

# Translating conceptual metaphors in the multilingual lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean

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## ABSTRACT

The multilingual use of Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit in song lyrics presents distinctive challenges for metaphor interpretation and translation, particularly when metaphorical expressions are closely connected to cultural meanings. *Asmalibrasi*, a popular indie song by Soegi Bornean, exemplifies this complexity through its extensive use of figurative language that conveys emotions, love, and commitment across different linguistic traditions. While previous studies have examined the song from stylistic, syntactic, and semiotic perspectives, limited attention has been given to the translation of its conceptual metaphors. This study aims to examine the metaphorical expressions found in the lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* and explore how their meanings can be interpreted through the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design using the official song lyrics as the primary data source. The data were collected through close reading, lyric transcription, and textual verification. They were analysed using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory to identify metaphorical expressions and interpret their conceptual meanings. The analysis indicates that the lyrics contain a variety of conceptual metaphors representing love, emotional commitment, unity, and marital relationships through symbolic lexical choices derived from Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit. These metaphorical expressions demonstrate the integration of cultural values and cognitive conceptualisation within multilingual song lyrics. The study contributes to metaphor and translation studies by providing a cognitive linguistic perspective for interpreting multilingual lyrical texts. It offers insights for future research on figurative language, cultural translation, and Indonesian contemporary music.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor; cultural translation; multilingual lyrics; qualitative study; song translation



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## INTRODUCTION

Song lyrics constitute a distinctive form of literary discourse in which linguistic expression, cultural symbolism, and emotional experience are integrated to construct meaning. Unlike ordinary communication, song lyrics frequently employ figurative language to express abstract concepts through concrete images, allowing listeners to interpret emotions, relationships, and cultural values beyond their literal meanings. Among various figures of speech, metaphor occupies a central position because it reflects not only aesthetic expression but also the cognitive processes through which people conceptualize abstract experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (2003)

argue that metaphor is fundamentally conceptual rather than merely rhetorical, enabling speakers and listeners to understand one conceptual domain through another. Consequently, the analysis of metaphor in song lyrics extends beyond stylistic appreciation to reveal how language represents human cognition and cultural experience.

One Indonesian song that demonstrates this phenomenon is *Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean. The song has attracted considerable public attention because of its poetic language and its combination of Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit lexical elements. Rather than relying on direct expressions of affection, the lyrics construct meanings of love, commitment, and marriage through metaphorical expressions rooted in local cultural traditions. This multilingual composition increases the complexity of interpretation because each language contributes distinctive semantic and cultural nuances. As a result, understanding the lyrics requires not only linguistic competence but also an appreciation of the conceptual relationships embedded within the metaphors. From a cognitive perspective on translation, song lyrics present unique demands because they operate under severe aesthetic, prosodic, and cultural constraints. As Rojo and Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2017) emphasize in cognitive translation studies, translating figurative discourse requires navigating whether the source and target languages share identical conceptual structures. When translating lyrical texts containing highly culture-bound metaphors, translators cannot rely on simple surface-level dynamic equivalence; they must achieve cognitive equivalence (Munday, 2016). This process involves reconstructing the cross-domain mappings of the source text so that target language readers can experience a similar cognitive and emotional resonance. In the context of song translation, this challenge is amplified because lexical choices are tied not only to semantic networks but also to musical rhythms, emotional tones, and cultural imagery.

The multilingual character of *Asmalibrasi* also presents challenges from a translation perspective. Translating metaphorical expressions is considerably more demanding than translating literal language because translators are expected to preserve semantic meaning while maintaining cultural associations, imagery, and aesthetic effects (Alifah et al., 2023). A literal rendering may accurately convey lexical meaning but fail to preserve the conceptual mapping intended by the songwriter. Therefore, investigating metaphor in multilingual song lyrics contributes not only to cognitive linguistics but also to translation studies by explaining how metaphorical meanings are interpreted across languages.

