



CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF OLIVIA RODRIGO'S SELECTED SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

This research was conducted to analyze the connotative meaning of Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics. The objectives of this research are (1) to identify the connotative meaning of Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics, (2) to identify the connotative types in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics. The results show that there are eighteen data containing connotative meanings: ten data with positive meanings and eight data with negative meanings. The dominant positive connotation is found in the song "Happier", while the most negative connotation is "Brutal". This research uses the theory of Abdul Chaer which states that connotative meaning can be divided into two kinds, namely positive connotative (the word snoring) and negative connotative (the word growling). The researcher used a qualitative approach in analyzing the data. The data of this research are the songs by Olivia Rodrigo in the album Sour. five songs were selected: "Brutal", "Deja vu", "Traitor", "Happier", and "Enough For You".

Key words: Semantic, connotative meaning, lyric.

A. INTRODUCTION

A language is an analytic system of communication. Communication is basically a social process. Laswell (1948) states that communication is following 5w models questions who says what in which channel to whom in what effect. Based on the theory, the writer concludes that the action of communication is a language process from speaker to receiver through a channel either verbally or in writing. There are several ways of expressing ideas that deviate from semantic conventions, some of which are through the use of denotative and connotative meanings. According to Kenney (1996: 60) words have two main types of meaning, denotation and connotation. Denotation is the meaning of a word, which mainly refers to the actual word, dictionary definition. It is a type of meaning that can be described in terms of a set of semantic properties that serve to

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identify a particular concept related to the word in question. For example cow indicates a type of animal, house indicates a type of building.

According to Barker (2001), connotation is part of the meaning of a word and he said that connotative as implicit. For example, if I say the sun rises in the morning "The term "sun" can be defined as something large that illuminates the world rising from the east and setting in the west. In the other hand the word sun in "She is my sun" has a connotative meaning (positive connotation). The word "sun" in that sentence has meaning as a power, something that will always be there the next day. If that sentence is said by a man, then the sentence "She is My Sun" has meaning she means a lot to him or he can rely on her power.

In addition, Chaer (2007) states that connotative meaning can be divided into two kinds, namely positive connotative (purr word) and negative connotative (snarl word). Connotative meaning can also change from time to time, because connotative meaning is related to value of the sense of people, and the value of people are different. The word "dirty" in the sentence "And baby, you know my hands are dirty" doesn't mean dirty, bad/immoral. But "dirty" means conduct related to past mistakes and wrongdoings (negative connotation). Contrast with the positive one, there was an "aroma" coming from the kitchen. Kevin put his book down and went to investigate. The word "aroma" has a positive connotation. It means whatever is in the kitchen smells good. Therefore, one could assume Kevin smells someone's delicious cooking.

There have been a few previous studies on connotative, which concentrated on different object such as Assiddiqy (2021) focused on metal song, Armawansyah (2016) and Wahyuni (2019) focused on religi song. The studies mentioned above analysis about connotative meaning of different type of song and use different theory. In addition, the researcher analyzed about connotative meaning of Olivia Rodrigo selected song lyrics. By analyzing connotations in songs, so that the listener gain a deeper understanding of the artist's intended message or the multiple layers of meaning embedded within the lyrics.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative descriptive methods appropriate to the objectives of this study because this study aimed to find out the words or phrases that have connotative meanings in the Olivia Rodrigo. According to Margono (2009), qualitative research is research that obtains descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words that can be observed. Descriptive research is research that aims to accurately describe a phenomenon based on the characteristics of the research. In this thesis, the researcher used qualitative research, where data was analyzed through interpretation, not statistical analysis. In short, the researcher scrutinized the connotative meaning on Olivia Rodrigo selected song lyrics through reading, listening, understanding, interpreting, and describing, the content to gain the data in research finding.

The data of this study are words, phrases, and sentences that contain connotative meaning in the lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's song. Based on that, the source of data in this research came from the song of Olivia Rodrigo's song in the album Sour. There are five songs that the researcher analyzed, which are "Brutal",

“Deja vu”, “Traitor”, “Happier”, and “Enough for you”. In content analysis, the instrument is basically the researcher herself, because to collect the data, to get the sources, and to analyze the data depends on the researcher. Instrument refers to the tools or methods used to collect data and gather information for a study. This research uses observation techniques, Observation means collecting data directly from the field (Semiawan, 2010). The objects used in this research were taken from the song lyrics in Olivia Rodrigo's album.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

In this thesis, the researcher analyzed the connotative meanings that are contained in the selected lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's songs, such as: "Brutal", "Deja vu", "Traitor", "Happier", and "Enough for You". This research aims to find the connotation meaning in the song lyrics. In this finding, the researcher found eighteen connotation meaning and types of connotation meaning, the types of connotation meaning found in Olivia Rodrigo's songs are ten positive connotations and eight negative connotations.

The song that has the most positive connotations is Happier. Then, the song that has the most negative connotation is Brutal, from the title of it song, it is certain that there will be many words, phrases and even sentences that will contain negative connotation. From the song Brutal, there are two negative connotation which are, fucking and upset. While the positive connotation in song Brutal just the word golden. In Deja Vu song the positive connotation was unique, while the negative connotation are reused and shit. Next, the song Traitor have two positive connotation and two negative connotation. The positive words are word and trophy, and the negative connotation are dump and hell. Then, the song Happier is the song that has the most positive connotation. The words are, sunlight, sweet, butterflies, and moved on. The last song is Enough for You, which has two positive connotations (everything and enough) and one negative connotations (discarded).

