolize the whole person. This reflects language and politeness, as it expresses admiration respectfully.

Data 4: *"When you smile, the whole world stops and stares for a while"*

This line is reclassified as a hyperbolic metaphor. The idea that the whole world stops is not literal; it exaggerates the effect of her smile while still mapping admiration onto a large-scale social reaction. It aligns with style, register, and genre because poetic exaggeration is typical of romantic pop lyrics.

Data 5: *"You're amazing just the way you are"*

The ontological metaphor emphasizes admiration for the person's true self. This relates to language and politeness, as it conveys a sincere compliment.

Data 6: *"Her lips... I could kiss them all day"*

The ontological metaphor treats her lips as an object of desire. This reflects language and gender, showing how

attraction is expressed through gendered language norms.

Data 7: *"Her laugh... I think it is so sexy"*

A structural metaphor characterizes the laugh as sexually attractive. This again relates to language and gender, reflecting perceptions shaped by gendered expectations.

Data 8: *"She's so beautiful, and I tell her every day"*

A conventional metaphor emphasizes admiration. This connects to language and politeness, as it involves giving consistent compliments.

Data 9: *"I'd never ask you to change"*

The ontological metaphor expresses unconditional acceptance. This relates to language and politeness, showing respect and affirmation through supportive language.

The analysis of metaphorical expressions in the selected lyrics reveals that Bruno Mars consistently uses conventional, structural, and ontological metaphors to convey emotional meaning and reinforce the songs' romantic tone. These metaphors function not only as artistic devices but also as reflections of key sociolinguistic elements. Conventional metaphors highlight admiration and idealization, structural metaphors emphasize expressive and poetic stylistic choices, and ontological metaphors deepen emotional intimacy by portraying feelings or physical features as tangible entities. Furthermore, the data demonstrate how these metaphors intersect with sociolinguistic categories such as style, register, and genre through poetic imagery; language and politeness through compliments and affirmations; and language and gender through expressions of attraction shaped by gendered norms. Overall, the metaphors enhance the lyrical narrative, strengthen emotional resonance, and illustrate how language is used to express affection, admiration, and relational dynamics within romantic discourse. Sociolinguistically, the metaphors in this song are not only decorative compliments. They reproduce a socially familiar pattern in romantic discourse, in which female beauty is praised through idealized images such as stars, smiles, and natural perfection. This shows a connection between metaphor and the social phenomenon of gendered admiration, because the speaker uses polite praise to affirm the listener's value while also reflecting common cultural expectations about beauty and romance.

2. Talking to the Moon

Data 1: *"I know you're somewhere out there, somewhere far away"*

It uses a conventional metaphor expressing emotional distance. It fits the category of style, register, and genres because the metaphor shapes a poetic tone typical of ballads.

Data 2: *"At night when the stars light up my room"*

It also uses a conventional metaphor in which stars symbolize hope and comfort. This relates to style, register, and genres, as the poetic imagery reflects features of romantic or lyrical songs.

Data 3: *"I'm talking to the moon"*

It employs a conventional metaphor that symbolizes loneliness and longing, fitting the style, register, and genre through its expressive, poetic tone.

Data 4: *"Am I a fool who sits alone talking to the moon"*

It uses an ontological metaphor that questions identity and emotional state. This aligns with ethnographic sociolinguistics because it reflects cultural interpretations of loneliness, self-reflection, and emotional expression.

Data 5: *"I'm feeling like I'm famous"*

It uses a structural metaphor to represent heightened emotion and perceived attention. This falls under style, register, and genres, showing how metaphor builds the dramatic, expressive tone typical in pop music.

Data 6: *"Do you ever hear me calling"*

It uses an ontological metaphor exploring the idea of connection across distance. This relates to ethnographic sociolinguistics, as the theme of reaching out and being heard varies across cultural and social contexts.