Previous studies have investigated *Asmalibrasi* from several perspectives. Anwar and Nirmala (2022) interpreted the overall meaning of the song by emphasizing its representation of love, marriage, and hope for human relationships. Amalia et al. (2023) examined phrase structures in the lyrics using a literary syntactic approach, while Fitriani et al. (2023) and Suwaryo (2022) focused primarily on stylistic features, diction, and figurative language. Hartono et al. (2023) analysed the song through a semiotic perspective to explain representations of romantic love. In contrast, Hilmah et al. (2023) discussed its stylistic characteristics and their

potential contribution to poetry instruction. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that *Asmalibrasi* has become an important object of linguistic and literary inquiry because of its distinctive language and cultural richness.

Despite these contributions, previous studies remain limited in several respects. Most investigations describe stylistic devices, phrase structures, or general meanings without examining how metaphor functions as a conceptual system that structures human understanding (Bowo et al., 2022). Moreover, although the multilingual nature of the lyrics has frequently been acknowledged, limited attention has been given to how metaphorical expressions can be interpreted through Conceptual Metaphor Theory and how such meanings may be maintained in translation (Kurniadi, 2021). Consequently, the cognitive relationships between source domains and target domains underlying the metaphors remain insufficiently explored.

Recent studies in cognitive semantics continue to demonstrate that Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides an effective framework for analysing metaphorical meanings in song lyrics. Research on Malay Sanggau songs identified conceptual mappings between source and target domains that reveal how local cultural experiences are cognitively represented in musical texts. Likewise, studies examining contemporary English-language songs have shown that structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors systematically organise emotional experiences rather than functioning merely as decorative language. These findings suggest that metaphor analysis from a cognitive perspective is capable of uncovering deeper conceptual structures that may not be visible through stylistic analysis alone. The socio-cultural dimension of contemporary Indonesian indie-folk music further highlights the relevance of this inquiry. In recent years, Indonesian popular music has witnessed a growing trend toward linguistic hybridity, where artists synthesize modern Bahasa Indonesia with regional vernaculars (such as Javanese) and archaic registers (such as Sanskrit). As Sharifian (2017) notes in *Cultural Linguistics*, such linguistic synthesis is not merely an aesthetic choice, but a socio-cognitive mechanism through which individuals re-conceptualize cultural values and emotional experiences. By examining *Asmalibrasi*, this study addresses how this hybrid lyrical discourse functions as a cognitive vehicle for modern listeners, providing a bridge between traditional cultural conceptualizations and contemporary romantic relationships.

The present study adopts Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory because it explains metaphor as a cognitive mechanism through which abstract concepts are understood by means of more concrete experiences. Rather than identifying metaphorical expressions solely as figures of speech, this framework investigates the conceptual mappings that connect the source domain and the target domain. Such an approach is particularly relevant for analysing *Asmalibrasi*, whose lyrics employ symbolic expressions associated with love, unity, commitment, and marriage across Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit linguistic traditions.

This study seeks to address the existing research gap by examining the conceptual metaphors embedded in the multilingual lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* and exploring how these metaphorical meanings can be interpreted from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Specifically, the study aims (1) to identify the conceptual

metaphors found in the song lyrics and (2) to explain how the metaphorical expressions represent meanings of love, emotional commitment, and marital relationships through conceptual mappings. By integrating cognitive linguistics with the analysis of multilingual song lyrics, this study contributes to metaphor studies, translation studies, and the broader understanding of Indonesian contemporary musical discourse.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Metaphor Theory**

Metaphor has traditionally been viewed as a rhetorical device used to enhance the aesthetic quality of language. However, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) redefines metaphor as a cognitive mechanism through which individuals understand abstract concepts by relating them to more concrete experiences. According to this perspective, metaphor is not confined to literary texts but constitutes an essential component of everyday thought and communication. The theory assumes that conceptual knowledge is organised through systematic mappings between a source domain, representing a familiar or concrete experience, and a target domain, representing a more abstract concept.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) classify conceptual metaphors into three major categories: structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors. Structural metaphors explain one concept in terms of another conceptual structure; orientational metaphors organise concepts through spatial orientations such as up-down or in-out; and ontological metaphors conceptualise abstract entities as concrete objects, substances, or containers. These conceptual mappings enable speakers and listeners to interpret complex experiences through familiar cognitive patterns.

