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Investigating Literal and Figurative Meaning in Song Lyrics: A Semantic Analysis of 'Fix You' by Coldplay

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Abstract

This study investigates how literal and figurative meanings are constructed in the song lyrics of "Fix You" by Coldplay through a non-empirical qualitative semantic analysis. The research examines the interaction between denotative and connotative language in shaping emotional representation within musical discourse. Data were drawn from the official lyrics and analyzed using semantic frameworks informed by theories of Lyons, Kreidler, Lakoff, and Johnson. The findings reveal that figurative meanings, particularly metaphors and symbolic expressions, dominate the lyrical structure, while literal expressions function as contextual anchors that support interpretative coherence. Emotional experiences such as loss, hope, and psychological struggle are predominantly conveyed through conceptual metaphors grounded in embodied cognition. The study also highlights that literal and figurative meanings operate in an integrated semantic system rather than as separate interpretative layers. It is concluded that semantic complexity in song lyrics enhances emotional depth and interpretative flexibility, contributing to both linguistic theory and pedagogical applications in language learning contexts.

Keywords: *Semantic Analysis, Figurative Meaning, Literal Meaning, Song Lyrics, Metaphor.*

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INTRODUCTION

The growing intersection between linguistics, literary studies, and popular culture has positioned song lyrics as a significant object of inquiry within contemporary semantic research, particularly in relation to how language constructs emotional, psychological, and symbolic meaning across global communicative contexts. Recent developments in applied linguistics indicate that musical texts are no longer treated merely as aesthetic artifacts but are increasingly understood as complex linguistic compositions that encode multilayered semantic structures capable of reflecting social experience, personal identity, and collective emotion. Within this trajectory, semantics has emerged as a crucial analytical framework because it enables scholars to examine not only denotative meaning but also the implicit conceptual mechanisms through which figurative expressions shape interpretation and emotional resonance (Kreidler, 1998; Lyons, 1995). The expansion of semantic inquiry into contemporary music is also closely related to broader theoretical shifts in linguistics that challenge the assumption that meaning is fixed at the structural level of language, emphasizing instead the cognitive and contextual dimensions of interpretation embedded within discourse practices (Chomsky, 2002; Meyer, 2009). Current international scholarship increasingly recognizes that song lyrics frequently operate through metaphorical and symbolic constructions that transcend literal representation, making semantic analysis particularly relevant for understanding how listeners negotiate emotional and experiential meaning in globally circulated musical texts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Gibbs, 2017). Under these conditions, popular songs occupy a strategic position within linguistic studies because they simultaneously function as communicative discourse, emotional narrative, and cultural expression, thereby demanding analytical approaches capable of integrating literal and figurative dimensions of meaning within a single interpretative framework.

Existing studies on semantic analysis in song lyrics have produced important insights into the prevalence of figurative language in musical discourse, particularly regarding the role of metaphor, symbolism, and emotional connotation in intensifying listener engagement and interpretative depth. Al-Hasyimi (2020) demonstrates that figurative expressions in song lyrics frequently operate as semantic instruments through which abstract emotional experiences are transformed into linguistically accessible imagery, enabling listeners to internalize emotional narratives beyond direct verbal expression. Similar

findings are articulated by Nurhayati (2019), who argues that semantic analysis of song lyrics reveals how figurative language functions pedagogically by enhancing interpretative competence and contextual language understanding among learners of English. More recent scholarship by Arira and Zaim (2025) further advances this discussion by illustrating that metaphors and symbolic expressions in contemporary songs construct layered semantic meanings that are strongly influenced by emotional subjectivity and cultural imagination. Despite their valuable contributions, these studies collectively reveal a dominant tendency within the literature to prioritize figurative meaning as the principal analytical focus, often treating literal meaning merely as a secondary or self-evident semantic layer rather than as an active component participating in meaning construction. Such a tendency reflects a broader inclination within semantic criticism to privilege symbolic interpretation while underestimating the dynamic interaction between denotative and connotative dimensions in shaping the communicative architecture of lyrical texts.