Data 7: *"Cause every night I'm talking to the moon / Still trying to get to you"*

It uses a structural metaphor to depict continuous longing and attempts to connect. This reflects style, register, and genres, reinforcing the emotional, poetic style common in ballads.

The analysis of the seven metaphorical expressions reveals that Bruno Mars consistently uses conventional, structural, and ontological metaphors to convey themes of longing, emotional distance, self-reflection, and unfulfilled connection. Most metaphors fall under style, register, and genres, showing how poetic and lyrical language constructs the emotional atmosphere typical of ballads and romantic songs. These metaphors enhance imagery, deepen emotional tone, and shape the overall expressive style of the lyrics. Meanwhile, metaphors categorized under ethnographic sociolinguistics highlight how emotional experiences, such as loneliness, questioning one's identity, and seeking connection, are interpreted within cultural and social contexts. These metaphors reveal how language reflects broader human experiences and cultural meanings. Overall, the metaphors across the lyrics work together to create a cohesive narrative of yearning and emotional vulnerability. They demonstrate how figurative language not only enriches the songs' artistic quality but also mirrors the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of human communication. The sociolinguistic link is evident in how loneliness is expressed through culturally shared symbols. Speaking to the moon represents an individual who lacks direct social access to the person addressed, so the metaphor connects private longing with a broader social experience of distance, separation, and the need to be heard.

3. Grenade

Data 1: *"Easy come, easy go, that's just how you live"*

Uses an ontological metaphor describing the fleeting nature of the relationship. It falls under Style, register, and genres because the metaphor reflects the expressive style typical of pop or reflective ballads.

Data 2: *"You tossed it in the trash"*

Uses a structural metaphor to show how the person discards love as worthless. It fits Style, register, and genres because this metaphor supports the emotional and stylistic tone of pop ballads.

Data 3: *"I'd catch a grenade for ya"*

This expression is more accurately categorized as a hyperbolic metaphor. It does not literally describe catching a grenade; instead, it exaggerates sacrifice by situating it within the domain of physical danger. It belongs to the realm of language and politeness because it indirectly conveys deep commitment, loyalty, and selflessness in an interpersonal relationship.

Data 4: *"Throw my hand on a blade for ya"*

This line is reclassified as a hyperbolic metaphor because the image of facing a blade intensifies the speaker's willingness to suffer for love. It falls under language and politeness because it expresses loyalty and sacrifice indirectly rather than through a direct request or claim.

Data 5: *"Jump in front of a train for ya"*

This expression is categorized as a hyperbolic metaphor. The train image exaggerates risk and transforms emotional devotion into a physical act of protection. It fits the language and politeness norms because it communicates dedication through indirect, emotionally charged language.

Data 6: *"I would go through all this pain"*

Uses an ontological metaphor describing emotional suffering endured for love. It falls under Style, register, and genres due to its expressive tone typical of emotional ballads.

Data 7: *"Take a bullet straight through my brain"*

This line is reclassified as a hyperbolic metaphor because it dramatizes emotional suffering through the image of fatal physical harm. It belongs to the realm of language and politeness because it conveys commitment and self-sacrifice indirectly.

Data 8: *"Yes, I would die for ya, baby"*

This expression is treated as a hyperbolic metaphor because death is used as an exaggerated image of total devotion. It fits the language of politeness, as it reflects loyalty and a willingness to prioritize the loved one, while also showing emotional imbalance in the relationship.

Data 9: *"But you won't do the same"*

Uses an ontological metaphor contrasting expectations in the relationship. It falls under Language and politeness because it expresses disappointment indirectly.

Data 10: *"Black, black, black and blue, beat me 'til I'm numb"*

Uses a structural metaphor describing emotional and physical pain. It fits Style, register, and genres since this intense imagery is typical of emotional or expressive pop songs.