Recent advancements in cognitive semantics have further refined CMT into Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Kövecses, 2020), which emphasizes the role of contextual factors and bodily image schemas in grounding metaphorical projections. Image schemas (such as container, path, balance, force, and link) are recurrent, pre-conceptual patterns of sensorimotor experience that structure how humans conceptualize abstract domains (Gibbs, 2017). In artistic and lyrical texts, songwriters frequently activate image schemas to evoke bodily and emotional responses. Furthermore, conceptual integration and figurative blending (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2017) complement CMT by explaining how elements from multiple input domains are integrated into a novel blended space, enabling songwriters to fuse distinct experiential domains, such as modern technology and romantic emotion, into emergent lyrical meanings.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been widely applied in linguistic studies because it provides a systematic framework for explaining how figurative expressions represent human cognition. Recent studies have demonstrated its applicability in analysing contemporary song lyrics by revealing conceptual mappings related to love, identity, emotion, and personal experience. Rather than functioning solely as artistic expressions, metaphors in song lyrics reflect the cognitive processes through which

composers construct and communicate meaning.

The present study adopts Conceptual Metaphor Theory because the multilingual lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* contain numerous metaphorical expressions that describe abstract concepts of love, emotional commitment, and marriage through concrete experiential domains. By identifying the relationships between source domains and target domains, this framework provides an appropriate theoretical basis for explaining the cognitive structures underlying the song's metaphorical language.

### **Previous studies on *Asmalibrasi* and metaphor in song lyrics**

Research on *Asmalibrasi* has increased in recent years, reflecting growing academic interest in its poetic language and cultural symbolism. Existing studies have investigated the song from several linguistic and literary perspectives. Anwar and Nirmala (2022) interpreted the song as a representation of love, marriage, and hope within human relationships. Amalia et al. (2023) examined phrase structures in the lyrics through a literary syntactic approach, while Fitriani et al. (2023) and Suwaryo (2022) focused on stylistic features, diction, and figurative language. Hartono et al. (2023) analysed the symbolic meanings of romantic love using a semiotic approach. In contrast, Hilmah et al. (2023) explored the educational potential of the song's figurative language as teaching material for poetry writing.

Although these studies contribute substantially to understanding the linguistic and literary characteristics of *Asmalibrasi*, several limitations remain evident. Most previous studies emphasise stylistic description, semiotic interpretation, or phrase-level analysis, while relatively little attention has been given to the cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphorical expressions. Furthermore, the multilingual composition of Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit has generally been acknowledged as a unique characteristic of the song. Yet, its role in shaping conceptual metaphors has not been systematically examined.

Beyond *Asmalibrasi*, recent studies applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory to song lyrics consistently demonstrate that metaphorical expressions reveal structured conceptual patterns rather than isolated figures of speech. Studies analysing English and Indonesian songs have identified conceptual metaphors such as Love Is Light, Love Is A Journey, Emotion Is Elevation, and Life Is A Journey, illustrating how emotional experiences are represented through concrete domains. Recent scholarly inquiries into song metaphors across Asian and Austronesian languages reinforce the necessity of analyzing figurative language within local cultural cognitive models (Sharifian, 2017). Research on Southeast Asian traditional and contemporary compositions indicates that metaphors of love and commitment frequently draw upon domains of nature, textile arts, agriculture, and spiritual rites. These findings confirm that metaphorical mappings are culturally situated rather than universally uniform. Consequently, when song lyrics transition into foreign language contexts through translation, understanding culture-specific source domains becomes essential for preserving both cognitive alignment and aesthetic integrity.

