

ABSTRACT

One of the ways in which people communicate in a society is through songs. Benga music is a genre of Kenyan popular music. Dholuo benga love songs have been in existence from 1960s to date. Aspects of language, like metaphors, usually vary over time due to external and internal influences on a speech community. The different linguistic expressions of love in Dholuo benga love songs are evidence of various conceptualizations of love over time by the benga artistes. Language use, other than the rhythm, defines a song and has a direct influence on the audience who may consider it either pleasant or unpleasant to listen to. Music artistes may address the same concept in their songs but their conceptualization of the concept may not necessarily be the same. The aim of this comparative study was to establish conceptualization of love by two male Dholuo benga artistes in Kenya, in two different time frames (1970s and 2000s). The specific objectives were to: determine the conceptual metaphors that motivate the linguistic metaphors and metonymies used in reference to romantic love by Ochieng Kabaselle and Atomi Sifa, examine how the source and target domains of the conceptual metaphors are mapped in Dholuo benga love songs by Ochieng Kabaselle and Atomi Sifa, and to establish the metaphoric and metonymic variations in conceptualization of romantic love between Ochieng Kabaselle and Atomi Sifa. The study was guided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The theory's tenets are metaphors structure thinking, metaphor structure knowledge; metaphor is central to abstract language and metaphor is grounded to physical experience. These aspects were used to analyze linguistic metaphors and metonymies of love in selected benga songs by Ochieng Kabaselle (1970s) and Atomi Sifa (2000s). The theory consequently aided in determining the conceptual metaphors that motivate the metaphoric expressions. The study adopted the analytical research design. The linguistic metaphors and metonymies identified in the songs were analyzed and categorized into their respective conceptual metaphor domains. The study then drew comparison between the conceptualization of romantic love in 1970s and 2000s. The study population comprised a total of thirty Dholuo benga love songs. Seventy eight metaphoric and metonymic expressions of love were extracted from lyrics of the thirty love songs by Ochieng Kabaselle and Atomi Sifa. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the love songs with required metaphorical expressions and saturated sampling technique was employed to get the requisite linguistic metaphors and metonymies of love. The data was then analyzed qualitatively into themes. The findings were that the conceptual metaphors that motivate the linguistic metaphors and metonymies of love by Ochieng Kabaselle and Atomi Sifa are THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS TASTY FOOD, LOVE IS A MALADY, LOVE IS A BOND, LOVE IS AN OBJECT, OBJECT OF LOVE IS A SMALL CHILD, OBJECT OF LOVE IS A PHYSICALLY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, LOVE IS INTIMATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR and OBJECT OF LOVE IS A LUXURIOUS OBJECT. The study concluded that there exist similarities and variations in conceptualization of love between 1970s and 2000s male Dholuo benga artistes. The research findings offer insights in the fields of semantics, cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics.