CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR OF ANXIETY: COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES IN *BUZZ* ALBUM BY NIKI

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the conceptual metaphor of anxiety in Buzz, the third album by Indonesian singer NIKI, from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Anxiety, as a blended emotional and cognitive experience, is often difficult to articulate directly, and metaphor provides a means to externalize such subjective states. This research analyzes how metaphorical expressions in NIKI's lyrics conceptualize anxiety and how these are structured through image schemas. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected from 13 songs on the album and transcribed into narrative texts. From 462 lines of lyrics, 66 metaphorical expressions were identified, and 16 of them were classified as anxiety-related metaphors. The analysis employs Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Image Schema Theory to examine the cognitive mappings involved. The findings reveal five metaphorical concepts of anxiety: ANXIETY IS EFFORT, PAIN, RELATION, PROTECTION, and DIRECTION, which are realized through image schemas such as FORCE, CONTAINER, SPACE, EXISTENCE, and UNITY. The dominant schema, SPACE, reflects the spatial orientation and instability associated with emotional disorientation. These results demonstrate that metaphor in song lyrics not only enhances aesthetic expression but also serves as a cognitive tool for expressing internal psychological struggles. This study contributes to cognitive linguistics by offering insight into how complex emotions like anxiety are represented in contemporary music discourse. This insight may inform mental health awareness and highlight music's role in helping listeners process and articulate emotional experiences.

Keywords: anxiety, Buzz album, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, image schema

INTRODUCTION

Concept albums are often built around a coherent emotional or thematic narrative drawn from the musician's personal experience. The songs on the album contained many words filled with cheerful or heart-wrenching lyrics. Metaphorical expressions are frequently used in song lyrics to enhance both emotional expression and aesthetic value. (Lakoff, 2003) described metaphor not merely as a poetic device, but as a fundamental mechanism of thought through extraordinary language. Extraordinary language means language that uses metaphor, symbolism, or imagery. This can also be observed in NIKI's third studio album, *Buzz* (Niki, 2024), which explores deeply personal, emotional themes. NIKI,

or Nicole Zefanya, is a singer from Indonesia who joined the 88rising record label. *Buzz* is NIKI's third album, released on August 4th, 2024. If the lyrics from the *Buzz* album are read carefully, they contain a lot of metaphorical lyrics with heart-wrenching feelings, like: "Now your heart feels heavy. What happened to making light of every problem? Or when bitterness bites, novelty is nectar."

Reported from DIY Magazine (Daly, 2024), NIKI said that she feels like the whole record (*Buzz*) is about an identity crisis and just being lost in your twenties and accepting that life is just a constant state of uncertainty. Her statement can be linked to Barlow (1991), who described anxiety in words by saying, "That terrible event is not my fault, but it may happen again, and I may not be able to cope with it, but I've

got to be ready to try." Anxiety differs from related emotions like anger and fear. Unlike fear, which typically has a clear trigger, anxiety often arises from ambiguous or internalized threats. Anxiety is a feeling of nervousness that happens when a person senses a real or imagined threat.

Anxiety is a signal that indicates the presence of a dangerous situation, distinguished between objective anxiety and neurotic anxiety based on whether the source of the danger originates from the external environment or internal impulses. Objective anxiety, also known as fear, consists of a complex internal response to the anticipated threat of injury or harm from external danger. On the other hand, neurotic anxiety is defined by feelings of unease and physiological arousal. Historically, anxiety has emerged from an aversive conditioning process that involves instinctual impulses and repression, often beginning in childhood (Mowrer, 1939).

Emotion metaphors often reveal culturally shared ways of conceptualizing affective experience across speaker groups. Some metaphorical source domains associated with emotion concepts appear to be specific to emotions. Emotion concepts studied by various scholars include anger, fear, happiness, sadness, love, lust, pride, shame, and surprise. Kovecses (2005) identifies several aspects to analyze conceptual metaphors: 1) source domain, the concrete and tangible aspects of metaphorical expression, 2) target domain, the abstract and intangible aspects of metaphorical expression, 3) embodiment of experience, the component that illustrates how concepts from the source domain are projected onto the target domain, representing a person's daily experience, through human perception or sensory observation, and 4) image schema, the repeated shapes or patterns of embodied experience that help humans to relate their daily experiences and express them metaphorically (Table 1). Clausner and Croft (1999) compiled image schemas with the following details.

Previous research by Sari and Nirmala (2022) largely focused on conceptual metaphors of emotion and mental disorder issues (MDI). This study found five types of MDI, which are depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. These types make up each metaphorical concept. In this study, a metaphorical concept of anxiety is ANXIETY IS SWARM OF THOUGHTS. However, most of this research has analysed all of the types of MDI and the data was randomly selected from social media, leaving a gap in the focus on one type of MDI to find more concepts of metaphor for each of those types. Furthermore, Sari and Nirmala (2022) analysed the data only with conceptual metaphor theory, without linking it to image schema theory.