Building upon these previous studies, the present research integrates

Conceptual Metaphor Theory with the analysis of multilingual song lyrics. Unlike earlier studies that primarily describe stylistic or semiotic features, this study investigates the cognitive mappings that organise metaphorical meanings in *Asmalibrasi*. Accordingly, the study contributes to cognitive linguistics and translation studies by explaining how multilingual metaphorical expressions represent cultural and emotional meanings through systematic conceptual structures.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the conceptual metaphors embedded in the multilingual lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on interpreting meanings, identifying conceptual patterns, and explaining metaphorical representations rather than measuring numerical variables. The analysis was guided by Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), which views metaphor as a cognitive mechanism through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete experiences. The study aimed to identify metaphorical expressions and explain the conceptual mappings underlying the lyrical representations of love, commitment, and marriage.

The primary data consisted of the official lyrics of *Asmalibrasi*, one of the most popular songs by Soegi Bornean. The song was selected because its lyrics combine Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit lexical elements, creating a rich multilingual discourse containing numerous metaphorical expressions. The multilingual composition provides an appropriate context for investigating conceptual metaphors and their semantic interpretations. The unit of analysis comprised words, phrases, and clauses that contained metaphorical meanings relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected through document analysis. First, the official song lyrics were transcribed from the publicly available audio recording. The transcription was then compared with several published lyric sources to ensure textual consistency and minimize transcription errors, particularly for Javanese and Sanskrit lexical items. After verification, the lyrics were read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic and contextual meanings. During the reading process, all expressions potentially representing metaphorical meanings were identified, highlighted, and compiled into a preliminary dataset for further analysis.

To ensure systematic rigor in identifying metaphorical language, the identification process adapted the updated Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) protocol (Steen, 2017; Reijnierse et al., 2018). The MIPVU protocol establishes precise empirical steps for establishing contextual versus basic meanings. For every lexical unit in the lyrics, its contextual meaning was established within the stanza. Next, standard lexicographical sources (including the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI) and Javanese/Sanskrit lexicons) were consulted to determine whether the unit possessed a more basic, concrete, or sensorimotor meaning in contemporary usage. If the contextual meaning differed from the basic

concrete meaning but could be understood in comparison to it, the unit was formally coded as a metaphorical expression.

The collected data were analysed using an interactive qualitative analysis procedure. The analysis began by identifying lexical units and expressions containing metaphorical meanings. Each expression was subsequently classified according to the conceptual domains proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). The analysis focused on identifying the source domain, the target domain, and the conceptual mapping connecting the two domains. Following the identification process, each metaphorical expression was interpreted within its linguistic and cultural context to explain how meanings of love, emotional commitment, unity, and marital relationships were conceptually represented in the song lyrics. Finally, the interpretations were synthesised to reveal recurring conceptual patterns throughout the lyrics. Following identification, each metaphorical expression was subjected to domain-mapping analysis (Kövecses, 2020). The analysis mapped the ontological correspondences connecting the source entities and processes to the target domain entities. Furthermore, to evaluate translation strategies, the identified metaphors were analyzed using cognitive translation models (Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2017), assessing whether each metaphor operated under a Similar Conceptual Mapping Condition (SCMC) or a Different Conceptual Mapping Condition (DCMC) relative to target language conventions.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, several trustworthiness procedures were employed. First, textual verification was conducted by comparing multiple lyric sources to ensure the accuracy of the analysed data. Second, repeated close reading was performed to maintain consistency in identifying metaphorical expressions. Third, every interpretation was grounded in the linguistic context of the lyrics and supported by the analytical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, thereby reducing subjective interpretation. Finally, the analytical procedures were documented systematically to improve the dependability and transparency of the research process, allowing future researchers to follow similar analytical steps in comparable studies.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Conceptual metaphors identified in the lyrics**

The analysis identified a series of metaphorical expressions that conceptualise love, commitment, and marital relationships through concrete experiences. Rather than expressing affection directly, the lyrics employ symbolic lexical choices originating from Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit to represent abstract emotional states. Table 1 presents the principal metaphorical expressions identified in the lyrics together with their corresponding conceptual domains.