The privileging of figurative interpretation within previous scholarship has generated several conceptual and methodological limitations that remain insufficiently addressed in current semantic studies of music. A substantial portion of existing research isolates metaphorical expressions from their literal linguistic environment, resulting in analyses that identify figurative devices descriptively without sufficiently explaining how literal and figurative meanings coexist, overlap, or mutually reinforce one another within the same textual structure. This fragmentation creates a conceptual imbalance because meaning in discourse cannot be reduced exclusively to symbolic interpretation; semantic meaning emerges through relational interaction between lexical reference, contextual implication, and cognitive association (Lyons, 1995; Kreidler, 1998). Cognitive semantic theories proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and expanded by Gibbs (2017) explicitly suggest that metaphor is not detached from literal cognition but rather grounded in embodied conceptual systems that interact continuously with ordinary language use. Yet empirical studies on song lyrics frequently fail to operationalize this theoretical insight within their analytical procedures, leading to interpretations that are impressionistic rather than systematically semantic. The absence of integrative frameworks examining both literal and figurative meaning simultaneously also limits the explanatory power of prior studies because emotional interpretation in songs often depends precisely on the tension between direct statements and symbolic implications. This unresolved gap becomes particularly visible in studies focusing on emotionally driven songs, where literal expressions of pain, exhaustion, or longing are deeply intertwined with metaphorical constructions that reshape their interpretative significance.

The unresolved imbalance between literal and figurative analysis carries important scientific and practical implications, especially in relation to how semantic meaning is understood within contemporary language learning, literary interpretation, and discourse analysis. From a theoretical standpoint, neglecting the interaction between literal and figurative meaning risks oversimplifying semantic interpretation by assuming that emotional depth in artistic discourse is generated exclusively through symbolic language, whereas many lyrical expressions derive their affective force precisely from the coexistence of direct and indirect meaning structures. Such reductionism weakens the capacity of semantic theory to account for how audiences process emotionally charged discourse in authentic communicative settings. From a pedagogical perspective, the issue is equally significant because song lyrics are increasingly incorporated into English language teaching as resources for developing vocabulary acquisition, interpretative competence, and pragmatic understanding, yet instructional approaches often focus selectively on identifying figurative language without training learners to analyze how literal and figurative meanings interact contextually (Nurhayati, 2019). Contemporary semantic scholarship therefore requires analytical models capable of demonstrating how linguistic meaning operates across multiple interpretative levels simultaneously, particularly in globally influential musical texts whose emotional accessibility depends on semantic complexity rather than isolated metaphorical devices. Investigating this issue becomes increasingly urgent within digital and transnational music cultures where songs circulate across linguistic and cultural boundaries, generating diverse interpretations shaped by both textual semantics and listener subjectivity.

Within this broader intellectual landscape, the song “Fix You” by Coldplay represents a particularly compelling site for semantic inquiry because its lyrical composition combines explicit emotional statements with highly symbolic imagery that collectively construct narratives of suffering, vulnerability, consolation, and psychological recovery. Unlike many studies that examine figurative expressions in fragmented or generalized corpora, the present research positions itself within an

integrative semantic framework that treats literal and figurative meanings as interdependent interpretative mechanisms rather than analytically separable categories. This positioning is theoretically important because it responds directly to the conceptual fragmentation observed in earlier scholarship by examining how denotative meaning supports symbolic interpretation and how figurative language amplifies the emotional implications of literal expressions. The selection of "Fix You" is methodologically strategic not merely because of its popularity but because the song demonstrates a dense interplay between emotional directness and metaphorical abstraction, allowing semantic analysis to move beyond taxonomic identification of figurative devices toward a more relational understanding of meaning construction in musical discourse. Through this approach, the study seeks to reposition semantic analysis of song lyrics from a predominantly stylistic exercise into a more comprehensive linguistic investigation concerned with the interaction between lexical meaning, emotional representation, and interpretative cognition.

