Mythical Car: Metonymy in Taylor Swift's Song Lyrics

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ABSTRACT

Varieties of car-related words reflect how the knowledge involving the vehicle has been stored in cultural society. The repetitive occurrence of phrases about a car in Taylor Swift's 40 song lyrics raises a question on how such a thing is used in song lyrics to convey meaning. This article uses Littlemore's (2015) theory to figure out the domain where metonymy is used. To explain the meaning-making process, it adopts Moore's (2016) notion that to reach metonymy is by analyzing the semiotic property of experiential correlation and descriptions of the semiotic structure which Brandt et. al (2019). Then, a qualitative method suggested by Gravells (2018) is applied to read the interaction among language features in context. The metonymy analysis shows the songs employ the domain of car parts, car types, road areas, driving manners, and street signs as part of car metonymy. The semiotic analysis shows that the car has the mythic meaning of overcoming trouble, private space, taking action, romance, and status so that the meaning is readily grasped by the audiences. Thus, this article enriches the method of researching popular songs where language plays vital parts in the lyrics.

Keywords: *Car; metonymy; semiotics; song lyrics; Taylor Swift*

ABSTRAK

Ragam kata yang berhubungan dengan mobil mencerminkan bagaimana pengetahuan tentang kendaraan tersimpan dalam masyarakat berbudaya. Kemunculan berulang frasa mengandung mobil dalam 40 lirik lagu Taylor Swift menimbulkan pertanyaan bagaimana hal tersebut digunakan dalam lirik lagu untuk menyampaikan makna. Artikel ini menggunakan teori Littlemore (2015) untuk mengetahui domain metonimi digunakan. Untuk menjelaskan proses pembuatan makna, peneliti mengadopsi gagasan Moore (2016) untuk menganalisis properti semiotik dari korelasi pengalaman dalam metonimi. Kemudian, metode kualitatif oleh Gravells (2018) diterapkan untuk membaca interaksi antar fitur bahasa dalam konteks. Analisis metonimi menunjukkan bahwa lagu-lagu tersebut menggunakan domain suku cadang mobil, jenis mobil, area jalan, cara mengemudi, dan rambu-rambu jalan sebagai bagian dari metonimi mobil. Analisis semiotik menunjukkan bahwa mobil memiliki makna mitis yakni, mengatasi masalah, ruang privat, mengambil tindakan, mengalami romansa, dan menyandang suatu status sehingga maknanya mudah ditangkap oleh khalayak. Dengan demikian, artikel ini memperkaya metode penelitian lagu-lagu populer di mana bahasa memainkan peran penting dalam liriknya

Kata Kunci: *lirik lagu; metonimi; mobil; semiotika; Taylor Swift*

INTRODUCTION

Cars have become part of the human necessity for mobility since they were invented around the 1800s and massively produced around the 1920s (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). The practice of car driving results in expressions that store knowledge and experience on it. They are mirrored in the idioms invented by the cultural society which are now able to signify a meaning from the involvement with the automobile. Terms like old banger and jalopy refer to a worn-out car while lemon to a car manufacturer's defect. There are also idiomatic phrases that refer to manners in riding a car like a hell for leather and putting the pedal to the metal which means to travel very fast or to maintain high-speed driving. Some phrases also refer to certain types of drivers; an amber gambler is one who risks it all by passing an intersection when the traffic lights become red and the road hog is one who drives so fitfully that cannot be safely overtaken by another vehicle (Reed, 2022). Some other idioms with a car-related situation are not even related to driving activity at all; *jump on the bandwagon* means to go with the majority or follow the current popular thing (*Jump on the Bandwagon Definition: To Join an Activity That Has Become Very Popular or to Change Your Opinion to One That Has Become*, 2023) and the dog that caught the car means someone who has overcome the experience so complicated that one does not know what to do next (*Dog That Caught the Car*, 2015). Transporting by car now allows people to mobile privately from one place to the other places conveniently, a person may develop new meanings every time she has a trip or a journey with a car. This personal experience is often associated with life experience resulting in an expression containing car-related metonymy appearing in verbal practice, especially in song lyrics.

One of the songs discussed here, *All Too Well* (10 Minutes Version) (Taylor's Version), is considered the longest No. 1 hit in Hot 100 chart history beating the 50 years record held by Don McLean's *American Pie* in 1972 (Pilastro, 2021). The lyric of this heart-breaking song says, "We're singing in the **car**, getting lost upstate" (Washington, 2022) which implies excitement at the beginning of a romantic relationship then, in the second verse, turns into saying, "And you were tossing me the **car keys**, fuck the patriarchy **key chain** on the ground, we were always skipping town" (Washington, 2022) which means the character noticed something wrong for having no clear purpose in that relationship. The phrases mentioned above are salient not only in this example song but also are also noticeable in Swift's other songs which then raise the interest to describe the implication of the chosen language expression.

In song writing, lyric lines appear is absurd if compared to everyday language but they are chains of words from the intended semantic field, in which coherence is processed through the relatedness of the words rather than appearing as full sentences (Von Appen et al., 2016). To write a song is about the capacity to turn everyday language into an intense and vital expression so it is a common way, as for songwriters to go through the creation of "fictitious" selves, or personae, by cooperating with their artistic practices and their cravings to perform making a "truth" that is more remarkable than the "literal truth" (Mattison & Suarez, 2021). In linguistics, such expression is called metonymy where idealized cognitive

models cover cultural knowledge which is not restricted to the 'real world.' It also represents distinct assessments of a certain concept and can be very personal for being an abstraction from an individual's encounters with that concept (Littlemore, 2015) The song mentioned above has framed the listener to a car situation which later is expectedly implying more than just an activity for it repetitively used in her songs now become a questioned motif.