Another previous research, Woodgate et al. (2021), emphasizes the voices of young people living with anxiety. This study focused on photovoice and ecomaps with multi-modal representations. Woodgate finds that anxiety is like a shrinking world, anxiety is like a heavy backpack, anxiety is like play, pause, rewind,

forward, and anxiety is like a fine balance. Overall, young people described anxiety as a monster, including the feelings of fear, loss, and pain, but also hope. Even though this study identifies many metaphorical concepts of anxiety, the data are drawn from visual metaphors. Leaving a gap in the data metaphors, is there any differentiation between visual metaphors and narrative metaphors about anxiety? Align with Farina and Pepe (2024), who state that adolescents with high alexithymia and low psychological well-being often produce metaphors related to confusion, emotional exhaustion, and helplessness. Sari and Nirmala (2022), Woodgate et al. (2021), and Farina and Pepe (2024) also do not associate the visual metaphors with image schema theory.

Table 1 Image schemas

SPACE	UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, LEFT-RIGHT, NEAR-FAR, CENTER, PERIPHERY, CONTACT
SCALE	PATH
CONTAINER	CONTAINMENT, IN-OUT, SURFACE, FULL-EMPTY, CONTENT
FORCE	BALANCE, COUNTERFORCE, COMPULSION, RESTRAINT, ENABLEMENT, BLOCKAGE, DIVERSION, ATTRACTION
UNITY/ MULTIPLICITY	MERGING, COLLECTION, SPLITTING, ITERATION, PART-WHOLE, MASS-COUNT, LINK
IDENTITY	MATCHING, SUPERIMPOSITION
EXISTENCE	REMOVAL, BOUNDED SPACE, CYCLE, OBJECT, PROCESS

Previous research on metaphor in songs by Nasution et al. (2024) highlights the emotional depth and symbolic presence communicated through structural and ontological metaphors in Lonestar's song lyrics. While this research focuses on emotional struggle, which is anxiety through image schemas and metaphorical domains. Vinh (2025) explores how metaphorical language conveys sorrow in the song lyrics of "Yesterday" by Paul McCartney. This research identifies four main conceptual metaphors of sorrow. In Kamandanu et al. (2024), conceptual metaphors in Michael Bublé's album are about love, emotion, and relational experience, emphasizing how figurative language shapes listeners' interpretations, emotional responses, and narrative depth in pop lyrics. Nwankwo and Nagornaya (2024) demonstrate that metaphor-filled lyrics can emotionally benefit listeners. Siva et al. (2023) also analyze conceptual metaphors in three Indonesian pop songs by Fiersa Besari and Feby Putri, though they do not connect these metaphors to image schemas. But these studies do not integrate image schema theory to examine how such metaphors are cognitively structured. In contrast to previous research

on conceptual metaphors of songs, which did not use image schemas, Puteri and Nur (2024), Fauzan et al. (2023), Devita and Nur (2020), and Liu and Mo (2020) focus on conceptual metaphors and image schemas. However, this research explores a broader and more varied set of image schemas to map anxiety.

Given these theoretical and empirical gaps, this study focuses on the conceptual metaphor of anxiety in NIKI's lyrics for the *Buzz* album. It will investigate how cognitive linguistics, which holds that metaphors reflect human thought, shapes diverse and unique language with different meanings. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how metaphors serve as a tool for bridging the gap between complex personal experiences, such as anxiety, that are hard to explain, and facilitating easier understanding. Unlike the previous research with a wide scope of mental disorders, this study filled the gap by specifically identifying the conceptual metaphor of anxiety. Also, this study associated its image schema to help determine the cognitive linguistic classification. This classification aims to highlight the strong connection between the cognitive process and the psychological mechanisms. In addition, the outcome of the study between the visual metaphor data and the narrative metaphor data is estimated to have significant differences. So, this study will bring the new concept of metaphors about anxiety as a complex emotion from one of the latest albums in the music world.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to uncover the conceptual metaphor of anxiety in song lyrics and to understand the meanings people assign to their lives (Taylor et al., 2015). A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to interpret how individuals cognitively represented emotions, such as anxiety, through metaphorical language. The lyrics were transcribed into narrative texts and analyzed to identify metaphorical expressions relevant to anxiety. Moreover, this methodology reveals a correlation between conceptual metaphor and anxiety. Also, it would help to classify the image schema that represented schematic patterns from imagistic domains.

The primary data for this study were the narrative texts from song lyrics by NIKI. There were 13 songs in this album: 1) "Buzz," 2) "Too Much of A Good Thing," 3) "Colossal Loss," 4) "Focus," 5) "Did You Like Her in The Morning?," 6) "Take Care," 7) "Magnets," 8) "Tsunami," 9) "Blue Moon," 10) "Strong Girl," 11) "Paths," 12) "Heirloom Pain," and 13) "Nothing Can." Every lyric in this album was listened to, and the transcription was made. Data were collected by listening to all 13 songs on the *Buzz* album, available on the official YouTube channel.

After finishing data collection, the data were transcribed into narrative text. There are about 462

lyrics on this album, which have been transcribed and classified. A total of 66 metaphorical expressions were identified across the 13 songs on the album. From the 66 metaphors, we reclassified the data that correlated with anxiety. Metaphors were selected based on their semantic association with emotional contradiction, internal conflict, and psychological distress, indicators of anxiety as conceptualized in psychological literature (Barlow, 1991; Mowrer, 1939). Based on the classification, we identified 16 metaphorical lyrics that convey contradiction and negative emotional states. These were further analyzed to reveal the underlying conceptual metaphors and their corresponding image schemas. This methodological design enabled a systematic understanding of how emotional experiences were linguistically structured and cognitively conceptualized through metaphor in narrative song lyrics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents metaphorical concepts of anxiety in NIKI's *Buzz* album lyrics, alongside their corresponding image schemas. Out of the 13 songs on NIKI's *Buzz* album, 16 metaphorical expressions were identified as conceptually related to anxiety. These five metaphorical concepts are rooted in everyday language and experience, making them consistent with the principles of conceptual metaphor theory.