This study aims to investigate how literal and figurative meanings are constructed and interconnected within the lyrics of "Fix You" through a semantic analytical framework that emphasizes contextual interpretation, emotional resonance, and linguistic interaction. The research contributes theoretically by advancing a more integrated understanding of semantics in musical discourse, particularly by demonstrating that figurative meaning cannot be fully interpreted independently of literal semantic structures embedded within the same text. Methodologically, the study contributes by applying a relational model of semantic analysis that systematically categorizes and interprets denotative and connotative meaning within a unified analytical process rather than separating them into isolated interpretative domains. The findings are expected to enrich contemporary discussions in applied linguistics, semantic studies, and discourse analysis by offering a more nuanced explanation of how meaning is produced in artistic language, while simultaneously expanding the pedagogical relevance of song lyrics as authentic materials for developing interpretative and critical language competence.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a non-empirical qualitative research design grounded in semantic and discourse-oriented textual analysis. The research was categorized as a library-based interpretative study because the primary data consisted exclusively of the official lyrics of "Fix You" by Coldplay, without involving human participants, surveys, interviews, or experimental procedures. The selection of the song was conducted purposively based on several analytical criteria, namely the density of figurative expressions, the prominence of emotional themes, and the presence of both literal and symbolic semantic constructions that enabled comprehensive interpretative examination. Secondary data sources included scholarly books and journal articles in semantics, cognitive linguistics, and figurative language studies, particularly those concerning denotation, connotation, metaphor, symbolism, and contextual meaning. The analytical framework was primarily informed by semantic theories proposed by Lyons, Kreidler, and Lakoff and Johnson, which conceptualize meaning as a relational and context-dependent linguistic phenomenon operating across both literal and figurative dimensions. Within this framework, the study focused on identifying how lexical expressions, emotional representations, and symbolic structures interact to construct meaning in musical discourse.

The analytical procedure was conducted through several systematic stages designed to ensure interpretative rigor and conceptual consistency. First, the lyrics were repeatedly examined to identify linguistic units containing semantic significance, including words, phrases, and clauses associated with emotional expression and figurative representation. Second, the identified data were classified into categories of literal and figurative meaning based on denotative and connotative semantic characteristics. Third, each expression was interpreted contextually by considering its linguistic environment, emotional implications, and symbolic associations within the broader structure of the song. The analysis also involved examining metaphorical and symbolic constructions to determine how figurative language intensified emotional meaning and shaped interpretative depth. To maintain analytical credibility and methodological rigor, the study applied theoretical triangulation by integrating multiple semantic perspectives and ensuring consistency between conceptual definitions and textual interpretation. Interpretative reliability was reinforced through repeated close reading, comparative examination of semantic categories, and careful alignment between analytical claims and textual

evidence, thereby minimizing subjective overinterpretation while preserving the interpretative nature of qualitative semantic inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semantic Construction of Literal and Figurative Meaning in *Fix You*

The semantic structure of "Fix You" demonstrates a persistent interaction between literal expression and figurative representation, indicating that meaning in the song cannot be interpreted through denotative reference alone. Several lexical units initially appear transparent in their surface structure but subsequently acquire symbolic dimensions when interpreted within the emotional progression of the lyrics. Semantic theorists have argued that meaning emerges through contextual relationality rather than isolated lexical reference, particularly in literary and musical discourse where emotional implication shapes interpretation (Lyons, 1995). The repeated coexistence between direct emotional statements and symbolic imagery in the song reveals a multilayered semantic architecture that aligns with contemporary perspectives in cognitive semantics.

The opening lyrical sequence, particularly the clause "When you try your best but you don't succeed," illustrates how literal language may simultaneously function as emotional abstraction. Lexically, the sentence denotes unsuccessful effort and personal disappointment, yet its contextual position transforms it into a broader existential commentary regarding human vulnerability and emotional insufficiency. Such semantic expansion reflects the argument proposed by Kreidler (1998), who maintains that contextual environments frequently modify lexical interpretation beyond dictionary-defined meaning. Emotional discourse in songs therefore operates through a dynamic semantic process in which literal structures become carriers of wider psychological significance.

The phrase "When you get what you want but not what you need" further demonstrates semantic tension between material fulfillment and emotional deprivation. The distinction between "want" and "need" establishes a conceptual opposition that exceeds literal consumption and enters the domain of emotional and existential dissatisfaction. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) identify this phenomenon as conceptual mapping, where ordinary lexical oppositions become vehicles for abstract emotional cognition. The semantic contrast embedded in the lyric intensifies the interpretative depth of the song because emotional absence is communicated indirectly through accessible lexical structures.

Another important semantic pattern appears in the expression "Stuck in reverse," which functions predominantly as metaphorical representation rather than literal description. The phrase does not describe physical immobility but symbolizes psychological stagnation and emotional paralysis within the broader thematic structure of the song. Gibbs (2017) explains that metaphorical cognition often derives its effectiveness from bodily experience, allowing listeners to conceptualize emotional conditions through spatial orientation and physical movement. The metaphor gains interpretative strength precisely because the literal impossibility of remaining "in reverse" in human life reinforces its symbolic resonance.