Discussion on figurative expression highlights mainly metaphor and metonymy. In practice, metaphors are adopted a negligible quantity and are mostly grounded on the metonymic link (Wang, 2020). It is noted that metaphor creates suggests new insight by creating new meaning understood by meaning existing in another thing (Littlemore, 2015). Referential metonymy, however, rarely creates new meaning for it depends on the existing relationships between the source and the target. Therefore, metonymy is impactful to 'language play' by its ability to move attention from one part of a domain to another and to form chains of association that alter people's perspectives in seeing things (Radden, 2018). Thus, the creative use of metonymy plays a significant role in song writing where the 'space' for telling a complex idea is limited by the style it usually appears. It is argued that how metonymic thinking is a creative force found in art, music, and film. It enables juxtaposition to deliver new meaning and can rhetorically function to extend the meaning of language resulting in a powerful and economical meaning-making device (Littlemore, 2015). It may also promote a new focus on meaning while implementing the Story Mapping strategy in the reading class, where the method was used to improve the student's reading comprehension, particularly of narrative texts (Syafii, 2021).

Metonymy gives shape to the mode human thinks and talks about everyday events and it becomes the foundation of symbolic comparison in art and literature demonstrating the character of the poetics of mind (Wachowski, 2019) so it leads to the construction of symbolic value (Zhang, 2016). When it is read figuratively, metonymy is a phenomenon of poetic language where the meaning is understood not based on similarity but in contiguity while it is the analogy in metaphor. Contiguity in metonymy denotes the notion that ideas, memories, and experiences are associated when one is recurrently undergone with the other (Matzner, 2016).

Besides, metonymy is an indexical relation that makes an associatory network in an abstract frame and has an experiential basis established in the human condition as a part of the language users' socio-cultural knowledge (Panther & Thornburg, 2018). The system of signification in the use of metonymy falls into Peirce's index since the identification of the signified includes causality and is stipulated by the lexical meaning that covers the relation of contiguity. It is noted that the connotative power of signs is important for it assists a cultural, and ideological purpose, thus 'mythology' (Littlemore, 2015). For Roland Barthes, it is argued that a variety of additional meanings are determined at a connotative level that brings all the social, cultural, and personal associations one has into the interpretation of signs (Gravells, 2017).
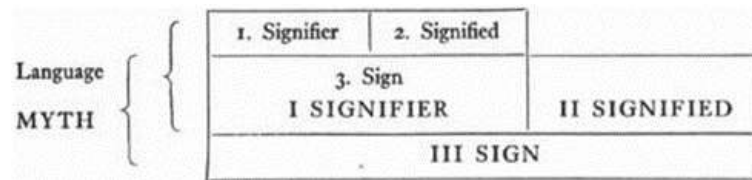
Figure 1. Barthes's Order of Signification (Yelly, 2019)

This process leads signs into codes, mythic meanings, the ideology. The analysis of metonymy falls in the search for mythic meaning which serves as additional connotative meaning to the denotative representation provided by signification order (Chandler, 2017; Gravells, 2017). So, semiotics provides a satisfactory analysis between signs and their referents systematically in the form of metonymic chaining (Littlemore, 2015).

Studied under the scheme of figurative languages, it is found that vocabulary learning works best through domain association that focuses on cognitive operation in metaphor as well as metonymy as they may overlap each other (Jimenez-Munoz & Martínez, 2017). Metonymy is also explained as different from other kinds of abstract polysemy where the change of meaning is detected only in one conceptual area because meaning for metonymy ensues not in the terminology but in "illustrative material" (Gabidullina et al., 2021). This article gives an overview of how different types of metonymies have distinct features and functions. Metonymic conceptualization is studied to understand how the conceptual mechanism process contributes to the realization of mental space that determines the domain of meaning which enabled meaning inference when one meets with metonymic expression (Vu et al., 2020). It is because, as the cognitive structure, a domain provides a background theme that helps one to grasp any word's meaning. Further, metonymy is found to be fruitful in framing public education as a commercialized system of capital gain, endorsing competition, and building individualism (McLachlan, 2021).

Song lyrics, however, display distinguished characteristics of language play that become a great source for linguistic and cultural studies. The works of Taylor Swift, in this matter, have also been researched with various approaches and some studies have contributed to this interest. A semantic study of the metaphor used in the *folklore* album by Taylor Swift has found 3 types of meaning which are denotative, connotative, and affective meaning (Frida & Zuraida, 2022). Songs in this album have also been studied to reveal the variety of life issues by looking at the use of deixis (Ginting & Levana, 2021). Songs entitled *Betty, Cardigan, and August* from the same album, specifically, show that different proportions of the transitivity processes result in the different perspectives of individuals assigned to be the speaker in the lyrics (Max, 2022). Besides, figurative language is collected in the lyrics from Taylor Swift's *Red* album that are used to talk about treachery (Setiawati & Maryani, 2018).

The music video is even a reviving study object. The music video, as examined in Rich Brian's official video, is a good way to express motivation and self-identity and cultivates the identity of a community (Mutiah et al., 2021). In addition, symbolically, *You Need to Calm Down* music video offers an alternative perspective on social issues (Max & Utomo, 2021). Meanwhile, the semiotic approach is descriptively used to examine the eroticism myth in selected English song lyrics (Ramadhani et al., 2019) and Barthes's denotation and connotation concepts are applied to reveal the urge of dismantling patriarchy in Ariana Grande's song *God is a Woman* (Jafar et al., 2021). Those attempts to study popular songs indicate a big interest in contemporary academic research.