One of the metaphorical concepts found in this study is ANXIETY AS EFFORT. Anxiety is a mental condition where someone continues to push themselves to do something because they want to prepare to cope with upcoming negative events. The person must make an effort to make something difficult happen. They have to keep moving to change the situation as they want. If anxiety comes from external threats that trigger internal impulses to change behavior, then we can conclude that anxiety has an effect of fear-terror. This behavior change indicates that the behavior is adapting. For further explanation, the results of the analysis will be explained in the following data:

Table 2 "The ache's the best index for drive"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Best Index ● Accurate ● Trusted	Measure ● Amount ● Method	FORCE (ENABLEMENT)
Drive ● Activity ● Force	Attempt ● Try to do something ● Effort	

The metaphorical lyric "the ache's the best index for drive" illustrates how emotional pain is associated with motivation or effort. If we take it literally, the "best index for drive" is an indicator of someone's ability to drive. As shown in Table 2, the source domain 'best

index' conveys accuracy and reliability, while 'drive' conveys an active attempt to move forward despite discomfort. If we connect it to the word 'ache', then we can assume that "best index for drive" means that the more intense the emotional pain, the greater the motivation to act, reflecting the metaphorical mapping of PAIN as a catalyst for EFFORT, which is very much in line with FORCE (ENABLEMENT) as its image schema.

Table 3 "Just drag your heels and don't you draw a line"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Drag ● Move ● Force	Procrastination ● Delaying something ● Holding back	FORCE (RESTRAINT)
Heels ● Part of the foot ● Shoes		
Draw ● Make ● Create	Set ● Put in a particular position ● Make certain	FORCE (BLOCKAGE)
Line ● Long mark ● Shape	Boundary ● Limit ● Mark	

In the lyric, "just drag your heels and don't you draw a line", anxiety appears as resistance and boundary making. 'Drag heels' means moving the feet somewhere by force. But, as shown in Table 3, 'drag' emphasizes moving something slowly. Next, the term 'heels' was used to refer to a girl. It is possible just to use 'feet' instead of 'heels', but this emphasizes that the girl is delaying the action. From the explanation above, 'drag heels' means a girl who delays and holds back her actions, just to be more careful about doing something or making a decision. Hence, it can be said that 'drag heels' has the same meaning as the image schema FORCE (RESTRAINT). Next, 'draw a line' means to create a long mark with a pencil or pen. In Table 3, 'draw' means to make certain about a particular position. Meanwhile, 'line' refers to a mark that is created, which has a similar meaning to a boundary. Based on the explanation above, we assumed that 'draw a line' means an activity that sets a boundary to prevent something undesirable from happening, which is related to the image schema FORCE (BLOCKAGE).

Further, in the lyric "we're hostages to the hour and the minute hands. Workin' overtime just to freeze," 'them' illustrates a sense of being controlled by time. As presented in Table 4, 'hostage' symbolizes someone who is taken as a prisoner and enslaved by an enemy. Hostages are usually restricted from doing something, so they lose their freedom. This is compatible with the target domain 'controlled' because these two concepts relate to the compulsion to do something the person may not want to do. Likewise, with the image schema,

FORCE (RESTRAINT), because in this metaphor, time is portrayed as controlling someone's freedom. Next, 'freeze' is a condition in which something stops working or becomes stuck in a certain situation. 'Freeze' in this metaphor is related to the target domain 'pause' because both concepts are used to stop something. This can also be connected to the image schema CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT) because 'freeze' time suggests stopping or holding time, as if it were trapped or contained at that moment.

Table 4 "We're hostages to the hour and the minute hands. Workin' overtime just to freeze them"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Hostage ● Prisoner ● Enslave	Controlled ● Restriction ● Under influence	FORCE (RESTRAINT)
Freeze ● Stop working ● Stuck	Pause ● Stop doing something temporarily ● Make something stop	CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT)

Table 5 "Full-sending a lot, only halfway sure"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Full-sending ● Deliver to destination ● Transmitting completely	Wholeheartedly ● Completely enthusiastic ●Commitment	CONTAINER (FULL-EMPTY)
Halfway ● In the middle ● Equally far from two places ● Sure ● Belief ● Certain	Uncertain ● Doubt ● Hesitation	SPACE (CENTER)

Another example, "full-sending a lot only halfway sure," shows contradiction in confidence and doubt. In Table 5, 'full-sending' means to do something wholeheartedly and to the fullest without caring about whether the results are good or bad. This metaphor was originally used in sports to describe performing a high-risk trick with maximum effort. Based on the explanation, the meaning is compatible with the image schema, CONTAINER (FULL-EMPTY), because 'full-sending' is giving 100% effort to what was done, which is similar to the concept of FULL. Then, the EMPTY concept describes that there is no doubt about what was done. Whereas, 'halfway sure' literally can mean in the middle of certain or doubt. It implies being at 50% for both of them. But in the metaphor, 'halfway sure' means partially certain about

something. It suggests confidence but lacks assurance. It is most suitable for the target domain 'uncertain', which describes hesitation and a lack of clarity. Based on the explanation above, we assumed the image schema is SPACE (CENTER), as it represents the midpoint between certainty and uncertainty. Also, in psychology, CENTER can symbolize a stable mental state in which one is aware of doubts and does not act hastily.