The semantic role of emotional embodiment becomes more evident in the recurring line "And the tears come streaming down your face." At the denotative level, the sentence directly describes the physical act of crying through accessible and concrete lexical choices. Emotional intensity, however, transforms the literal description into an index of grief, despair, and vulnerability that exceeds physical representation alone. Research on figurative language in songs has consistently shown that literal imagery frequently acquires symbolic value when embedded within emotionally charged discourse contexts (Wahyuni, 2018). The lyric consequently operates simultaneously as literal observation and emotional signification.

The interaction between denotation and connotation in the analyzed lyrics may be observed more systematically through the following classification table. The semantic categorization reveals that figurative constructions dominate the lyrical composition, although literal expressions continue to provide contextual grounding for interpretative coherence. Previous studies on Coldplay's lyrics similarly identify the prevalence of symbolic and metaphorical structures that mediate emotional communication (Puspitorini & Hamdani, 2021). The analytical pattern identified in this study demonstrates that literal meaning remains structurally important because figurative interpretation depends on lexical recognizability.

Table 1. Semantic Classification of Literal and Figurative Meaning in the Lyrics of "Fix You" by Coldplay

No	Lyric Excerpt	Semantic Category	Interpretative Function
1	"When you try your best but you don't succeed"	Literal + Figurative	Emotional frustration and existential struggle
2	"Stuck in reverse"	Figurative	Psychological stagnation
3	"Tears stream down your face"	Literal	Physical manifestation of sadness
4	"Lights will guide you home"	Figurative	Hope and emotional reassurance
5	"I will try to fix you"	Figurative	Emotional healing and support

The metaphorical expression "Lights will guide you home" occupies a central semantic position because it transforms physical illumination into emotional direction and existential reassurance. The lexical item "lights" no longer functions as an ordinary object but becomes a symbolic representation of hope, guidance, and psychological restoration. Studies focusing specifically on "Fix You" have similarly concluded that metaphorical imagery in the song constructs cognitive pathways through which listeners interpret emotional recovery (Dewi, 2025). Symbolic semantic structures therefore become essential mechanisms for translating abstract emotional states into communicatively accessible forms.

A comparable semantic transformation appears in the lyric "I will try to fix you," where the verb "fix" transcends its ordinary mechanical meaning and enters the domain of emotional healing. The sentence does not imply physical repair but rather communicates empathy, companionship, and emotional restoration within interpersonal relationships. Cognitive semantic theory explains that metaphorical extensions frequently emerge from everyday language usage, allowing abstract human experiences to be conceptualized through concrete action verbs (Harahap & Armis, 2025). The emotional persuasiveness of the lyric depends precisely on this transfer from material repair to psychological recovery.

The findings also reveal that figurative meaning in "Fix You" is not isolated from grammatical structure but is reinforced through syntactic simplicity and repetition. Chomsky (2002) emphasizes that structural organization contributes significantly to linguistic interpretation because recurring patterns create cognitive emphasis and semantic salience. Repetition within the song intensifies emotional continuity and allows metaphorical expressions to acquire cumulative interpretative force over time. Musical discourse therefore demonstrates that semantic meaning emerges not only from lexical choice but also from structural arrangement and rhythmic recurrence.

The broader analytical pattern identified in this study confirms that semantic meaning in "Fix You" operates through a continuous negotiation between literal reference and figurative implication. Emotional interpretation becomes possible because listeners simultaneously process concrete lexical meaning and symbolic emotional association within the same textual environment. Similar conclusions have been identified in semantic analyses of emotionally oriented songs where metaphorical structures strengthen audience engagement and interpretative flexibility (Simanjuntak & Pasaribu, 2021). The song ultimately illustrates that semantic depth in musical discourse depends less on isolated figurative devices than on the interactional relationship between literal language, emotional cognition, and symbolic representation.