**Table 1.** Conceptual metaphors identified in *Asmalibrasi*

| No. | Lyric excerpt                                        | Source domain             | Target domain                    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1   | <i>Asmara telah terkalibrasi frekuensi yang sama</i> | Calibration / measurement | Love and emotional compatibility |
| 2   | <i>Mengikat janji</i>                                | Binding                   | Commitment and marriage          |
| 3   | <i>Ruang biru</i>                                    | Space                     | Emotional intimacy               |
| 4   | <i>Bias kita jadi taksu</i>                          | Light/radiance            | Attraction and affection         |
| 5   | <i>Kalbu mendayu</i>                                 | Sound/movement            | Emotional tenderness             |
| 6   | <i>Sang garwa pambage</i>                            | Family relationship       | Marriage                         |
| 7   | <i>Merangkai binar asmara</i>                        | Light                     | Love                             |
| 8   | <i>Melebur tuk satukan ego</i>                       | Melting                   | Unity                            |
| 9   | <i>Bahtera mahligai rasa</i>                         | Journey/vessel            | Married life                     |
| 10  | <i>Merajut ketulusan jiwa</i>                        | Weaving                   | Trust and sincerity              |
| 11  | <i>Mengukir ruang renjana</i>                        | Carving                   | Lasting love                     |

Table 1 demonstrates that the lyrics consistently represent abstract emotional experiences through concrete domains associated with physical objects, movement, craftsmanship, and spatial experience. The metaphorical expressions collectively construct a coherent representation of romantic relationships as processes involving harmony, commitment, unity, and permanence.

### Distribution of conceptual domains

The identified metaphorical expressions reveal several recurring conceptual domains throughout the lyrics. Table 2 summarises the conceptual patterns observed during the analysis.

**Table 2.** Recurring conceptual domains

| Conceptual domain     | Representative expression                             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Love as calibration   | <i>Asmara telah terkalibrasi</i>                      |
| Love as unity         | <i>Melebur tuk satukan ego</i>                        |
| Love as a journey     | <i>Bahtera mahligai rasa</i>                          |
| Love as craftsmanship | <i>Merajut ketulusan jiwa; Mengukir ruang renjana</i> |
| Love as light         | <i>Binar asmara; Bias kita</i>                        |
| Commitment as binding | <i>Mengikat janji</i>                                 |

The findings indicate that no single metaphor dominates the lyrics. Instead, the songwriter combines multiple conceptual domains to construct a multidimensional representation of romantic relationships. Mechanical imagery, spatial imagery, light imagery, and craftsmanship imagery appear repeatedly to portray different stages of love and emotional commitment.

### Multilingual metaphorical expressions

The analysis also shows that metaphorical meanings are distributed across lexical items derived from different languages. Indonesian expressions mainly describe emotional processes and interpersonal relationships, whereas Javanese lexical items such as *garwa*, *pambage*, and *renjana* contribute cultural meanings associated with marriage, devotion, and affection. Sanskrit-derived vocabulary reinforces the poetic and symbolic character of the lyrics by introducing expressions that are uncommon in everyday communication.

These multilingual elements function collectively rather than independently. Instead of producing separate meanings, the three linguistic traditions complement one another to construct an integrated metaphorical representation of love and marital commitment throughout the song.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* contain diverse conceptual metaphors that portray love through multiple experiential domains. The identified metaphorical expressions consistently describe emotional compatibility, interpersonal commitment, unity, sincerity, and enduring relationships using concrete images derived from everyday human experience. The multilingual composition further enriches these metaphorical representations by incorporating Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit lexical resources within a unified lyrical discourse.