This study significantly contributes to cognitive linguistics by emphasizing how song lyrics convey metaphorical concepts rooted in emotional experiences. Previous studies have similarly explored this phenomenon (Jannah & Istiqomah, 2021). For instance, nine conceptual metaphors were identified in Kahitna's lyrics, demonstrating how image schemas such as PASSION OF LOVE IS A WAVE IN THE SEA reflect the intensifying nature of love. Suryadi (2023) also found that Denny Caknan's lyrics conceptualized love through metaphors that personify the heart as a sentient being capable of feeling, sensing, and persisting. Meanwhile, Budiawan (2022) analyzed the *Manusia* album and classified structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors, showing how everyday experiences are mapped onto lyrical expressions. These studies highlight that metaphorical expressions in music, whether about love or anxiety, serve as cognitive tools to make abstract emotions more tangible and relatable—an approach similarly applied in this study through the metaphorical conceptualization of anxiety in NIKI's lyrics.

Another metaphorical concept found is ANXIETY AS PAIN. Anxiety is a situation where negative events happen and cause emotional and physical burdens. It could carry unresolved past experiences and affect the present emotional state. The excessive anxiety that happens in teenagers about their school or daily life causes insomnia, difficulty focusing or concentrating, forgetfulness, a tendency to feel frustrated, and irritated (Fitria & Ifdil, 2020). If this situation keeps happening, this will increase the damage to their mental function and lead to physical illness, which aligns with the concept. For further explanation, the results of the analysis will be explained in the following data.

Table 6 "New indentations cover my back"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Indentations ● Mark ● Hole	Trauma ● Emotional shock ● Injury	CONTAINER (SURFACE)
Cover ● Place over ● Deal with		
Back ● Body part ● Behind		

The lyric "new indentations cover my back" describes anxiety as a physical and emotional impact. As shown in Table 6, 'indentations' means a physical mark or a hole in the surface of something. If we connect the sentence, it means there is a hole or a mark on the back. But metaphorically, "indentations cover my back" describes a weighty experience that left a mark on her life and caused trauma, as the target domain. It also refers to a new emotion from the past that leaves a lasting impact on life. This impact is affected by external factors and marking the individual condition, such as a plain surface marked by something. Based on the explanation, the most suitable image schema in this metaphor is CONTAINER (SURFACE).

Table 7 "Walking around with heirloom pain"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Walking around ● Strolling ● Move from place to place	Life ● Time being alive ● Still breathing	UNITY (PART-WHOLE)
Heirloom ● Inheritance ● Valuable object	Struggle ● Difficulty ● Fight	
Pain ● Illness ● Suffering		

This song tells about intergenerational trauma and the hope of becoming the cycle-breaker. In "walking around with heirloom pain", anxiety is depicted as an inherited emotional burden. Table 7 shows that the metaphor of 'walking around' means moving from one place to another, which aligns with the target domain of life. The similarity lies in their tendency to move. Living creatures usually keep moving as they walk around. Next, 'heirloom' refers to a valuable object inherited by a family from previous generations. Meanwhile, 'pain' is a bad feeling we suffer when something hurts. The equation that connects 'pain' and its target domain 'struggle' is the difficulty that must be suffered. So, 'heirloom pain' means a struggle that the current generation has to suffer from the previous generation. The appropriate image schema in this metaphor is UNITY (PART-WHOLE) because the 'heirloom pain' is passed down from the family (whole) to the next generation (part).

Unspoken emotions are portrayed in "and what's unsaid feels like concrete slabs." According to Table 8, 'concrete slabs' are a hard surface material often used in construction as a foundation or roof. If we connect it to the full lyric, "what's unsaid feel like concrete slabs," this metaphor refers to the weight of unspoken words and creates unresolved emotions. This is compatible with the target domain, burden, because of the difficult situation to be faced. 'Concrete slabs' describe an emotional weight, such as a heavy load pressing down, which is why the most suitable

image schema is SPACE (UP-DOWN).

Table 8 "And what's unsaid feels like concrete slabs"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Concrete slabs ● Hard material ● Solid substance	Burden ● Carried ● Weight ● Difficult situation	SPACE (UP-DOWN)

Table 9 "Now your heart feels heavy. What happened to making light of every problem?"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Heart ● Central part ● Feeling Heavy ● Great weight ● Mass	Sadness ● Grief ● Regret	SPACE (UP-DOWN)
Make ● Process ● Produce Light ● Not heavy ● Not weighing a lot	Unseriousness ● No intention ● Joking	EXISTENCE (REMOVAL)

The lyric "Now your heart feels heavy. What happened to making light of every problem?" contrasts emotional weight and avoidance. As shown in Table 9, 'heavy' is a measure of weight or something unpleasant, meanwhile 'heart' correlates with feeling. 'Heavy heart' means an emotional state when something unpleasant happens, and it is very hard to get up. This is compatible with the target domain of sadness. 'Heavy' is a condition where something is difficult to lift up, while sadness is a condition where feelings are going down. Moreover, 'heavy heart' describes a declining mental condition, which we can relate to the image schema, which is SPACE (UP-DOWN). Furthermore, 'making light' means producing light sources, such as lamps and flashlights. But in this metaphor, 'making' means an attempt to treat something, meanwhile 'light' is something that is not heavy. 'Heavy' in this context can be interpreted as a serious situation. Because when we feel we have to be serious at a certain moment, the pressure weighs us down. Then 'light' can be interpreted as something not serious. From the previous explanation, we can assume that 'making light' means to behave not seriously in a situation. This can be aligned with the target domain, unseriousness, which has a similar meaning. 'Make light' can also be described as making something less serious or removing its seriousness, which relates to the image schema EXISTENCE (REMOVAL).