Metaphorical and Symbolic Representation of Emotional Experience

The semantic analysis demonstrates that metaphorical and symbolic expressions in "Fix You" function as cognitive instruments through which emotional suffering is transformed into linguistically interpretable experience. Emotional states within the song are rarely articulated through direct psychological terminology, since the lyrical discourse consistently relies on symbolic imagery to communicate vulnerability, despair, and recovery. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that metaphor structures human cognition by enabling abstract emotions to be conceptualized through familiar experiential domains. The lyrical composition consequently reveals that emotional meaning in musical discourse is constructed through conceptual projection rather than explicit descriptive narration.

One of the most significant symbolic structures appears in the phrase "Lights will guide you home," where illumination operates as a metaphorical representation of emotional orientation and existential reassurance. The semantic force of the lyric derives from the universal experiential association between light and safety, allowing listeners to interpret hope through spatial and visual cognition. Gibbs (2017) explains that metaphorical comprehension depends heavily on embodied conceptual systems that connect physical experience with emotional understanding. The metaphor therefore acquires persuasive emotional power because the symbolic image of "light" activates deeply familiar cognitive associations regarding protection and direction.

The metaphorical sequence "And ignite your bones" further intensifies the emotional complexity of the song through bodily symbolism. The lexical choice "ignite" conventionally refers to physical combustion, yet within the lyrical context it signifies emotional awakening, psychological strength, and the restoration of inner vitality. Such metaphorical embodiment corresponds with findings by Agustin, Musyarofah, and Aisyah (2026), who emphasize that cognitive semantic structures in "Fix You" rely extensively on corporeal imagery to communicate emotional transformation. The lyric demonstrates how bodily references in songs frequently transcend material meaning and become symbolic representations of emotional resilience.

Another important symbolic construction appears in the recurring emotional motif of falling and emotional descent embedded in the contrastive phrase "High up above or down below." Spatial orientation in this expression functions metaphorically to represent fluctuating psychological conditions rather than literal physical location. Cognitive semantic research consistently identifies verticality metaphors as central mechanisms for conceptualizing emotional states such as happiness, despair, empowerment, and vulnerability (Harahap & Armis, 2025). The semantic movement between upward and downward imagery therefore reflects emotional instability while simultaneously reinforcing the introspective atmosphere of the song.

The metaphorical dimensions identified throughout the lyrics reveal recurring semantic patterns that organize emotional experience into symbolic conceptual categories. Several expressions rely on bodily movement, illumination, and spatial orientation to communicate abstract emotional conditions in linguistically accessible ways. Research concerning figurative language in songs similarly notes that metaphorical imagery enables listeners to internalize emotional narratives more effectively than literal exposition alone (Tambunsaribu & Sigalingging, 2023). The following table illustrates the dominant symbolic patterns identified within the analyzed lyrics.

Table 2. Metaphorical and Symbolic Semantic Categorization of Emotional Expressions in "Fix You" by Coldplay

No	Metaphorical Expression	Symbolic Domain	Emotional Interpretation
1	"Lights will guide you home"	Illumination	Hope and reassurance
2	"Ignite your bones"	Fire and body	Emotional revival
3	"Stuck in reverse"	Movement	Psychological stagnation
4	"High up above or down below"	Spatial orientation	Emotional instability
5	"Fix you"	Mechanical repair	Emotional healing

The symbolic phrase "When you lose something you cannot replace" introduces another layer of emotional abstraction by avoiding explicit reference to the object of loss. Semantic ambiguity in this lyric becomes interpretatively productive because listeners are invited to project personal emotional experiences onto the unspecified absence articulated in the song. Lyons (1995) explains that semantic openness frequently enhances interpretative multiplicity within literary discourse because meaning becomes contextually negotiated rather than lexically fixed. The emotional universality of the lyric therefore emerges precisely from its refusal to identify loss in concrete terms.

The metaphorical configuration of emotional repair in "I will try to fix you" also reflects broader conceptual tendencies within interpersonal discourse. Human emotional suffering is represented through the conceptual vocabulary of mechanical dysfunction, allowing psychological pain to be framed as something repairable and manageable. Similar metaphorical constructions have been

identified in contemporary semantic analyses of popular songs where emotional intimacy is conceptualized through material or technical imagery (Arira & Zaim, 2025). The metaphor gains emotional credibility because it transforms abstract care into an actionable conceptual process understandable within ordinary human experience.