English songs increase students' listening (Solihat & Utami, 2014) and on speaking skills (Permana & Megawati, 2021) in the way it has not focused on how meaning is produced in the song which is possibly useful to the reproduction of meaning by the students who learns from the songs. It is where the desire to learn English can be accommodated through informal education (Mattarima et al., 2022). Thus, practically, discussion on song lyrics can be added to the English Club or classroom activities to enhance students' motivation. Meanwhile, this research contributes to the way English users perceive meaning by understanding the way metonymy works semiotically in creating myths in enjoyable popular songs. It also enriches the former research done on song lyrics analyzing metaphorical expression (Akun, 2014) and figurative language (Mianani & Wardani, 2018). Even the use of the rhetorical device in other types of English texts such as in business expressions where language play is proven to deliver a persuasive gesture to the addresses (Supeno, 2018). This is because metonymy acts as a slice of expressed reality which develops those stylistic and rhetorical devices.

Different from the studies mentioned above, the way this research analyzes song lyrics offers not only descriptive categorization of metonymic expression but with the semiotic signification process attempts to describe how phrases about cars are chosen to produce levels of meaning. This research is also meant to provide a new scheme for studying language used in song lyrics where the efficient uses of metonymy play a big role in developing one's sense of life experiences. Therefore, it can also be fruitful for future researchers who want to study figurative language in literary works such as poetry and films. The researcher is then motivated to answer the question, "how are car metonymies used as a symbol in Swift's song lyrics?" By acquiring the domain of car as metonymy, the researcher wants to show how myth-making is realized around car-related terms as they appear in song lyrics and how it possibly develops one's myth of the car-related experience. Other words/phrases which do not evoke an association with car-related activity are not discussed in this article. Thus, linguistic awareness is raised for the readers who enjoy popular music as a current mode of self-expression.

METHOD

The data source of this research is Swift's 40 songs containing words and phrases mentioning words related to cars occur such as cab, streets, key, parking

lot, Chevy truck, passenger's seat, etc. as listed below. All song lyrics used here are from Taylor Swift's 9 albums launched from 2006 until 2020.

Table 1. Taylor Swift Song Titles Containing Car Metonymy

Album	No.	Title
"Taylor Swift" (2006)	1	*Tim McGraw*
	2	*Picture to Burn*
	3	*Teardrops on My Guitar*
	4	*A Place in This World*
	5	*The Outside*
	6	*Our Song*
"Fearless" (2008/2021)	7	*Fearless*
	8	*Fifteen*
	9	*Hey Stephen*
	10	*You Belong with Me*
	11	*Breathe*
"Speak Now" (2010)	12	*Never Grow Up*
"Red" (2012/2021)	13	*State of Grace*
	14	*Begin Again*
	15	*Come Back...Be Here*
	16	*Nothing New*
	17	*Run*
	18	*The Very First Night*
	19	*Red*
	20	*Treacherous*
"1989" (2014)	21	*Style*
	22	*Out of the Woods*
	23	*I Wish You Would*
	24	*Wildest Dreams*
"Reputation" (2017)	25	*Getaway Car*
	26	*King of My Heart*
	27	*New Year's Day*
"Lover" (2019"	28	*Cruel Summer*
	29	*I Think He Knows*
	30	*Paper Rings*
	31	*Cornelia Street*
	32	*Death by a Thousand Cuts*
	33	*London Boy*
"folklore" (2020)	34	*august*
	35	*this is me trying*
	36	*illicit affairs*
	37	*invisible string*
	38	*mad woman*
"evermore" (2020)	39	*champagne problems*
	40	*nobody, no crime*

To collect the data, firstly, the researcher read all the released song lyrics from the genius.com. Secondly, lyric lines from each song that contain car-related words are highlighted. Third, the data are organized in the lines listed in the table below.

Table 2. Data Collected from Taylor Swift Songs

Album	No.	Title	Lyric lines
"Taylor Swift" (2006)	1	*Tim McGraw*	Just a boy in **a Chevy truck** That had a tendency of gettin' stuck **On back roads** at night I'm standin' on your **street**
	2	*Picture To Burn*	I hate that stupid old **pickup truck** You never let me **drive**
	3	*Teardrops On My Guitar*	So, I **drive** home alone He's the song in **the car** I keep singing, don't know why I do
	4	*A Place In This World*	Don't know what's down this **road**, I'm just walking
	5	*The Outside*	I tried to take **the road** less traveled by
	6	*Our Song*	I was **riding shotgun**, with my hair undone, In the front seat of **his car** He's got a one-hand feel, On **the steering wheel**, The other on my heart
"Fearless" (2008/2021)	7	*Fearless*	here's a glow off the pavement, you walk me to **the car** I wanna ask you to dance right there, in the middle of **the parking lot** We're drivin' down **the road** So, baby, **drive slow** 'Til we run out of **road** in this one-horse town I wanna stay right here in this **passenger's seat**
	8	*Fifteen*	And then you're on your very first date and he's got **a car** And you're feeling like flying
	9	*Hey Stephen*	They're dimming the **streetlights**
	10	*You Belong With Me*	Oh, I remember you **driving** to my house, In the middle of the night
	11	*Breathe*	I see your face in my mind as I **drive** away
"Speak Now" (2010)	12	*Never Grow Up*	You're in **the car** on the way to the movies
"Red" (2012/2021)	13	*State of Grace*	I'm walking fast through **the traffic lights** **Busy streets** and busy lives
	14	*Begin Again*	And we walked down the block to **my car** and I almost brought him up
	15	*Come Back...Be Here*	**Taxi cabs** and **busy streets t**hat never bring you back to me
	16	*Nothing New*	But I wonder if they'll miss me once they **drive** me out
	17	*Run*	Give me **the keys**, I'll bring **the car** back around I'd **drive** away before I let you go There's **a key** on the chain, there's a picture in a frame
	18	*The Very First Night*	They weren't riding in **the car** when we both fell I was riding in **the car** when we both fell
	19	*Red*	Loving him is like **driving a new Maserati** down **a dead-end street** His love was like **driving a new Maserati** down **a dead-end street**
	20	*Treacherous*	That nothing safe is worth **the drive** and I will follow you home
"1989"	21	*Style*	Midnight, You come and pick me up, **no headlights, Long**