These findings aligned with Woodgate's (2021) concepts of anxiety metaphor and Ajayi's (2023) about metaphors in 9ice's lyrics. While Woodgate portrays anxiety as a monster using visual metaphors, this study identifies anxiety through narrative metaphors. A monster, as an imaginary and frightening figure, symbolizes fear and loss, whereas in this study, anxiety is conceptualized as a reflection of internal struggles and relational complexities. Ajayi demonstrates that metaphors in Nigerian hip-hop lyrics reflect social experiences and emotions, reinforcing the role of lyrics as cognitive tools for expressing complex feelings such as anxiety. Similar emotional expression is also found in Azlinda et al. (2022), who identified ontological metaphors in Denny Caknan's lyrics that reflect emotional pain and inner turmoil. Expressions such as *mbekas ning dodo* (a scar in the chest) and *badai pasti berlalu* (the storm will pass) metaphorically represent suffering and instability, which align with the conceptualization of anxiety in this study as an internal pain. From these comparisons, it can be concluded that the key difference between visual and narrative metaphors lies in how the concepts are represented. Visual metaphors rely on immediate symbolic imagery, while narrative metaphors require contextual and cognitive interpretation to reveal their meaning.

In addition, ANXIETY can be conceptualized as RELATION, not merely an internal state but something that emerges in and through our interactions with others and the world. Anxiety could be the situation where we feel complexities about something, in this case, emotional connections to other people. It blends the feelings of affection, insecurity, and jealousy, which creates an anxiety effect. Anxiety in communicating with others is a major obstacle for individuals in interacting. In the realm of education, for example, there is a relationship between students' anxiety in adapting to their peers (Gude et al, 2023). On the other hand, if the student adapts well but struggles with their final assignments, the final-year student who tends to withdraw from their environment needs support from their peers. In terms of social aspects, this can reduce the risk of anxiety in final-year students (Gustina et al, 2023). For further explanation, the results of the analysis will be explained in the following data.

Table 10 "Was she weightless in just your sweater? And does it feel heavy now to look at me instead?"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Weightless ● Light ● Not heavy	Comfort ● Relief ● Satisfying	CONTAINER (CONTAIN-MENT)
Heavy ● Great weight ● Need effort to carry	Burden ● Carried ● Difficult situation	FORCE (COUNTER-FORCE)

Anxiety in relationships is conveyed through

"Was she weightless in just your sweater? And does it feel heavy now to look at me instead?" In Table 10, 'Weightless' could mean a condition where something is not heavy. If we associate it with 'sweaters', and if we feel light when wearing it, then those sweaters are comfortable clothes. It is compatible with the target domain, comfort. Also, the sweater can be understood as a container for the body that holds the person without pressure. As the explanation, we can assume that the image schema of this metaphor is CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT). Next, 'heavy' means something is weighty and needs effort to carry it. In this metaphor, 'heavy' means a very hard burden or a difficult situation you must worry about. This is related to the target domain, burden, because both are depicted carrying something weighty. 'Heavy' can also describe the act of looking with difficulty, such as guilt, discomfort, and avoidance, which creates internal struggle. This struggle represents counterforce, where one emotional force opposes another, which is why the image schema of this metaphor is FORCE (COUNTERFORCE).

Table 11 "Then the room is a sailboat in a storm. And a new friend's a soaring kite"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Sailboat ● Small vehicle ● Sea/water	Vulnerable ● Easily hurt ● Chance of being attacked	CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT)
Storm ● Extreme weathe ● Strong wind		
Soaring ● High ● Flying	Uplifting ● Make someone feel better ● Encourage	SPACE (UP-DOWN)
Kite ● Flying object ● Sky		

There are two metaphorical phrases in these lyrics: "sailboat in a storm and soaring kite." Table 11 shows that "sailboat in a storm" could mean a small water vehicle that was hit by extreme weather and strong winds in the middle of the sea. This condition made the sailboat appear as if it were very vulnerable, the same as the target domain. Moreover, the sailboat can be compared to a small container in a very extreme condition which makes it very easy to destroy. Based on the previous explanation, the relevant image schema in this metaphor is CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT). It defines the sailboat as a container and the effect of a storm that captures the protection but is still fragile. Next, 'soaring kite' simply means an object that is propelled by the wind and flies high in the sky. If we connect the previous words in the lyrics, 'new friends',

it represents a connection that brings positivity and uplifts your mood, which aligns with the target domain. It also emphasizes joy and playfulness as the children fly a kite from the bottom to the top, as high as possible. Based on the previous explanation, we can assume the image schema in this metaphor is SPACE (UP-DOWN).