### **Qualitative Analysis of Key Metaphorical Expressions**

To fully grasp how conceptual metaphors operate in *Asmalibrasi*, it is essential to examine specific stanzas and their linguistic nuances.

#### **1. Love as Technical Precision (*Asmara telah terkalibrasi*)**

The opening premise of the song introduces the phrase “*Asmara telah terkalibrasi frekuensi yang sama*”. Here, the noun *asmara* (passion/love) is paired with *terkalibrasi* (calibrated), a modern technical loanword in Indonesian. In technical domains, calibration involves adjusting a measuring device so its output aligns precisely with a standard. When mapped onto the target domain of romantic relationships, the metaphor conceptualizes emotional compatibility not as a sudden emotion, but as a deliberate state of mutual tuning. The phrase “*frekuensi yang sama*” reinforces an acoustic image schema where two distinct entities achieve resonance by oscillating at identical frequencies.

#### **2. Commitment as Physical Craftsmanship (*Merajut ketulusan jiwa & Mengukir ruang renjana*)**

Craftsmanship source domains appear repeatedly in the expressions “*merajut ketulusan jiwa*” and “*mengukir ruang renjana*”. The verb *merajut* (to knit/weave) evokes an image schema of tactile, repetitive, and patient physical labor where individual threads are systematically intertwined to create a resilient fabric. In the target domain, sincerity (*ketulusan*) is conceptualized as a fabric woven over time through mutual effort. Similarly, *mengukir* (to carve/sculpt) implies transforming raw material into an enduring structure. By pairing *mengukir* with *ruang renjana* (a room of deep passion), love is conceptualized as an architectural sanctuary sculpted with care.

#### **3. Marriage as a Royal Voyage (*Bahtera mahligai rasa*)**

The complex expression “*bahtera mahligai rasa*” blends two distinct source domains: maritime navigation (*bahtera* = vessel/ship) and royal architecture (*mahligai* = palace). By merging these domains, the lyrics elevate marital life into a noble voyage. The ship schema introduces movement, navigation across uncertain waters, and shared direction, while the palace schema introduces dignity, sacredness, and emotional shelter. This blended metaphor portrays marriage not

merely as a contract, but as a regal journey undertaken together.

#### **4. Cultural Complementarity (*Sang garwa pambage*)**

The Javanese phrase “*sang garwa pambage*” carries profound cultural philosophy. In Javanese folk etymology, *garwa* is understood as *sigaraning nyawa* (“half of one's soul”). The modifier *pambage* refers to one who greets, welcomes, or shares. Mapping *garwa pambage* onto the target domain of marital roles frames a wife not as a subordinate partner, but as an indispensable soulmate who completes and welcomes her husband.

### **DISCUSSIONS**

The findings demonstrate that the metaphorical expressions in *Asmalibrasi* are not merely ornamental linguistic devices but function as conceptual structures through which abstract experiences of love and commitment are understood. Rather than describing romantic relationships literally, the songwriter consistently employs concrete experiences such as calibration, binding, weaving, melting, carving, and travelling to conceptualise emotional experiences. This finding supports Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) proposition that metaphors are fundamentally conceptual because they allow individuals to understand abstract concepts through more familiar and concrete domains. The metaphorical expressions identified in this study therefore reflect cognitive processes rather than stylistic embellishments alone.

One of the most distinctive expressions found in the lyrics is *asmara telah terkalibrasi frekuensi yang sama*. The lexical choice *terkalibrasi* is commonly associated with measurement, precision, and scientific instruments. Within the context of the song, however, the expression represents emotional compatibility between two individuals rather than technical calibration. This metaphor demonstrates how the abstract concept of love is conceptualised through the concrete experience of achieving balance and precision. Such conceptual mapping illustrates that emotional harmony is represented as a condition in which two individuals share the same “frequency,” suggesting mutual understanding and psychological alignment.

