

# Denotative and Connotative Meaning in *One direction's* Songs Lyric: A Semantic Perspective

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this analysis is to find out some words that contains with connotative and denotative meaning on specific object in the three one direction's songs lyric based on Withers and Keami (2003) as the activity in semantic class. The data was taken from the text, found in the three different songs lyric: "Hey Angel", "Long Way Down", and "Drag me Down" by One Direction in their album "Make in the A.M.". Descriptive qualitative employed as the method in this research. After analyzing the data found from the lyrics, this study found that (1) Some lyrics contained with connotative and denotative meaning on referring a specific object, (2) Connotative meaning found more dominant compare than denotative meaning.

**Keywords:** Denotative and Connotative, Semantic, Song's Lyrics

## 1. Introduction

There are 3 aspects study of linguistics; language form, language meaning, and language in context. Semantics (the study of meaning) is central to the study of communication and as communication becomes more and more a crucial factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes more and more pressing. Semantics is also at the central of the study of the human mind - thought processes, cognition, conceptualization - all these are intricately bound up with the way in which we classify and convey our experience of the world through language.

There are 7 types of meaning in semantics; (1) Denotative meaning (meaning by dictionary), (2) Connotative meaning (meaning by suggest of mind), (3) Social meaning (social context), (4) Affective or Emotive meaning (convey about personal feeling), (5) Reflected meaning (multiple conceptual meaning), (6) Collocative meaning (association of words), and (7) Thematic meaning (message of meaning), Leech (1974).

Denotation is the meaning of a word which is primarily refers to the real word, Meanwhile, Connotative meaning is when a word suggests a set of associations or it is an imaginative or emotional suggestion connected with the words, while readers can relate to such associations.

The function of semantic is the purpose exact meanings of the words and phrases and remove confusion, which might lead the readers to believe a word has many possible meanings. It makes a relationship between a word and the sentence through their meanings. Besides, semantic enables the readers to explore a sense of the meaning, because if the people remove or change the place of

a single word from the sentence, it will change the entire meanings, or else the sentence will become anomalous. Hence, the sense relation inside a sentence is very important, as a single word does not carry any sense or meaning. Semantics is appropriated to be used on investigating the meaning of lyrics of songs because it deals with the meaning of language used by people in order to convey their intended meaning of speaking or message of a language used.

## 2. Theoretical Review

### 2.1 Semantics

Semantics as a part of linguistics study, where the meaning of the semantics is the study of meaning and sentence and also in language. According to Cole (1981), "Semantics is involved in the determination of conventional (or literal) meaning". Similarly, Recanati (2004) stated that semantics deals with the literal meaning of words and sentences as determined by the rules of the language.

According to Fromkin (2001), "The study of linguistic meaning of morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences is called semantics". Subfields of semantics are lexical semantics, which is concerned with the meanings of words, and the meaning relationships among words; and phrasal or sentential semantics, which is concerned with the meaning of syntactic units larger than the word.

Therefore it came onto a conclusion that semantics is the study of the meaning of words (lexical semantics) and fixed word combinations (phraseology), and how these combine to form the meanings of sentences.

## 2.2 Types of Meaning in Semantics

According to Leech (1974), there are seven types: denotative meaning (meaning by dictionary), connotative meaning (meaning by suggest of mind), social meaning (social context), affective or emotive meaning (convey about personal feeling), and reflected meaning (multiple conceptual meaning), collocative meaning (association of words), and thematic meaning (message of meaning). The two types of meaning according to Leech are as follows; denotative is the literal. "dictionary" meaning of a word – what is "supposed" to mean and connotative is your personal meaning implication, or interpretation of a word.

## 2.3 Denotative vs Connotative meaning

The differences between denotative and connotative meaning are; denotative meaning is a real meaning based on dictionary. It means, it interprets directly a word, phrase, or sentence according dictionary. Meanwhile, connotation is about getting a meaning from a word, phrase, or sentence according suggests, or what we associate the word with, that goes beyond its formal definitions..

## 3. The Result

The data was analyzed descriptively based on the theory of denotative and connotative meaning. The data are some songs lyric by One Direction's Album "Made in the A.M (2015)": 1. Hey Angel lyric, 2. Long Way Down lyric, and 3. Drag Me Down lyric.

**Table 3.1**  
Analysis "Hey Angel's Lyric

1)	<u>Angel</u> (n)	"Hey Angel" in first line.
2)	<u>Sky</u> (n)	"We look up to the sky?" in third line.
3)	<u>Bar</u> (n)	"Yeah I see you at the bar" in twenty second line.
4)	<u>Bed</u> (n)	"at the edge of my bed" in twenty second line.