The semantic interaction between symbolism and emotional narration also reveals the importance of contextual continuity within the song. Isolated metaphorical expressions would lose interpretative coherence without the emotional progression established throughout the lyrical sequence. Meyer (2009) argues that discourse meaning emerges cumulatively because linguistic units acquire significance through their relation to surrounding structures and thematic continuity. Emotional symbolism in "Fix You" consequently operates not as disconnected figurative ornamentation but as an integrated semantic network shaping the listener's interpretative experience.

Research on figurative language in educational and literary contexts similarly supports the argument that metaphorical expressions strengthen emotional engagement and interpretative participation. Avillanova and Bram (2019) observe that song lyrics containing symbolic imagery encourage readers and listeners to engage more actively with semantic interpretation because meaning cannot be extracted solely through surface lexical recognition. Symbolic ambiguity therefore becomes pedagogically and emotionally valuable rather than interpretatively problematic. The metaphors in "Fix You" exemplify this process by requiring listeners to negotiate emotional meaning through contextual and experiential inference.

The analytical findings confirm that metaphorical and symbolic constructions function as the primary semantic mechanisms through which emotional experience is represented in "Fix You." Emotional suffering, recovery, uncertainty, and hope are consistently translated into embodied, spatial, and material imagery that allows abstract psychological states to become cognitively accessible. Comparable findings appear in systematic reviews of experiential meaning in song lyrics, where figurative structures are identified as central tools for emotional representation and listener immersion (Simbolon, Suhadi, & Pratiwy, 2025). The song ultimately illustrates that metaphor in musical discourse operates not merely as aesthetic decoration but as a foundational cognitive structure shaping how emotional reality is linguistically understood.

Semantic Interpretation and Pedagogical Implications in Musical Discourse

The semantic patterns identified in "Fix You" indicate that song lyrics possess significant interpretative value within linguistic and educational contexts because meaning is constructed through layered interaction between lexical form, emotional implication, and symbolic representation. The lyrics do not merely function as artistic expression but also operate as authentic discourse capable of demonstrating how semantic interpretation depends on contextual and cognitive processing. Kreidler (1998) emphasizes that meaning in discourse emerges through interpretative relations among linguistic units rather than through isolated vocabulary recognition. The song therefore provides a valuable textual environment for examining how listeners negotiate literal and figurative meaning simultaneously within emotionally complex communication.

The interpretative flexibility observed throughout the lyrics reveals that semantic understanding is strongly influenced by experiential and contextual factors. Expressions such as "lights will guide you home" or "stuck in reverse" do not produce singular interpretations because listeners may associate these metaphors with different emotional experiences depending on personal background and psychological condition. Semantic theory consistently argues that language interpretation remains dynamic because meaning is negotiated between textual structure and individual cognition (Lyons, 1995). Emotional discourse in songs consequently encourages multiple layers of interpretation without eliminating semantic coherence.

The findings also suggest that semantic ambiguity in musical texts contributes positively to emotional engagement and interpretative depth rather than generating communicative confusion. Figurative expressions in "Fix You" remain accessible because metaphorical meaning is grounded in familiar experiential domains such as movement, light, bodily sensation, and repair. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) maintain that conceptual metaphors derive their communicative effectiveness from ordinary embodied experiences shared across human cognition. The emotional accessibility of the song therefore depends on the balance between symbolic abstraction and recognizable experiential imagery.

Educationally, the semantic structure of "Fix You" demonstrates considerable potential for language learning, particularly in developing interpretative competence and contextual awareness among English learners. Song lyrics expose learners to authentic language use in which meaning extends beyond grammatical structure and dictionary definition, encouraging deeper engagement with contextual interpretation. Studies concerning figurative language in English teaching contexts consistently show that musical texts enhance students' understanding of metaphorical meaning and semantic nuance (Nurhayati, 2019). The interpretative complexity of the lyrics consequently transforms the song into an effective pedagogical resource for semantic instruction.

The pedagogical relevance of semantic interpretation in song lyrics becomes more visible when the identified analytical patterns are organized systematically. Several semantic dimensions found in the lyrics correspond directly with linguistic competencies associated with critical reading and contextual interpretation. Research on figurative language in educational materials similarly demonstrates that songs can facilitate emotional literacy and linguistic comprehension simultaneously (Avillanova & Bram, 2019). The following table summarizes the principal semantic and pedagogical dimensions identified in this study.