Another recurring pattern concerns the representation of commitment through physical actions. Expressions such as *mengikat janji*, *melebur tuk satukan ego*, and *merajut ketulusan jiwa* conceptualise interpersonal relationships as tangible processes involving binding, melting, and weaving. These metaphorical choices portray commitment as an active and continuous process rather than a static emotional state. Instead of presenting marriage solely as a social institution, the lyrics portray it as a relationship that necessitates cooperation, sincerity, and personal growth. The repeated use of action-oriented metaphors indicates that love is represented as something that is intentionally constructed and maintained over time.

The findings also reveal that spatial and journey-related metaphors contribute significantly to the overall conceptualisation of romantic relationships. Expressions such as *ruang biru*, *bahtera mahligai rasa*, and *mengukir ruang renjana* describe emotional experiences through images of space, movement, and physical

environments. These metaphorical representations suggest that love is understood as a shared experiential space in which individuals develop intimacy, permanence, and mutual belonging. The metaphor *bahtera mahligai rasa*, for example, portrays marriage as a journey undertaken together, emphasising continuity rather than a single ceremonial event.

The multilingual composition of *Asmalibrasi* further strengthens the metaphorical richness of the lyrics. Indonesian lexical items primarily express emotional processes, whereas Javanese expressions such as *garwa*, *pambage*, and *renjana* introduce cultural concepts that are closely associated with marriage, devotion, and harmony. Sanskrit-derived vocabulary contributes additional poetic and symbolic nuances that are less common in everyday communication. Rather than functioning independently, these linguistic resources interact to construct an integrated conceptual representation of romantic relationships. Consequently, the metaphorical meanings emerge not only from individual lexical items but also from the cultural interaction among the three languages represented in the song.

### Cognitive Translation Strategies for Multilingual Lyrical Metaphors

Applying cognitive translation frameworks (Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2017) to the empirical findings reveals clear distinctions between metaphors that share conceptual structures with English and those that require cultural adaptation. When a metaphor operates under a Similar Conceptual Mapping Condition (SCMC), direct translation successfully preserves cognitive meaning. For example, *mengikat janji* maps seamlessly to the English metaphor *commitment is binding/knotting* (“tying the knot” or “binding promises”).

However, expressions involving Javanese and Sanskrit lexical items often trigger a Different Conceptual Mapping Condition (DCMC), where a direct literal rendering results in semantic loss or cognitive distortion. Table 3 presents a cognitive translation matrix evaluating potential English target renderings for the song's primary metaphorical expressions.

**Table 3.** Cognitive translation strategy matrix for *Asmalibrasi*

| Metaphorical Expression                              | Domain/Cultural Context                  | Literal Translation                         | Cognitive Translation Strategy                                    | Proposed English Target Rendering              |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Asmara telah terkalibrasi frekuensi yang sama</i> | Calibration / Acoustic Physics           | “Love has been calibrated to the same freq” | Preserve domain; adjust prosody for poetic rhythm.                | “Our passion calibrated to a shared frequency” |
| <i>Sang garwa pambage</i>                            | Javanese Philosophy (Garwa = soulmate)   | “The welcoming wife”                        | Cultural domain expansion; compensate through relational imagery. | “My soul’s complementary half who welcomes me” |
| <i>Bias kita jadi taksu</i>                          | Balinese-Sanskrit Spiritual Aura (Taksu) | “Our refraction becomes charisma”           | Domain shift to spiritual radiance / divine light.                | “Our fused light turns into divine radiance”   |
| <i>Bahtera mahligai rasa</i>                         | Maritime Vessel & Royal Palace           | “Ship of the palace of feeling”             | Conceptual blending of voyage and royal shelter.                  | “A regal vessel carrying our shared devotion”  |
| <i>Mengukir ruang renjana</i>                        | Craftsmanship (Carving) & Space          | “Carving the room of passion”               | Preserve action mapping (carving)                                 | “Carving out a sanctuary for our deep passion” |