Table 12 "Cause I don't know if I can compete. With the former crowned head of your old Ford's front seat"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Former crown head ● Previous monarch ● Past ruler	Ex ● Partner in the past ● Formerly held a specified position	SPACE (UP-DOWN)
Old Front Seat ● Position in the car ● Beside the driver	Special Place ● Not usual ● Particular	SPACE (FRONT-BACK)

The lyric "cause I don't know if I can compete. With the former crowned head of your old Ford's front seat" uses spatial imagery. As illustrated in Table 12, "former crown head" could refer to monarchs such as a king, queen, etc. who previously ruled the country. In this metaphor, "former crown head" is a person who was once a partner in a relationship that is suitable with the target domain, 'ex'. The relationship between "former crown head" and 'ex' lies in a position that is no longer held. The image schema that fits the metaphor is SPACE (UP-DOWN) because it emphasizes falling from the elevated position and changing the status. Next, "old front seat" refers to the position in the vehicle such as the car, bus, etc. But in this metaphor, "old front seat" means a special place given to someone in the past, the same as the target domain. This place held a meaningful experience between the driver (the boyfriend) and the passenger (the boyfriend's ex). The relevant image schema in this metaphor is SPACE (FRONT-BACK) because it symbolizes the time, present, and the past.

Expressions like "you're the bee's knees, I'm the bull's eye, but in a doomed way" show admiration and self-doubt. Table 13 indicates that 'bee's knees' could mean a part of the leg of an insect. But in this metaphor, 'bee's knees' is someone great and very affectionate. It also describes someone who is highly admired, which is suitable for the target domain and attractive. 'Bee's knees' refers to the qualities of the person who has attracted admiration and attention. As a result, the most suitable image schema for this metaphor is FORCE (ATTRACTION). Next, 'bull's eye' could mean part of the face of a four-legged animal that is functioning to see. It also describes the center of the target in most points games like archery or darts. If we connect with other words in the sentence, 'bull's

eye' means someone who does something perfectly right, which is why the target domain is perfection. Also, if the bull's 'eye' is the center of the target, then the center could mean the highest value or the most significant thing. So, the perfect fit image schema in this metaphor is SPACE (CENTER).

Table 13 "You're the bee's knees, I'm the bull's eye, but in a doomed way"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Bee ● Animal ● Insect	Attractive ● Great ● Excellent	FORCE (ATTRACTION)
Knees ● Part of the leg ● Joint		
Bulls ● Animal ● Large	Perfection ● Correct ● Extremely well	SPACE (CENTER)
Eye ● Part of the face ● Center		

This study is aligned with Irwansyah (2021), who found 16 conceptual metaphors of love in Taylor Swift's 1989 Album. One of the concepts is LOVE IS FIRE. The conceptualization of love as fire is like a romantic relationship that continues to burn and blaze passionately. This aligns with the meaning of a fragile object that can easily be broken or damaged. The passionate relationship is complex but also fragile at the same time. Hussain et al. (2022) categorized five conceptual metaphors in the community's institution of marriage. One concept is that marriage is friendship. This concept can describe two different points of view. First, when two friends want their children to get married, it strengthens their friendship. Second, the relationship should not be arranged when two families have different economic statuses. This conceptualization of anxiety as socially embedded is also reflected in Hutagalung's et al. (2023) analysis of the Malay traditional song "Senandung Malam Berinai." The metaphors in this ritual-based chant reinforce emotional and cultural bonds within the community, symbolizing the social fabric that gives individuals a sense of security and belonging. As tradition fades, so does this bond, mirroring the ANXIETY IS RELATION metaphor in this study, where anxiety is portrayed as arising from fragile or broken interpersonal connections. A relational perspective of metaphor is also observed in Sangian and Nasution (2024) on the traditional song "Yo Botoi-Botoi" from Bengkulu. The repeated expression "yo botoi-botoi yo tarik tali" symbolizes collective effort and social cohesion within the community. This reinforces the idea that strong interpersonal bonds can serve as a source of emotional grounding. About this study, anxiety is conceptualized as emerging from vulnerable or unstable relationships, which parallels the significance of social ties portrayed metaphorically in the song

The metaphor of ANXIETY IS PROTECTION also appears in the data. Anxiety is a protective mechanism that helps people keep themselves safe because they are going through the negativity of their important life events. This interpersonal conflict, for example, being rejected by others, activates their predictor of high anxiety, which makes them protect themselves so that the negativity does not happen again (Casline et al., 2021). Interpersonal negativity affects higher anhedonia-apprehension, which is characterized primarily by low positive affect, depression, and anxiety (Yarrington et al., 2023). For further explanation, the results of the analysis will be explained in the following data.

Table 14 "Build a pillow barricade so the ghosts can't get to me"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Pillow ● Cushion ● Soft material	Boundary ● Limit ● Mark	FORCE (BLOCKAGE)
Barricade ● Fort ● To block		
Ghost ● Spirit ● Haunt	Anxiety ● Uncomfortable feeling ● Fear	CONTAINER (CONTAIN-MENT)

A lyric like "build a pillow barricade so the ghosts can't get to me" reveals a desire for protection. 'Pillow barricade' means arranging pillows to resemble a fort. But Table 14 shows, 'pillow barricade' is a defense mechanism to set the boundary to the external. It is compatible with the target domain boundary. It also refers to emotional protection from a scary world. Therefore, the image schema that best fits the metaphor is FORCE (BLOCKAGE), because it prevents scariness from reaching the person. Next, the 'ghost' is the spirit of a dead person, usually shown in almost transparent form. In this metaphor, 'ghost' refers to the personal fear of the unknown that haunts a person. It also represents anxiety as its target domain. Ghosts are often seen as entities that enter a space where they don't belong. So, it could mean that anxiety can come anytime and anywhere, as if haunting the person's daily life. In the explanation, we assume that the image schema in this metaphor is CONTAINER (CONTAINMENT) because it represents the mind (world) as inside of a container, and the anxiety (ghost) as outside. The anxiety crosses that boundary, creating uncomfortable feelings.