- 1) Angel (n) "Hey Angel" in first line.

The conclusion of the word of "Angel" in this song has connotative meaning. It means a beautiful girl who loves by him or his darling or his girlfriends, and if the writer try to analyzes the word "Angel" and connected to next song lyric "Do you know the reasons why", "we look up to the sky?",

"Hey angel, Do you look at us and laugh", "When we hold on to the past? Hey angel" so, the writer knows the word "Angel" on the lyric is his ex-girlfriends or ex-wife who does not live with him again.

- 2) Sky (n) "We look up to the sky?" in third line.

The conclusion of the word "Sky" related the lyric of this song "We look up to the sky" is denotative meaning, because that is a situation when someone doing something like see or look up to a thing, and this case someone doing action to look up the sky. But, the word of "Sky" can be connotative meaning, if the writer connects to in all contain in this song. It means the word "Sky" is a dream world of him or the fantasy of him about his lovely, or the situation of someone who is remembering his life in the past.

- 3) Bar (n) "Yeah I see you at the bar" in twenty second line.

The conclusion of the word of "Bar" has denotative meaning. Its mean the word of "Bar" on the song lyric "Yeah I see you at the bar" is explain the place of someone met his girlfriends in the first time, so the purpose in here the boy try to remember again the place and the situation when he met with his girlfriend.

- 4) Bed (n) "at the edge of my bed" in twenty second line.

The conclusion of the word "Bed" related on the song lyric "at the edge of my bed" has connotative meaning, because the word "Bed" in here, if the writer connected to all lyric in "Hey Angel" song is describes of someone who's sees or meet his girlfriends in his dream, so it is not in the a real thing like bed.

So, the conclusion for the song lyric in the title "Hey Angel" that the writer analysis in that song have some words contain connotative meaning such as, angel, sky, and bed and denotative meaning is bar.

**Table 3.2**  
Analysis Long Way Down's Lyric

1)	<u>Angel</u> (n)	"Hey Angel" in first line.
2)	<u>Sky</u> (n)	"We look up to the sky?" in third line.
3)	<u>Bar</u> (n)	"Yeah I see you at the bar" in twenty second line.
4)	<u>Bed</u> (n)	"at the edge of my bed" in twenty second line.

- 1) **Fire** (n) “We've been in fire” in first line.

The conclusion of the word “Fire” on the song lyric “We've been in fire” is connotative meaning, its mean this song lyric explain or describe about bad situation or condition that happened because problem.

- 2) **Flame** (n) “Went down in the flames” in second line.

The conclusion the word of “Flame” on the song lyric “Went down in the flames” has connotative meaning. It means the word “Flame” in here not a thing, but like a feeling of someone who’s excessive to his girlfriends.

- 3) **Ocean** (n) “We sailed the ocean” in third line.

The conclusion the word of “Ocean” on the lyric “We sailed the ocean” has denotative meaning, because the word “Ocean” in here is a thing and the lyric “We sailed the ocean” is an action of someone. But the word of “Ocean” can be has connotative meaning if the writer connected to all lyric in this song “Long Way Down” the meaning is “life”, its mean the purpose of walk on their life or explain the situation a couple that was walked on their life.

- 4) **Cathedral** (n) “Built a cathedral” in fifth line.

The conclusion of word “Cathedral” related on the lyric “Built a cathedral” has denotative meaning, its mean “Cathedral” is a thing or building, so the purpose on the lyric “Built a cathedral” is an action of someone to build a building, like cathedral, but the word of “Cathedral” can be has connotative meaning if we connect to all lyric in this song entitle “Long Way Down”, because “Built acathedral” can has a meaning make relationship with someone, like married.

- 5) **Mountain** (n) “We had a mountain” in sixteenth line.

The conclusion of word “Mountain” is connotative meaning, its mean the word “Mountain” on the lyric “we had a mountain” is not a real of mountain, but the word “Mountain” in here is hopeful of someone, more clearly “we had mountain” is a couple which has a high hopeful in their relationship maybe they want to continue to more serious relationship like married, so the author from this song draw it with a word “mountain”.

- 6) **Stranded** (adj) “But we got stranded” in twenty first line.

The conclusion the word “Stranded” on the lyric “But we got stranded” has connotative meaning, its

mean a condition of someone has problem, feel confused, but they do not have solution and finally they cannot do anything.