The analysis of the ten data points shows that Bruno Mars' song lyrics make extensive use of both ontological and structural metaphors to express emotional depth, sacrifice, pain, and relational conflict. These metaphors help shape the songs' overall style, register, and genre, reflecting the expressive and emotional characteristics typical of pop ballads. From a sociolinguistic perspective, many metaphors also relate to language and politeness, as they communicate devotion, loyalty, disappointment, and interpersonal expectations in indirect yet powerful ways. Overall, the metaphors function not only as literary devices but also as tools for conveying social meaning, emotional intimacy, and relational dynamics within the lyrics. In this song, the revised classification is especially important because several expressions are hyperbolic metaphors rather than pure metaphors. Their sociolinguistic significance lies in how they dramatize unequal emotional labor: the speaker offers extreme sacrifice while the other person does not reciprocate. Thus, the metaphors are connected to the social phenomenon of imbalance, devotion, and expectation in romantic relationships.

4. Locked Out Heaven

Data 1: *"Never had much faith in love or miracles"*

This line uses a conventional metaphor to express skepticism toward love and extraordinary experiences. It relates to Style, register, and genre because the metaphor shapes the reflective, emotional tone typical of pop ballads or soulful songs.

Data 2: *"But swimming in your water is something spiritual"*

This is a structural metaphor describing love as a deep, almost spiritual experience. It fits Style, register, and genres, as the poetic imagery reflects the expressive style found in romantic or introspective music.

Data 3: *"Your sex takes me to paradise"*

This line uses a conventional metaphor where physical intimacy is compared to reaching "paradise." It relates to Language and gender because it expresses desire and pleasure in a way shaped by social and gendered expectations about intimacy.

Data 4: *"You make me feel like I've been locked out of heaven"*

This line uses a conventional metaphor to show deep longing and emotional deprivation. It belongs to Style, register, and genres, as the metaphor creates the dramatic and emotional tone common in love songs and ballads.

Data 5: *"You bring me to my knees; you make me testify"*

This is a structural metaphor that shows being emotionally overwhelmed or deeply moved. It fits Style, register, and genres because this intense, expressive language is typical of soulful or emotionally charged music.

The analysis shows that Bruno Mars' lyrics rely heavily on metaphors to express deep emotions, personal experiences, and romantic intensity. These metaphors, whether conventional, structural, or ontological, help create a poetic, expressive style that fits the genres of pop, soul, and emotional ballads. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the lyrics also reflect patterns of language and politeness, language and gender, and style, register, and genres, showing how emotions, admiration, desire, and identity are shaped and communicated through language. Overall, metaphors function not only as artistic devices but also as tools that reveal social meanings, cultural expectations, and interpersonal relationships in the songs. Sociolinguistically, the heaven and paradise metaphors show how popular music often frames intimacy as transcendence and fulfillment. This reflects social and gendered discourse because desire is expressed through spiritualized imagery, making private intimacy sound culturally meaningful and emotionally elevated.

5. Reflection of Metaphor in Sociolinguistic Lens

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the metaphors found in Bruno Mars's songs reflect how language shapes emotional expression, social values, and cultural understandings of relationships. Sociolinguistics explains how and why our communication shifts across social contexts, examines the social roles languages perform, and explores how language is used to convey social meaning (Sagala et al., 2022). In *"Just the Way You Are,"* metaphors of beauty, such as comparing a woman's smile or eyes to stars, reinforce shared cultural ideals about admiration and romantic affection, showing how language strengthens societal norms of expressing love. Meanwhile, *"Talking to the Moon"* portrays loneliness and the search for connection through the metaphor of speaking to the moon, symbolizing how individuals cope with emotional isolation when social support is lacking.