The phrase "a half-baked thought" represents immature thinking. In Table 15, 'half-baked' means food such as bread or cake that is not fully cooked

or baked in the oven. The food is underdone and not proper to serve. But in metaphor, 'half-baked' means something not fully complete. This is compatible with the target domain 'not fixed.' If we connect to the sentence, "half-baked thought," this could describe immature thinking, where the idea is not considered carefully enough. The most suitable image schema in this metaphor is EXISTENCE (Process) because 'half-baked' refers to something that has been started but not finished. The metaphor aligns with the process that is prematurely stopped, so the results are not finished yet.

Table 15 "Or a half-baked thought"

Source Domain	Target Domain
Half-baked	Not Fixed
● Undone	● Incomplete
● Not proper	● Unfinished

Table 16 "When bitterness bites, novelty is nectar"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Bitterness	Disappointment	EXISTENCE
● Sharp taste	● Unhappiness	(PROCESS)
● Distressing	● Not satisfied	
Bites		
● Cut		
● Eat		
Novelty	Excitement	SPACE
● New	● Enthusiast	(UP-DOWN)
● Unusual	● Happy	
Nectar		
● Liquid from flower		
● Sweet		

In "when bitterness bites, novelty is nectar," anxiety is contrasted with joy. As seen in Table 16, 'bitterness bites' are an unpleasantly sharp taste when consuming dark chocolate, coffee, etc. It describes the experience of tasting something with a very strong effect on your taste buds. In this metaphor, 'bitterness bites' means disappointment when reality falls short of expectations. Reality can be harsh truths and cause discomfort when dealing with difficult situations, which is suitable with the target domain, disappointment. The disappointment does not happen suddenly; it is a result of an ongoing process. First, we feel disappointed, then we dislike it, and after that, the bitterness comes. There is a moment when the painful feelings are fully realized. As explained before, the most suitable image schema is EXISTENCE (PROCESS). Next, "novelty is nectar" literally could mean something new that is sweet like a nectar. It can refer to a fresh experience or an innovative object. In this metaphor, "novelty is nectar" means a feeling full of pleasure and satisfaction from new experiences, such as hobbies, new relationships, etc. It emphasizes the happiness and the enthusiasm

that enhance life quality. This metaphor describes the upward sense of joy, which is suitable with the image schema SPACE (UP-DOWN).

This study aligned with the metaphorical lyrics from the *Buzz* album: build a pillow barricade so the ghosts can't get to me. The lyrics describe a defense mechanism from the world, so the person does not have to experience uncomfortable feelings. As Sari (2020) concludes in the study, there are six conceptual metaphors of love in Minang song. One concept is that love is protection. The metaphor suggests the similarity between humans and the mountain, like a mother who cares for her child or a husband who keeps his wife safe. The mountain is described as a tall, sturdy object that protects everything around it. Shi et al. (2021) took a different approach to how metaphor can predict students' mental health from the texts they create. This identification can help the student to know more about themselves and protect their mental health. A related concept can be found in Luthfiani and Kurniawati (2024), who studied Namika's lyrics, where the metaphor "You are my Area 51" represents a trusted person as a secure, private, and emotionally safe space. This metaphor functions as a protective construct, similar to how anxiety in this study is conceptualized as a defense mechanism, where emotional closeness and secrecy offer a sense of psychological security. This protective concept is reflected in NIKI's lyrics through self-isolation and silence as emotional defense. A similar expression is found in Iwan Fals's humanitarian songs, such as "disirami air mata dan doa" (watered by tears and prayers), which metaphorically frames grief as emotional and spiritual protection (Tsamarah et al., 2023), reinforcing the idea of anxiety as a form of self-preservation in emotional contexts.

The final metaphorical concept identified in this study is ANXIETY AS DIRECTION. This concept reflects the uncertainty of the person that impact his life path. Uncertainty about the future probably made someone worry, anxious, or not be able to function (Gu et al, 2020). Higher levels of uncertainty are related to worst mental health outcomes (Massazza et al., 2022), such as anxiety disorder through its impact and emotions. For further explanation, the results of the analysis will be explained in the following data.

Finally, "I'm a pendulum, I don't know where I'll land." captures uncertainty. Table 17 illustrates 'pendulum' is a weight under a clock that swings back and forth. But in this metaphor, it can mean the inability to be static and stick to one choice. It is also fickle and difficult to decide on something suitable for the target domain, indecision. 'Pendulum' sticks to one place, but at the same time, it must swing. It shows that 'pendulum' is attached to something, but must keep moving whether it wants to or not. According to the explanation, we can assume that the image schema in this metaphor is SPACE (LEFT-RIGHT). Next, 'land' can mean the ground we touch after arriving and moving down through the air. In this metaphor, 'land' is a comfortable place to make a home and live. It also

describes the condition that is steady and secure as the target domain, 'settle down.' In addition, settling down can mean an establishment dropping a decision. Based on the explanation, the most suitable image schema is SPACE (UP-DOWN).