Table 3. Semantic Features and Pedagogical Implications of Literal and Figurative Meaning in "Fix You" by Coldplay

No	Semantic Feature	Linguistic Function	Pedagogical Relevance
1	Metaphorical expressions	Symbolic emotional representation	Enhances interpretative competence
2	Literal descriptions	Contextual grounding	Supports vocabulary comprehension
3	Emotional imagery	Psychological engagement	Encourages critical interpretation
4	Repetition	Semantic emphasis	Strengthens contextual retention
5	Symbolic ambiguity	Multiplicity of meaning	Develops inferential thinking

The relationship between semantic interpretation and emotional literacy is particularly evident in how the song encourages listeners to infer emotional states through indirect language. Learners encountering expressions such as "ignite your bones" are required to interpret emotional intensity through symbolic association rather than literal lexical reference. Wahyuni (2018) explains that figurative language in songs stimulates interpretative reasoning because listeners must connect textual imagery with emotional implication. Semantic analysis therefore becomes not only a linguistic exercise but also a cognitive process involving abstraction, empathy, and contextual inference.

Another important implication emerging from the analysis concerns the role of repetition in reinforcing semantic salience and interpretative continuity. Recurrent phrases in "Fix You" function not merely as musical devices but also as mechanisms for emphasizing emotional themes and stabilizing symbolic meaning throughout the discourse. Chomsky (2002) argues that structural recurrence contributes significantly to cognitive processing because repeated linguistic patterns facilitate recognition and semantic retention. Repetition within the song consequently strengthens emotional immersion while simultaneously reinforcing interpretative accessibility for listeners and learners.

The findings further indicate that semantic interpretation in songs can support interdisciplinary approaches within language and literary education. Musical texts combine linguistic structure, emotional narrative, and cultural symbolism within a single communicative medium, allowing students to examine language from cognitive, stylistic, and sociocultural perspectives simultaneously. Studies focusing on translation and semantic shifts in song lyrics similarly reveal that musical discourse provides rich material for exploring contextual meaning and interpretative variation across languages and cultures (Sri, Saientisna, & Widiastuti, 2025). Song lyrics therefore represent an academically productive intersection between linguistics, literature, and cultural analysis.

The semantic organization of "Fix You" also demonstrates that interpersonal meaning and emotional communication are inseparable from figurative construction. Emotional reassurance within the song is communicated not through direct explanation but through metaphorical and symbolic

structures that frame care, suffering, and recovery in cognitively relatable forms. Recent studies examining interpersonal meaning in "Fix You" similarly conclude that emotional connection in the song emerges through relational and symbolic language patterns rather than explicit declarative statements (Amalia et al., 2026). Semantic interpretation consequently becomes central to understanding how emotional solidarity is constructed linguistically in musical discourse.

The broader analytical implications of this study confirm that semantic analysis of song lyrics contributes meaningfully to both theoretical linguistics and pedagogical practice. Figurative and literal meanings in "Fix You" operate interactively to create emotional depth, interpretative flexibility, and communicative resonance within the lyrical structure. Similar conclusions have been identified in studies examining figurative language across contemporary English songs, where symbolic meaning consistently functions as a primary mechanism for emotional and experiential representation (Al-Hasyimi, 2020; Samosir & Damanik, 2025). The song ultimately illustrates that semantic interpretation in musical discourse extends beyond aesthetic appreciation and functions as a complex cognitive process through which language, emotion, and human experience become interconnected.

CONCLUSION

The semantic examination of "Fix You" demonstrates that meaning in musical discourse is constructed through a continuous interplay between literal expressions and figurative representations, where both operate as an integrated interpretative system rather than independent semantic layers. The analysis across all lyrical structures indicates that literal meanings provide foundational contextual grounding, while figurative meanings dominate the emotional and conceptual articulation of experiences such as loss, hope, vulnerability, and psychological recovery. Metaphorical and symbolic expressions consistently transform ordinary lexical items into complex cognitive constructs that reflect embodied emotional experience, confirming that semantic interpretation extends beyond surface-level denotation. The interaction between structural repetition, emotional imagery, and conceptual metaphor further reinforces interpretative depth, allowing meaning to emerge dynamically through contextual and cognitive engagement. These findings collectively establish that the song's semantic richness lies in its ability to merge direct linguistic reference with abstract emotional signification, producing multilayered meaning accessible to diverse interpretative perspectives.

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