

A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN BEN HOWARD'S SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

In linguistics, semantics studies how meaning is expressed through language, including sentences, phrases, and words. Connotative meaning, which gives words emotional depth and resonance, is significant in song lyrics. This study, titled "A Semantic Analysis of Connotative Meaning in Ben Howard's Song Lyrics," aims to explore the connotative meanings in Ben Howard's lyrics. The researcher chose five of his most popular songs on Spotify for this analysis. Using a qualitative descriptive analysis approach, the study looks into the sense of values and types of connotative meanings in the lyrics. The analysis shows that the songs' themes affect the types of connotations found. Songs about love, vulnerability, and youth memories tend to have positive connotations, while themes of self-doubt, separation, and searching for life's meaning have more negative and neutral connotations. Moreover, associative meaning is the most common connotative form, followed by affective, reflective, and allusive meanings. The findings indicate that song themes greatly influence the types of connotations used, with positive connotations more frequent in hopeful songs and negative ones in introspective songs. This research adds to language studies by offering insights into the complex and rich meanings in Ben Howard's song lyrics.

Keyword : Ben Howard, Connotative Meaning, Semantic, Song lyrics

INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, semantics focuses on the study of how meaning is conveyed through linguistic systems. These systems comprise various structural units, including sentences, phrases, words, and morphemes. The main objective of semantics is to examine

how these linguistic units contribute to the transmission and interpretation of meaning (Yunira et al., 2020). Linguistically, culture plays a crucial role in the dimension of language that affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language itself (Prastiwi & Purnama, 2018). According to Purnamasari (2018), semantics can be categorized based on lexical meaning and grammatical meaning. Lexical meaning refers to the specific meaning associated with a word, while grammatical meaning refers to the role a word plays in the structure of a sentence. Words can also be distinguished as having denotative meaning, which is the literal or dictionary meaning, or connotative meaning, which includes the emotional or cultural associations attached to a word. Connotative meaning plays an important role in song lyrics, as it adds depth and emotional resonance to the words being sung.

The connotations attached to certain words and phrases in songs can evoke personal memories, cultural references, or societal themes, thus creating a rich of emotions and connections. Plotnickiy (2021) emphasized song lyrics can describe stories and evoke strong emotions through the themes expressed by the writer. Songs can be composed in order to reflect reality, evoke the imagination, or utilise figurative language to convey a message that will leave an artistic impression on listeners (Tirtanawati et al., 2022). Songwriters usually use poetic elements such as metaphors and symbolism to bring the narratives in their songs to life. The lyrics of a song often invite different interpretations, sometimes deviating from the artist's explicit intention in creating the meaning of the song (Castilla et al., 2023).

Ben Howard's lyrics have a strong impact on listeners, captivating them with poetic and introspective lyrics. Ben Howard's lyrics are often full of deep meaning, metaphor, and powerful imagery. Attracting the listener to a masterful blend of acoustic elements and compelling storytelling. Each of his song lyrics serves as a medium for exploration and reflection, making his song lyrics an interesting subject to research. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "A Semantic Analysis of Connotative Meaning in Ben Howard's Song Lyrics." This study aims to explore the connotative meanings contained in Ben Howard's song lyrics.

The researcher has selected five of Ben Howard's most popular songs on Spotify to investigate their connotative meanings. Using semantic analysis techniques, the researcher will analyze the depth of the meanings, associations, and emotions contained in

the song lyrics. Through this analysis, the researcher hopes to contribute to the field of language studies and provide insights into the rich and complex meanings within Ben Howard's song lyrics.

Definition Writing and Writing Assessment

Definition of Semantic

Semantics is the academic field that investigates the meaning of language (Acheoah & Olaleye, 2018). Yunira et al., (2020) stated that semantics is commonly employed to describe the exploration of meaning. Vorobets (2022) stated that recent linguistic research has focused on analyzing the semantic organization of sentences, specifically the functions of syntax and their relationships, as well as the syntactic properties of grammatical classes of words. Semantics not only focuses on how words express meaning, but also on how words, phrases, and sentences interact with each other to form meaning in language. Semantic analysis involves examining the meaning of these linguistic units (words, phrases, and sentences) to uncover the connotative meanings contained in the selected songs' lyrics.

Based on all of the statements above it can be concluded that semantics is the academic field dedicated to investigating the meaning of language. It involves exploring how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning and how they interact with each other to form coherent messages. Recent linguistic research has emphasized analyzing the semantic structure of sentences, the functions of syntax, and the relationships between syntactic properties and grammatical word classes. Semantic analysis, therefore, examines these linguistic units to uncover deeper connotative meanings, such as those found in song lyrics.

Definition of Connotative Meaning

The connotative meaning of an expression relates to its communicative significance, which goes beyond its purely conceptual content and is influenced by what it refers to. Marlina et al., (2023) refer to connotative meaning as the additional meaning or implied meaning that goes beyond the literal or dictionary definition of a word or phrase. Connotative meaning is often considered more

subjective and can vary among individuals or communities (Wang, 2022). According to Chaer in (Purnamasari, 2018), word is said to have connotative meaning when it carries a sense of value, whether it be a positive or pleasant value, or a negative or unpleasant value. Dickins et al. (2017) divide connotative meanings into six main types based on socially accepted rather than individual meanings. By categorizing connotative meanings into these six main types, Dickins et al. (2017), provide a comprehensive framework for understanding socially accepted interpretations of words and phrases. Those types are attitudinal, assosiative, affective, allusive, collocative, reflective.