Table 17 "I'm a pendulum, I don't know where I'll land"

Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
Pendulum ● Part of clocks ● Swing	Indecision ● Unable to make decision ● Difficult deciding	SPACE (LEFT-RIGHT)
Land ● Arrive on the ground ● Area	Settle down ● Comfortable ● Make home ● Make a decision	SPACE (UP-DOWN)

The metaphor ANXIETY IS DIRECTION in this study reflects how anxiety disrupts one's sense of purpose, clarity, and orientation in life. Rather than being a fixed or stable state, anxiety creates internal confusion and emotional disorientation. This is in contrast to the findings of (Dirgaprimawan, 2023), who studied the metaphor in the book of Proverbs, concluding that the concept of wisdom is a tree of life that motivates the readers to do anything to pursue wisdom to get the boon from God. Proverbs 3:18, "She is a tree of life to those who hold her firmly; and those who lean on her are fortunate, symbolizes long life and fullness that can be gained through wisdom." If anxiety makes someone uncertain about the future, this study represents a clear direction to receive God's gift. Meanwhile, in the era of COVID-19, Prasetya et al. (2024) found the concept that THE VIRUS PANDEMIC CRISIS IS A MOTION STATE. It describes the situation that is always changing, moving up, down, and in other directions, such as the virus. Similarly, Danial and Widyawati (2024) found that metaphorical expressions in Aurora's *A Different Kind of Human* album often depict emotional disorientation and the struggle to find direction in life. Metaphors such as "I don't know where to go, will I float or will I drown?" and "I'm reaching light through the struggle." reflect a search for clarity and purpose, aligning with how anxiety is conceptualized in this study as a condition of existential uncertainty and directional confusion. This sense of directionless waiting is also reflected in Didi Kempot's lyrics, such as "Nganti kapan tak enteni sak tekane," which metaphorically captures the uncertainty of emotional return (Widyastuti & Fateah, 2024), resonating with the metaphor ANXIETY IS DIRECTION in this study.

From the findings of this study, it is proven that metaphors can be a medium for expressing mixed emotions through language in the form of song lyrics. Although this study served novelty from the data and the concept of anxiety, this study only found 5 metaphorical concepts from an album. To make a concept, we have to collect and analyze more data. As noted by Sari and Nirmala (2022), a concept containing 6-13 data metaphors has been analyzed. However, many studies only use 3-5 data points. Exploring other singers' albums across genres and contexts could provide a more diverse and representative understanding of how anxiety is conceptualized in popular music. Future research could explore new metaphorical concepts from other mental disorder issues like depression, trauma, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc., as noted by Sari and Nirmala (2022) in their study. Moreover, the data could be sourced from educational discourse, archaeological records, political communication, novels, poems, or songs. Furthermore, the advantages of conceptual metaphor could be explored further.

CONCLUSIONS

This study identified five conceptual metaphors of anxiety and their corresponding image schemas in NIKI's *Buzz* album. The findings reveal five metaphorical concepts in this song: ANXIETY IS EFFORT, ANXIETY IS PAIN, ANXIETY IS RELATION, ANXIETY IS PROTECTION, and ANXIETY IS DIRECTION. These concepts are the results of exploration between the abstract emotional states to concrete experiences of anxiety. The findings affirm that metaphor functions as a cognitive mechanism to express complex emotional states, such as anxiety, in narrative song lyrics. From this study, anxiety is effort that comes from external threats that trigger internal impulses to change behaviour. Next, anxiety is pain that comes when negative events happen in someone's life and causes emotional and physical burdens. Meanwhile, anxiety is related comes when someone feels complex emotions about connections to other people. Lastly, anxiety is a protective mechanism when people try to keep themselves safe from negativity. Anxiety is direction is the uncertainty that impacts the life path. All of these personal experiences of anxiety are poured into the song lyrics and conceptualised as metaphors.

The image schema was also found in this study: FORCE, CONTAINER, SPACE, EXISTENCE, AND UNITY. SPACE is the dominant image schema. It reveals that the conceptualization of the spatial relationship between anxiety and the human's physical and cognitive. Based on the metaphorical concept, overall, this album is about the fear of something that may not happen, and trying to prevent bad things from happening by doing the best. This study also aligns with broader research on conceptual metaphors in songs by focusing on anxiety rather than more common emotion themes such as love or sadness. This insight may inform mental health awareness and highlight music's role in helping listeners process and articulate emotional experiences. This study contributes significantly to cognitive linguistics, specifically conceptual metaphor,

by highlighting anxiety in songs. Furthermore, it also offers a framework for further exploration in related domains. However, the concepts we identified are only five due to data limitations, and suggest more concepts from other kinds of data in the future.

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Data Availability Statement: Data derived from public domain resources. The data that support the findings of this research are available in the public domain through music streaming platforms. These data were derived from the following resources:
* Spotify (*Buzz* album by NIKI): https://open.spotify.com/album/3g73KFee4dbxDq5vTmX92S
* Apple Music (*Buzz* album by NIKI): https://music.apple.com/id/album/buzz/1741576136
* YouTube (*Buzz* album by NIKI): https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwQBUd8MkxXvMI124wMHYJdhWI3K3iceE

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