As demonstrated in Table 3, translating culturally layered phrases requires prioritizing cognitive equivalence over formal word-for-word accuracy (Munday, 2016). A literal rendering of *sang garwa pambage* as “the welcoming wife” strips away the Javanese philosophy that views a spouse as an indispensable portion of one's soul. To maintain cognitive and emotional equivalence, translators must deploy compensatory strategies, such as expanding the phrase into “my soul's complementary half”, ensuring target readers gain access to the conceptual model intended by the original songwriters.

The present findings complement previous studies while extending their analytical perspective. Anwar and Nirmala (2022) interpreted *Asmalibrasi* as representing love, marriage, and hope within human relationships. Similarly, Hartono et al. (2023) examined the symbolic meanings of romantic love through a semiotic perspective. Other researchers focused on stylistic characteristics, phrase structures, and figurative language in the lyrics (Amalia et al., 2023; Fitriani et al., 2023; Hilmah et al., 2023; Suwaryo, 2022). While these studies successfully explain the artistic and linguistic characteristics of the song (Sermiah et al., 2023), they pay relatively limited attention to the underlying conceptual mappings that organise metaphorical meanings. By applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the present study demonstrates that the metaphorical expressions are systematically connected through cognitive relationships between source domains and target domains rather than functioning as isolated stylistic devices.

The findings also have implications for translation studies. Because the metaphorical expressions are deeply embedded within Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit cultural contexts, literal translation alone may not adequately preserve their conceptual meanings. Translators need to consider both semantic equivalence and conceptual equivalence to maintain the cognitive and cultural relationships represented by the original lyrics. Expressions such as *bahtera mahligai rasa* or *garwa pambage*, for instance, carry cultural associations that extend beyond their literal lexical meanings. Consequently, successful translation requires sensitivity to both linguistic meaning and cultural conceptualisation.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is restricted to a single song and relies exclusively on textual interpretation using Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The findings therefore cannot be generalised to all multilingual Indonesian songs or other musical genres. Future studies may compare conceptual metaphors across different songs, genres, or cultural traditions and investigate how metaphorical meanings are translated into other languages or interpreted by listeners from different linguistic backgrounds. Such comparative investigations would provide a broader understanding of the interaction between metaphor, cognition, culture, and translation in contemporary musical discourse.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the conceptual metaphors embedded in the multilingual lyrics of *Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean using Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The findings demonstrate that the song represents abstract concepts of love, emotional

commitment, unity, and marriage through diverse conceptual domains derived from concrete human experiences, including calibration, binding, weaving, melting, spatial experience, and journeys. These metaphorical expressions reveal that the lyrics are structured not merely as poetic language but as coherent cognitive representations that enable listeners to understand complex emotional experiences through familiar conceptual patterns. The integration of Indonesian, Javanese, and Sanskrit lexical elements further enriches the metaphorical meanings by embedding cultural values and symbolic expressions within a unified lyrical discourse. This study contributes to the growing body of research on multilingual song lyrics by extending previous stylistic and semiotic analyses toward a cognitive linguistic perspective that explains how metaphorical meanings are conceptually organised. The findings also provide practical insights for translation studies by highlighting the importance of preserving conceptual and cultural meanings when translating metaphorical expressions rather than relying solely on lexical equivalence.

Nevertheless, the scope of this study is limited to a single song, and the interpretations are based on qualitative textual analysis. Future research is encouraged to investigate conceptual metaphors across a wider range of multilingual songs, compare metaphorical patterns across different musical genres or cultural traditions, and examine how listeners from diverse linguistic backgrounds interpret metaphorical meanings. Overall, this study demonstrates that conceptual metaphor analysis offers a valuable framework for understanding the interaction between language, cognition, culture, and translation in contemporary Indonesian song lyrics.

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