Definition of Song Lyrics

Song lyrics are the textual components that create a song. Typically, these lyrics are performed by a singer or band in a musical performance. Song lyrics often contain narratives, emotions, concepts, or personal experiences that the songwriter wants to communicate to the listener. In addition, Que & Patty (2023) state that each song produces a unique story, where messages are conveyed to the listener by inviting them to interpret their personal experiences and knowledge as a foundation for understanding the lyrics.

(Theses & King, 2020) which states that song lyrics serve as a means of personal and intimate communication, fostering a one-on-one connection between the song and the listener within the musical experience. Varnum et al. (2021) state that lately songs tend to use repetitive lyrics because they have the advantage of conveying information that is easier to remember and has a higher probability of being transmitted accurately.

METHODS

The researcher will use a qualitative descriptive analysis approach, which is a research method that involves collecting and examining data relating to a particular topic or phenomenon. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the findings, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subject under study. With the qualitative approach, researchers will be able to explore the broader dimensions of connotative meanings in Ben Howard's song lyrics.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents data on the connotative meanings found in Ben Howard's song lyrics. The researcher identified twenty-four data with sense of values and nineteen data with types of connotative meaning. A more detailed classification can be seen in the following table and figure.

Song Title	Sense of Values			Total
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	
Only Love	2	1	2	5
Old Pine	5	-	-	5
Keep Your Head Up	4	2	-	6
Promise	-	3	-	3
In Dreams	1	2	2	5

Table 1. Classification of Data

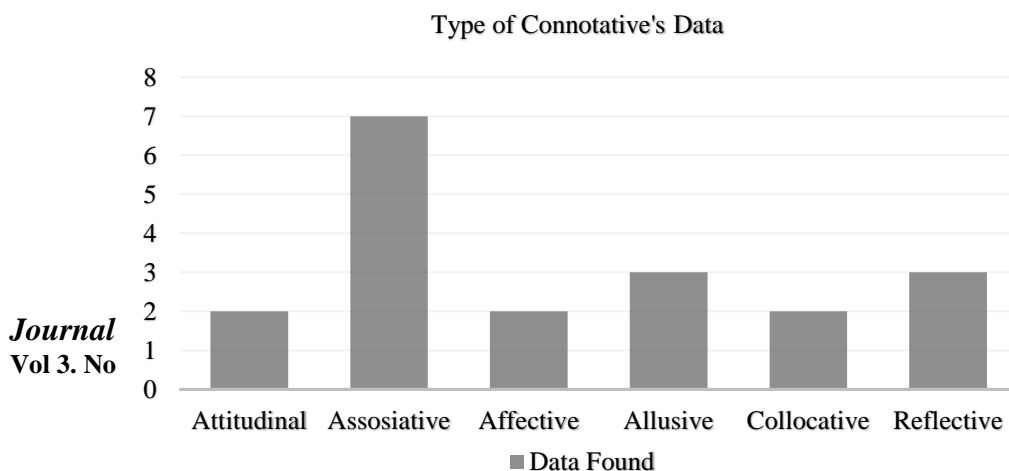


Figure 1. Classification of Data

This study analyzes the connotative meanings in Ben Howard's song lyrics by examining themes and forms of connotative meanings. In "Only Love," themes of love and vulnerability result in a mix of positive, neutral, and negative connotations, with positive and neutral being dominant. "Old Pine" focuses on fond memories of youth and growth, showing predominantly positive connotations. "Promise" explores self-doubt, love challenged by distance, fear of loneliness, and hope for reunion, resulting in solely negative connotations. "In Dreams" deals with life's meaning, self-reflection, alienation, and struggle, leading to a combination of positive, negative, and neutral connotations, with negative and neutral being dominant.

The analysis reveals that associative meanings are the most common, indicating the importance of word associations in uncovering deeper meanings in Howard's lyrics. Reflective meanings are the second most common, followed by attitudinal, affective, and collocative meanings. The study concludes that song themes significantly affect the types of connotations used. Positive connotations are more frequent in songs with themes of love, vulnerability, and positive memories, while negative connotations dominate in songs about self-doubt, separation, and existential searches. This highlights the emotional depth and personal reflection in Howard's lyrics, shaped by the themes they explore.

The themes of the songs have a strong influence on the types of connotations present. This connection emphasizes how thematic content shapes the emotional and associative meanings conveyed by the lyrics. Understanding the types of connotations used in Howard's songs can increase the interpretation by providing insight into the underlying themes and emotional landscapes depicted. Positive connotations often align with themes of hope and optimism, while negative connotations delve into themes of introspection and existential questions.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the connotative meanings in Ben Howard's song lyrics, focusing on values and forms of connotative meaning. The analysis shows that song themes significantly influence the types of connotations present. Associative meaning is

the most dominant form, with affective, reflective, and allusive meanings also common, reflecting the emotional depth and personal reflection in the lyrics. In conclusion, song themes have a significant impact on the connotations used, with positive connotations more common in optimistic themes and negative connotations more common in introspective themes.

For future research, it is recommended that inter-rater reliability be used to ensure objective categorization of connotations. In addition, further studies could explore the influence of cultural or social contexts on the interpretation of connotative meanings, the impact of figurative language on listeners' perceptions, and how song lyrics influence emotions, perceptions, and the formation of individual identities and values.

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