So, the conclusion in the song lyric entitled “Long Way Down” has connotative meaning is fire, flames, ocean, Cathedral, mountain, stranded.

**Table 3.3**  
Analysis Drag Me Down's Lyric

Line	Word	Meaning
1	Fire	Connotative meaning, bad situation
2	Flame	Connotative meaning, feeling of excessiveness
3	Ocean	Denotative meaning, life
5	Cathedral	Denotative meaning, relationship
16	Mountain	Connotative meaning, hopeful
21	Stranded	Connotative meaning, condition of problem

- 1) **Fire** (n) “I've got fire for a heart” in first line.

The conclusion the word of “Fire” on the lyric “I've got fire for a heart” has connotative meaning, its mean the word “Fire” in here is not a thing, but a condition of someone heart, like feel falling in love, get spirit or motivation from someone.

- 2) **Dark** (adj) “I'm not scared of the dark” in second line.

The conclusion the word of “Dark” on the lyric “I'm not scared of the dark” is connotative meaning, its mean the word “Dark” on the lyric has not areal condition or situation do not have light, but it is the condition of someone that gets problem, and he not scared because he has a girlfriend or someone that always support him.

- 3) **Boat** (n) “and baby you're a boat” in fifth line.

The conclusion the word of “Boat” on the song lyric “and baby you're a boat” has connotative meaning, its mean that is an expression of someone to express sense of need to his girlfriend in order to always beside him to give him support.

- 4) **Sun** (n) “If I didn't have you, I'd never see the sun” in ninth line.

The conclusion the word of “Sun” on the song lyric “If I didn't have you, I'd never see the sun” is connotative meaning, its mean that is a feeling of someone to his girlfriend, because his girlfriend is like “Sun” give him support, spirit, motivation and of course give him love, so if the boy lost his girlfriend he will lost his spirit and motivation.

- 5) **Blind** (adj) “They can't blind me” in fifteenth line.

The conclusion of the word “Blind” on the song lyric “They can't blind me” is connotative meaning, its mean the word “Blind” in here not a real bad condition of eyes that cannot see anything, but the word “Blind” in here if the writer connected to the song lyric “They can't blind me” support to next song lyric “With your love, nobody can drag me down” has a meaning “backstop or destroy” because for example, the boy cannot drop or lost because he has a girlfriend who loves him and always give him support.

#### 4. Denotative vs Connotative Meaning: Comparison

After the writer analyzes three songs lyric entitled “Hey angel”, “Long way down”, and “Drag me down” by One Direction in their album “Make in the A.M.” the writer gets conclusion the dominant denotative and connotative meaning in songs lyric is connotative meaning, because based on fifteen word, there is 1 word contained denotative meaning and fourteen words contained connotative meaning.

#### 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

##### 5.1 Conclusions

Semantic is the study of meaning in language. In the semantic have several types, there are denotative and connotative meaning, denotative meaning is a real meaning based on dictionary. Its mean interprets directly a word, phrase, or sentence based on dictionary. Meanwhile, connotative meaning is get a meaning from a word, phrase, or sentence according suggests, or what we associate the word with, that goes beyond its formal definitions.

In the object three songs lyric entitled “Hey angel”, “Long way down”, and “Drag me down” by One Direction in their album “Make in the A.M.” the writer found fifteen words (1) angel, (2) sky, (3) bed, (4) bar, (5) fire, (6) flames, (7) ocean, (8) cathedral, (9) mountain, (10) stranded, (11) fire, (12) dark, (13) boat, (14) sun and (15) blind.

There is 1 word (Bar) contained denotative meaning. Meanwhile, fourteen words [ (1) angel, (2) sky, (3) bed, (4) fire, (5) flames, (6) ocean, (7) cathedral, (8) mountain, (9) stranded, (10) fire, (11) dark, (12) boat, (13) sun and (14) blind] contained connotative meaning.

The dominant of meaning between denotative and connotative meaning on the three song lyrics by One Direction is connotative meaning. The reader can see the example of them and understand the

differences of denotative and connotative meaning, so the reader knows the true meaning of songs lyric by One Direction.

#### 5.2 Suggestion

For the beginners, the writer hopes that this thesis will be useful to know about semantic especially denotative and connotative meaning, because this thesis has some denotative and connotative meaning theory based on some experts.

For the next researcher, if they want to discuss about denotative and connotative meaning must understand the differences both of the meaning, its mean they must read more clearly about them, so they can give each the right example.

The writer hope for the reader will understand about the writer explanation about denotative meaning and connotative meaning, so the reader will not erroneous both of the meaning.

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