			drive
	22	*Out Of The Woods*	Remember when you hit **the brakes** too soon?
	23	*I Wish You Would*	It's 2 AM in **your car** Windows down**, you pass my street**, the memories start You say it's in the past, you **drive straight ahead**
	24	*Wildest Dreams*	He said, "Let's get out of this town **Drive out** of this city, away from the crowds"
"Reputation" (2017)	25	*Getaway Car*	No, nothing good starts in **a getaway car** You were driving **the getaway car** We're riding in **a getaway car** I'm in **a getaway car** Put the money in a bag and I stole **the keys**
	26	*King Of My Heart*	Cause all the boys and **their expensive cars** With their **Range Rovers** and **their Jaguars**
	27	*New Year's Day*	You squeeze my hand three times in **the back of the taxi** I can tell that it's gonna be **a long road**
"Lover" (2019)	28	*Cruel Summer*	I'm drunk **in the back of the car**
	29	*I Think He Knows*	He got my heartbeat, skipping down 16th Avenue We can follow the sparks, I'll **drive**
	30	*Paper Rings*	The wine is cold, like the shoulder that I gave you in **the street**
	31	*Cornelia Street*	"I rent a place on Cornelia **Street**" I say casually **in the car**
	32	*Death by a Thousand Cuts*	I dress to kill my time, I take **the long way** home I ask the **traffic lights** if it'll be alright.
	33	*London Boy*	Show me a gray sky, **a rainy cab ride**
"folklore" (2020)	34	*august*	Remember when I pulled up And said **"Get in the car"**
	35	*this is me trying*	I had the shiniest **wheels**, now they's rusting Pulled **the car off the road** to the lookout
	36	*illicit affairs*	Take **the road less traveled** by
	37	*invisible string*	Bad was the blood of the song **in the cab** on your first trip to LA
	38	*mad woman*	What do you sing on your **drive** home?
"evermore" (2020)	39	*champagne problems*	Your Midas touch on the **Chevy** door
	40	*no body, no crime*	And I noticed when I passed his house **his truck** has got some **brand-new tires**

To reach the objective of this research, the first analytical step taken follows Littlemore's four steps. The first is to identify metonymy which is done by looking for metonymy-related words. The second is to see the proportions of the operated metonymy. The third is to decide the domain of association. Fourth is to see relations that happen within the domain (Littlemore, 2015).

The next step follows Barthes's second order of signification (1977) to reach the symbolism creation in the selected song lyrics. It is because, in understanding metonymy, it should be based on a semiotic property of the experiential correlation (Moore, 2014). Semiotics offers considerable interpretative flexibility in the recognition of units of meaning as its intentionality stretches to a more opulent and sentient reader's

language processing (Brandt, 2020). In addition, the qualitative method is also applied as it is meant to explain "the function of a language feature in context and interaction with other features" (Gravells, 2017, p. 82). So, in presenting the analysis result, this research applies a qualitative method since semiotics has descriptive capacities when it reveals structures that produce meaning that needs a qualitative interpretation of a text. The quantitative technique is incompatible with semiotic analysis (Chandler, 2017).

FINDINGS
1. Distribution of Car Metonymy in Taylor Swift's Songs

Indexical relation in metonymy is the underlying concept that figures out the basis of viewing the words or phrases evoking the activity related to the car when listening to the songs written by Taylor Swift. So, the observation of the song lyrics has already brought this awareness. However, the process of listing the metonymy also has undergone Littlemore's four metonymy identification where the researcher decides by observing that contextual and basic meaning is closely related to the text suggests the circumstance. With the steps, from the 40 selected songs, the researcher has managed to identify that,

a. Words/phrases are all related to a car which is the metonymically used word,
b. Mobile activity with a car is the proportion of the used metonymy,
c. The domain is the car and everything associated with it,
d. The fact that those words/phrases refer to the whole car-related activity, is a PART of the WHOLE metonym.