In “*Grenade*,” metaphors of sacrifice and extreme devotion reveal the sociolinguistic realities of unequal emotional expectations in relationships, highlighting how language expresses themes of loyalty, imbalance, and disappointment. Finally, “*Locked Out of Heaven*” uses metaphors of heaven and spiritual fulfillment to show how society often frames love as a source of happiness and completeness. The use of metaphorical language in a song conveys the songwriter's heartfelt emotions and real-life experiences (Fikriyah Layaly et al., 2023). Altogether, these metaphors demonstrate how language not only conveys emotion but also reflects broader cultural beliefs about love, connection, sacrifice, and interpersonal relationships within society. The findings show a clearer relationship between metaphor and social phenomena. Beauty metaphors relate to the social construction of attractiveness and gendered compliment practices; moon and distance metaphors relate to loneliness and the search for social connection; sacrifice metaphors relate to unequal emotional labor and reciprocity; and heaven/paradise metaphors relate to cultural narratives that frame love and intimacy as fulfillment. Therefore, the sociolinguistic analysis moves beyond description by explaining how metaphor participates in the production, circulation, and reinforcement of social meanings in popular music.

These findings support sociolinguistic views that language both reflects and reproduces social norms related to gender identities and interpersonal roles. The findings indicate that conventional metaphors are the most frequently used metaphor type across the selected songs, followed by structural and ontological metaphors. These metaphorical expressions primarily represent themes of love, admiration, emotional longing, sacrifice, and personal fulfillment. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the metaphors reflect social values concerning romantic relationships, emotional commitment, gender expectations, and interpersonal communication. The results suggest that metaphor functions not only as a stylistic device but also as a medium through which social meanings and cultural beliefs are communicated. These findings are consistent with previous studies on metaphor in song lyrics, which suggest that metaphorical language plays an important role in expressing emotions and constructing social meaning. Similar to earlier research, Bruno Mars's lyrics employ figurative expressions to communicate experiences of affection, longing, and interpersonal relationships. However, the present study extends previous research by examining these metaphors through a sociolinguistic perspective, highlighting their connection to cultural values and social interaction. Despite providing valuable insights, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses on only four songs by Bruno Mars, which may not fully represent the range of metaphorical expressions found throughout his musical works. Second, the interpretation of metaphors is inherently subjective and may vary according to listeners' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. Future studies may examine a larger corpus of songs or incorporate audience perspectives to gain a broader understanding of metaphor interpretation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of metaphors in Bruno Mars's selected songs demonstrates that figurative language serves not only as an artistic device but also as a meaningful reflection of sociolinguistic patterns. The findings reveal that conventional metaphors are the most frequently used, followed by structural and ontological metaphors. These metaphorical expressions function to articulate complex emotions such as admiration, longing, sacrifice, emotional dependence, and personal fulfillment. Through these expressions, the lyrics construct relatable narratives that mirror shared human experiences and emotional realities. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the metaphors reveal how language shapes and reinforces cultural understandings of love, intimacy, and relational expectations. Metaphorical expressions found in the songs reflect broader social norms, including ideals of beauty, emotional reciprocity, devotion, and the pursuit of fulfillment in romantic relationships. They illustrate how individuals use figurative language in society to communicate feelings that may be difficult to express directly, thereby highlighting metaphor's role as a social and cultural tool. The study concludes that metaphors in popular music not only enhance lyrical style and emotional depth but also serve as windows into societal values and interpersonal dynamics. Through the interplay between language and culture, the metaphors analyzed in this research underscore the significance of figurative expression in shaping how people understand, negotiate, and communicate their emotional realities within contemporary social contexts. Furthermore, this study contributes to sociolinguistic research by demonstrating how metaphorical language in popular songs reflects cultural values and social meanings, offering insights into the relationship between language, society, and artistic expression. Quantitatively, the study identifies 31 metaphorical/figurative expressions: 9 conventional metaphors (29.0%), 7 structural metaphors (22.6%), 8 ontological metaphors (25.8%), and 7 hyperbolic metaphors (22.6%). In terms of sociolinguistic categories, style, register, and genre appear most frequently with 16 instances (51.6%), followed by language and politeness with 10 instances (32.3%), language and gender with 3 instances (9.7%), and ethnographic sociolinguistics with 2 instances (6.5%). These frequencies strengthen the findings by showing both the dominant metaphor types and the distribution of their social functions.

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