Table 3. Distribution of Car Metonymy in Taylor Swift's Songs

Car				
car parts	**car types**	**road areas**	**driving manners**	**street signs**
front seat, steering wheels, car keys, headlights, brakes, back of the car, tires, key chain, radio, passenger's seat	Chevy, truck, Range Rover, Jaguar, Taxi, cab, pickup truck, Maserati, getaway car	backroads, long road, Cornelia Street, dead-end street, road, creek beds, town, pavement, the block, one block wide, one-horse town, street, 16 Avenue	driving/drive, riding shotgun, drive away, rainy cab ride, drive home, pull off, pull up, driving/drive down, skipping town, riding, turn up, drive slow, getting stuck, long way	street lights, traffic lights, parking lot

There are five domains of car metonymy used in the song lyrics. The first one fills the area of car parts which are the *front seat, steering wheel, car keys, headlights, brakes, back of the car, door, passenger seat, wheels, tires,* and *key chain*. The second domain goes to the area of makers of the car which is mostly done by mentioning car brands like *Chevy, Range Rover, Jaguars,* and *Maserati* and also the types of car like *taxi, cab, pickup truck,* and *getaway car* (which is the unique one here, but it is related to the type of car connoted by how it is used for). The third is the domain of road types which contiguously appear in noun phrases *like backroads, long roads, Cornelia Street, dead-end street, long way, one-horse town, upstate,* and *town street*. The fourth is the domain of driving manners which are represented by *driving, riding shotgun, drive away, drive out, rainy cab ride, drive home, pull up, pull off, skipping town,* and *driving*

down. The fifth domain goes to the physical object related to street properties like *street lights*, *the block*, *traffic lights*, and *parking lot*.

2. Realization of Car Metonymy in Taylor Swift's Songs

Realization, in the semiotic system, is the evocation of meaning potential that allows readers to obtain meanings in context (Kiernan, 2018). In writing song lyrics, the effectiveness of metonymy is needed for highlighting the important moment worth sharing from the countless possibility of choices to express it, that is the realization of metonymic meaning in the song. So, when an individual mentions parts of the car, there is a possibility that she is familiar with the car situation and carefully selects the parts that significantly generate meaning. Take a look at the lyric excerpt below:

I was <u>riding shotgun</u>
With my hair undone
In the <u>front seat</u> of his car
He's got a one-hand feel
On the <u>steering wheel</u>
The other on my heart
(Swift, 2006a)

'Riding shotgun' is associated with a distinct place to accompany the driver and the 'steering wheel' means a device used for controlling the vehicle. It could mean that someone has a chance to share at least the same space with the driver who has control of the riding. The whole experience of sharing space with a loved one evokes an idea of the excitement of teenage love as suggested by the song's theme entitled *Our Song*.

Meanwhile, having types of cars mentioned in the lyric, Swift might learn the way society readily connotes certain types of cars and it can be a shortcut to explain a specific situation or person talked about in the songs.

'Cause all the boys and their expensive cars
With their <u>Range Rovers</u> and their <u>Jaguars</u>
Never took me quite where you do
(Swift, 2017)

These two brands are associated with high-end vehicles owned by rich people. People characterized as having these cars must live a luxurious lifestyle and are often financially independent. It makes them able to afford the expensive brand instead of other cheaper brands for they are offered comfort and elegancy equal to the price paid for them. The song *King of My Heart* tells how a person falls in love with someone who is more treasured than other people with expensive possession. The person whom the singer falls in love with metaphorically brings her to a new phase of life that cannot be done by other people.

The next occurring domain describes the location or duration of the car driving activity and figuratively invites the listener to follow particular processes experienced by the person who voices the lyrics.

So, baby, drive slow 'til we run out of <u>road</u> in this <u>one-horse town</u>
I wanna stay right here, in this passenger's seat

You put your eyes on me

In this moment now, capture it, remember it

(Swift, 2008)

In *Fearless*, she mentions a 'one-horse town' referring to a very narrow road where driving a car could be so challenging that the passengers must stop the car and walk it. It represents the end of the road which can be maximally reached by car. Having that kind of trip suggests that the singer is willing to follow the journey until the end. The phrase one-horse town is effectively describing such expectation.

Then, the driving domain brings about the action taken by the actors involved in the journey. Car metonymy is represented by drive away, drive out, rainy cab ride, drive home, drive away, pull up, driving down, pull off, skipping town, and drive down.

"I've had (I've had) too much to drink tonight

But I wonder if they'll miss me once they <u>drive</u> me <u>out</u>

I wake up (Wake up) in the middle of the night

And I can feel time moving"

(Swift, 2021a)

'Drive out' in *Nothing New* lyric refers to the action that makes someone must leave a place mostly unwillingly. Different use of verb phrases suggests different attitudes and purposes of car driving, therefore using this domain invites the listener to see how action might be taken as a response to a situation.

The last domain consists of street properties that show how a person notices the details throughout her experience of driving a car. Those are street lights, parking lot, traffic lights, and the block. These physical properties are mechanisms made to guide drivers on the streets usually for safety and order. So, this domain provides meaning potential in delivering the songwriter's specified experience.

"I dress to kill my time, I take the long way home

I ask the <u>traffic lights</u> if it'll be alright

They say, "I don't know"

And what once was ours is no one's now

I see you everywhere, the only thing we share

Is this small town"

(Swift, 2019b)

'Traffic lights' as mentioned in *Death by a Thousand Cuts* are part of car metonymy filling the domain of street signs involved in car driving activity. It is also part of socio-cultural knowledge for a person to notice the street signs that cue an expected order.

Though the lyric employs metonymic expression, it is still further implying a metaphoric expression even though no direct comparison is mentioned in its text painting method. This proves one best use of metonymy in song lyrics whose storytelling manner should be presented creatively to fit the text type.

3. Mythic Meaning of Car in Taylor Swift's Songs

Metonymy is used in the song as the substitution of one verbal expression for another because the expressions are connected within an entanglement of connotative associations. The repetitive use of car metonymy found in Swift's

songs offers a stand to larger objects of domain or experiences. Here, the researcher moves to display the possible myth of car metonymy by using Barthes's level of signification. Signification is not a closed, static, or finished process; rather, it is a social event, a product where all members of a society are interpreters or decoders (Sui & Fan, 2015).

First, the result of the semiotic analysis on the sign is presented in the table below placing each lyric that uses metonymy to symbolize trouble, private space, taking action, romance, and status. Then, each myth will be given a lyric example to display Barthes's signification to show the level of denotative, connotative, and the myth in song lyrics placed in different sub-numbers.

Table 4. Mythic Meaning of Car Metonymy as Result of Semiotic Analysis

Myths	Song Titles
avoiding trouble	*Tim McGraw, Picture to Burn, Teardrops on My Guitar, Hey Stephen, Never Grow Up, Come Back...Be Here, Run, Red, Style, Out of the Woods, I Wish You Would, Getaway Car, I Think He Knows, Paper Rings, Death by a Thousand Cuts, illicit affairs, mad woman*
having private space	*Tim McGraw, Teardrops on My Guitar, Our Song, Fearless, The Very First Night, Treacherous, New Year's Day, Cruel Summer, Cornelia Street, august*
taking action	*The Outside, Our Song, Fearless, State of Grace, Nothing New, The Very First Night, Treacherous, Wildest Dreams, Getaway Car, I Think He Knows, this is me trying, illicit affairs*
experiencing romance	*Fearless, Breathe, Begin Again, The Very First Night, Getaway Car, Cornelia Street, London Boy*
possessing status	*Tim McGraw, Picture to Burn, Our Song, Fifteen, King of My Heart, invisible string, champagne problems, nobody, no crime*

Thus, it reflects a substantial form of the songwriter's perception and leads to the mythic meaning exposed together with the song themes. Though the nature of metonymy is indexical, it has the potential to represent something else, so it should also be seen as a sign. The explanation below involves descriptions of the semiotic structure which is done a thorough reading on, firstly, the enunciation which seeks the speaker of the expression (Brandt et al., 2019). Second is the semantic content which pays attention to the subject being talked about. Third is the textual rhetoric that see the how linguistic representation of the content. The fourth is the interpretational level which deals with describing the process of text in becoming a signifier for some life-world phenomenon and is identified as the author's intention model.

a. The Myth of Trouble

A song entitled *Run* talks about a romance between two persons getting into trouble in their relationship by the judgment of other people. To deal with this situation, the duo vocalist in this song intend to "run" away from the distractors who disapprove of their relationship. This song shows the idea of a rebellious love since it is well said in the song's line saying "We can go like they're trying to chase us/ Go where no one else is, run" (Swift, 2021b).

Language	1. Signifier words "keys, car, town, drive away"	2. Signified part of a car, vehicle type, road area, driving manner	Denotative	
	3. Sign			
Myth	I SIGNIFIER to drive a car		II SIGNIFIED a means to avoid the trouble	Connotative
	III SIGN Car is used when there is an attempt to avoid a trouble			

Figure 1. The Myth of Trouble

In the song entitled *Run*, car metonymy appears in the line saying "Give me the **keys**, I'll bring the **car** back around/ We shouldn't be in this **town**/ And my so-called friends, they don't know/ I'd **drive away** before I let you go" (Swift, 2021b). The car-metonymy is represented by mentioning keys, car, town, and drive away. It denotatively leads to the image of a whole car and the action of using the car for a purpose. This example raises a connotative use of a car as a means to avoid trouble. Overcoming trouble with a car is also found in other songs such as *Tim McGraw, Picture to Burn, Teardrops on My Guitar, Hey Stephen, Never Grow Up, Come Back...Be Here, Red, Style, Out of the Woods, I Wish You Would, Getaway Car, I Think He Knows, Paper Rings, Death by a Thousand Cuts, illicit affairs,* and *mad woman.*

b. The Myth of Private Space

Treacherous is a song chosen to display how private space is a myth contained in car metonymy used in Taylor Swift's songs. This song talks about someone who has noticed that the love relationship she is about to commit will have a sad ending but still pursues it anyway. As it says "That nothing safe is worth the drive" (Swift, 2021c) the song implies that anything that makes someone feel something and be alive with it is worth the try.

Language	1. Signifier word "headlights"	2. Signified part of a car that produces a powerful light attached to the front of a vehicle	Denotative	
	3. Sign			
Myth	I SIGNIFIER car		II SIGNIFIED the private space needed by someone to deal with a private matter	Connotative
	III SIGN Car is a private space			

Figure 2. The Myth of Private Space

In these lines, "Two **headlights** shine through the sleepless night and I will/ Get you a, get you alone" (Swift, 2021c), headlights represent car parts that are switched on when a driver turns the vehicle on. It means that the car is used to go to a place. Meanwhile, the overall song theme imbues a sense of a private relationship as the car is also used to pick somebody to get them alone. This myth also appears in songs entitled *Tim McGraw, Teardrops on My Guitar, Our Song, Fearless, The Very First Night, New Year's Day, Cruel Summer, Cornelia Street,* and *august.* In these songs, car metonymy delivers the myth of private space which is a fragment of the songwriter's life experience.

c. The Myth of Action

A song entitled *I Think He Knows* talks about someone that falls in love so deeply that all her behaviors send a clear love signal to the one she is in love with. The song theme delivers the idea that there is no need to hide the feeling for someone if it is true and somehow it is better to show them honestly to get a chance to win that person's heart. It can be interpreted in the line that states "He got my heartbeat/ Skipping down 16th Avenue" (Swift, 2019c). It turns out that the speaker of this lyric takes the first step which leads her to the next level of a romantic relationship.

	1. Signifier word "drive"	2. Signified act of operating a vehicle's speed and direction	Denotative	
Language				
		3. Sign		Connotative
	Myth	I SIGNIFIER to drive a car	II SIGNIFIED any action taken as a response to a situation or feeling	
		III SIGN Car Driving means taking action		

Figure 3. The Myth of Action

Here, car metonymy appears in the domain of action represented in lines "Lyrical smile, indigo eyes, hand on my thigh/ We can follow the sparks, I'll **drive**" (Swift, 2019c). To drive the car is the action taken by the speaker which connotatively means that she is about to respond to her emotion aroused by the presence of the one she loves. Thus, car metonymy delivers the myth of action and this meaning also occurs in other songs like *The Outside, Our Song, Fearless, State of Grace, Nothing New, The Very First Night, Treacherous, Wildest Dreams, Getaway Car, this is me trying,* and *illicit affairs.*

d. The Myth of Romance

Cornelia Street is a song talking about memories made in a place called Cornelia Street (a street in NYC). If we read the lines saying, "We bless the rains on Cornelia Street/ Memorize the creaks in the floor" (Swift, 2019a) they are telling

great detail about how the couple living there has built up memories so much that it will not be easy to forget. So, if the relationship ever ends, it will be hard for the singer to go back to the place. This message is insinuated by the lines "And I hope I never lose you, hope it never ends/ I'd never walk Cornelia Street again" (Swift, 2019a).

Language		1. Signifier words "backseat, Cornelia Street, car"	2. Signified part of a car, road area, a mobile	Denotative	
	Myth	3. Sign			
		I SIGNIFIER car		II SIGNIFIED a situation where the romance happens	Connotative
		III SIGN Car is romance			

Figure 4. The Myth of Romance

However, the car metonymy used in this song lyric suggests the beginning of a romance. The evidence lies in these lines stating, "We were in the **backseat**/ Drunk on something stronger than the drinks in the bar/ "I rent a place on **Cornelia Street**"/ I say casually in the **car**" (Swift, 2019a). The metonymy of a car in this lyric connects to the domain of car parts, road areas, and type of vehicle in which meaning connotatively develops as a situation where the romance takes place. The pieces of evidence show how car-related expression here has the myth of romance. This myth also occurs in other domains of car metonymy in the songs namely *Fearless, Breathe, Begin Again, The Very First Night, Getaway Car,* and *London Boy*.

e. The Myth of Status

The country song entitled *Tim McGraw* delivers the idea of a short-term relationship which is highlighted in the lines that say "And I was right there beside him all summer long/ And then the time we woke up to find that summer gone" (Swift, 2006b). Though the relationship does not last long enough to be called a romance, the songwriter intentionally lists things that can recall their shared moments if one day the boy forgets about her. She mentions her faded blue jeans, little black dress, and her favorite song by Tim McGraw.

Language		1. Signifier words "chevy truck"	2. Signified A field truck with the Chevrolet brand	Denotative	
	Myth	3. Sign			
		I SIGNIFIER Car		II SIGNIFIED Someone's status	Connotative
		III SIGN Car is a person's status			

Figure 5. The Myth of Status

The boy in the song is characterized as one who lives in a farming area as suggested by the used metonymy in the domain of car type found in the lines "Just a boy in a **Chevy truck**/ That had a tendency of **gettin' stuck**/ On **backroads** at night" (Swift, 2006b). Chevy is colloquially used to call the Chevrolet brand of vehicle produced by American manufacturer General Mobile. For this song context, this type of car refers to those that are commonly found in country field areas because of its build and power that suits that kind of work however the modern ones can be lux fancy cars. Similar use of car metonymy is also found in songs entitled *Picture to Burn, Our Song, Fifteen, King of My Heart, invisible string, champagne problems,* and *nobody, no crime.*

DISCUSSION

Metonymy enacts an important role in fashioning and sustaining a flow of ideas (Littlemore, 2015). This common play of language has been known to be useful to raise the tradition of poetic symbolism sustained in popular songwriting because it is proposed to guarantee that those expressions are understood by the listeners. They are also meant to meet the referential function of language (Von Appen et al., 2016). Evidence put in the result of this research shows that Taylor Swift's songs recurrently used car metonymy in 40 song titles, selected from all released songs before her latest album called *Midnights* which was released on October 21st, 2022.

The findings show that the car-related words are distributed in the source domains which are car parts, car types, road areas, driving manners, and street signs making them a representation of the whole experience with mobile cars (target domain). To 'partially' mention the part to refer to the whole experience is claimed to be the very basic cognitive ability that construing life is impossible without (Wachowski, 2019). It is hard to imagine if a song should always use a complex explanation for the story setting for a lyric could not compensate for the limited 'space' available. It is even impossible to be done in a daily conversation since it is also meant to meet the illocutionary function. It can be illustrated by the mapping below.
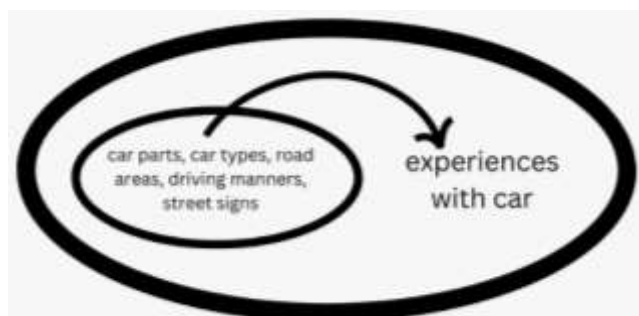

Figure 6. The Cars Metonymic Mapping in Taylor Swift's Songs

As a metonymic expression, they work to condense complex storytelling by raising the cognitive process of meaning-making so that the song lyrics can say more than what is written in the texts synchronized with the song themes. It is because the target meaning is highlighted and the source meaning turns

backgrounded (Wachowski, 2019). What is being targeted in the songs by using the metonymy is various events happening while one is doing an activity with a car. As explored above, there are certain conditions meant to be understood by the listeners. It means that the construe of meaning works best when a condition being talked about is readily acknowledged by the listeners since they may have shared the experience or at least they use a little imagination (as that one does in enjoying a novel) to construct the set of situation shaped by the songwriter. Then, the transfer of meaning is effectively done.

Furthermore, one of four ways a song meets the pathic function is by the attention given to the symbol (Von Appen et al., 2016) because images were invoked by symbol rather than a literal description (Forney et al., 2022). The way human attaches meaning to something is already saturated as well with the connotative meaning. In metonymy, it must not be seen as a concept triggered simply by linguistic form but as an allusion to a whole story of an expression gained from a specific context (Zhang, 2016). So, when they appear in significant occurrences through the mentioned lyrics, it develops a motif that leads to myth-making on the car-related activity.

In this instance, metonymy is mostly representational as a form of symbolic communication (Littlemore, 2015). Besides, in a semiotic mode, metonymy has indexical relations among meaning elements that shape an associatory web within an intangible frame (Panther & Thornburg, 2018). Consequently, the target domain found in the lyrics represents a bigger sense of experience that they signify. By putting each metonymic expression in the order of signification, they show how the car metonymy is first gone through a connotative stage from the second level of signification. A connotational framework is provided by cultural codes, and certain connotations are well-known within a culture that makes connotations not purely personal meanings (Sui & Fan, 2015).

The signification order as demonstrated in the findings shows the mechanism of metonymic expressions, which firstly indexical, turns into symbolical carrying the myth of 1) avoiding trouble, 2) having private space, 3) taking action, 4) experiencing romance, and 5) possessing a status. This myth of car is the sense that everybody gets from the signs and the signs are made by a metonymic expression which, as said before, is a powerful device of storytelling. Thus, those meaning readily set in the reader's experience makes the message or the story in the songs perceivable to the listeners without having it said in a wordy narrative. The research purpose is now achieved after it manages to show how meaning is made through the intense use of car metonymies in 20 song lyrics that provide the context for a sign to develop a myth through the semiotic signification order.

Future research may be conducted to describe the singer's ideas by mentioning specific hours of the day, types of clothes, or colors as they are saliently used in her songs too, especially in Swift's newest album *Midnights* where colors like lavender, maroon, burgundy, green, and crimson are used as symbols related to life problems which makes it an interesting object to study. Or, with the same stages developed in this research, other researchers can find different objects of analysis such as lyrics from other singers to find out more about the phenomena

of metonymy in songwriting so that more knowledge about language use in cultural expression can be stored in academic writing.

This kind of research is not only relevant to English songs but also to Indonesian songs as it is done within the stylistic study. For example, the Dangdut song is found to have unique diction in the lyrics (Yulistiana et al., 2019). Similarly, Korean songs which now employ code-switching with English phrases are proven to invite more listeners around the world (Berliana & Anjarningsih, 2022). In discourse study, attention to metonymy can provide empirical evidence on how an issue is being referred to in songs. Thus, it can be further applied to the examination of a song lyric by focusing on the lexical aspect (Risdianto, 2016), on the use of vernacular and slang variation (Arbain, 2016), and the songs' thematic analysis (Zaidi, 2022). The semiotic approach taken in the analysis above is also in line with the systemic functional approach applied in a study that exposes moral values and judgment in a song when certain social-religious backgrounds are found to be a dependable point on the song's interpretation (Nurhamidah & Purwanto, 2020). Here, the stage of denotative and connotative meaning can be argued to reach the contextual inference as the language works as a sign.

CONCLUSION

For Taylor Swift, metonymy involving cars is not only representing the physical activity of a human who is trying to be mobile from place to place but also a vehicle of meaning. A prudent choice of language is a product of intense observation of experience and therefore results in song lyrics that resonate with listeners around the globe. Her distinct language competence is what makes her achieve the Songwriter-Artist of the Decade Award in the Nashville Songwriter Awards 2022 (Paulson & Dowling, 2022). The discussion above is then useful to stimulate a proper appreciation of the songwriter because the language choice put in the songs is engaging for the listeners as it poetically fosters personal expression while using everyday language.

Since the research question is now descriptively answered, which is done by a careful exploration of words forming metonymy and putting them into Barthes's signification table, the established method can be used on various objects of study which is not limited to the song lyrics only. It is because metonymy has saturated the way language users write or speak in many communicative events. Therefore, the method applied in this research is most fruitful for studying songs with a characteristic of storytelling which has a similarity with narrative poetry. It is so because song lyrics feature a character of lyrical poetry whose richness is in the use of figurative language. This research contributes not only to language studies but as a response to cultural phenomena, especially the pop culture field which is relevant to students of this era. Thus, it is hoped that the linguistics field can be more inviting to future young learners.

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