1. Connotative Meaning in Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics.

a. Song Title “Brutal”

1. “ *Where's my **fucking** teenage dream?* ”

Based on Oxford dictionary definition of word fucking is used by some people to emphasize a word or phrase, especially when they feel angry or upset. For many people, the word fucking is very vulgar, considered inappropriate and taboo in all its senses. Even so, various word forms, especially in the nonliteral, slang sense, are increasingly creeping into regular use, not only as spontaneous expletives of shock, horror, or anger, but also as verbal tics and general intensifiers, just an index of annoyance or impatience or even pleasant surprise. The word fucking in that lyrics stand as a word of reinforce or suppress the intent or meaning of a sentence. It same idea with the sentence “What the Fuck

are you doing?” which comes from What are you doing? which is added with the word "Fuck" to suppress and explain the feelings of the speaker. What the Fuck are you doing? That is, what you do, but the person who asks you what you are doing feels that what you are doing is very unnatural or should not be done. So the sentence where's my fucking teenage dream is the type of negative connotation because that lyric give negative pressure to show the emotion.

2. *“They say these are the **golden** years ”*

The word Golden or gold based on Oxford dictionary is a soft and malleable precious metal that is commonly used to make jewelry or valuable properties. In addition, gold is a popular and reliable investment instrument from time to time. As a valuable asset, this asset is also an investment instrument that can protect the value of wealth because its value tends to be higher than other types of precious metals such as platinum and palladium. In fact, this precious metal is known as a safe haven. If it is connected with the lyrics above, then the golden mean in the lyrics is valuable. "They say these are the golden years " means that some people say that this year is the golden year. The year is likely to bring a lot of luck or positive things. So it is type of a positive connotation.

3. *“ This the kinda thanks I get? **Unrelentlessly upset** ”*

According to the Cambridge dictionary upset means to make someone worried, unhappy, or angry. Upset has several different meanings, depending on how the context and position. In that lyric meaning upset is angry or annoy. It implies feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment, or frustration. Because there is a sentence *“This the kinda thanks I get?”* before *“Unrelentlessly **upset** ”* so it is clear that the writer irritated. The writer is already done something but then she got less appreciate. So, upset in this lyric identify negative connotative.

b. Song Title “Deja Vu”

1. *“ I bet she’s bragging to all her friends saying you’re so **unique**”*

Unique is its own good shape, kind, or different than the other, and there is no similarity with the other (Oxford dictionary). So unique can be interpreted as something very special and rarely found. In this lyric *“ I bet she’s bragging to all her friends saying you’re so **unique**”* described that Olivia ex-boyfriend found someone new and that girl thinks that Olivia ex-boyfriend has a signature personality, unusual characteristic or uncommon traits or qualities that make his special or different from others. The word unique indicates type of positive connotative, because in this lyric tell the greatness of someone’s character.

2. “ *She thinks it’s special but it’s all **reused***”

From Oxford dictionary the word “reused” the act of using something again. But in this lyric the word reused means that nothing new. It implies that someone has the belief or opinion that something has special or exceptional qualities, but in reality, it is nothing more than reused. New girlfriend of writer’s ex thought that all the things that her boyfriend did was special and it is original just for her. But actually, that’s already he did with Olivia. So, the lyric “ *She thinks it’s special but it’s all **reused***” is type of negative connotative because this connotation carries elements of disappointment or realization that what was initially perceived as extraordinary or original turns out to be ordinary or unoriginal.

3. “ *Don’t act like we didn’t do that **shit** too*”

From the lyrics above the word "shit" is not translated as "poop" or "crap." The connotative meaning shit in the lyric “ *Don’t act like we didn’t do that **shit** too*” refer to all the things that they have been through. In that lyric it could be seen that Olivia said to her ex do not act like you never did all those thing like what he did with his new girlfriend. So the word shit in that lyric means to what they do. This explanation relates with the lyric “ *She thinks it’s special but it’s all **reused***” because both tell about the pass. From the explanation above the lyric song is include in negative connotative meaning. Because shit is the type of a rude word.

c. Song Title “Traitor”

1. “ *I play **dumb** but I always knew* ”

Before seeking connotation meaning, the meaning of the word dumb is lacking intelligence or stupid based on Oxford. But the meaning conveyed by Olivia is that she pretends to be stupid and intentionally acts ignorant or naive in certain situations while secretly being aware and knowledgeable about what is happening. She acts like she does not know what happened, but actually she knows everything. From the above, the connotations in the song lyrics are classified as negative connotative meanings because the lyrics use the word "dumb," which evokes negative vibes.

2. “ *And ain’t it funny how you said you were friends? Now it sure as **hell** don’t look like it*”

The denotative meaning of the word "hell" in Oxford dictionary refers to a place or state of punishment or suffering in various religious beliefs, particularly in Christianity. It is often described as a realm of eternal damnation and torment for those who have committed sins or transgressions. The connotation of the phrase "And ain't it funny how you said you were friends? Now it sure as hell don't look like it" suggests a sense of irony and disappointment in a strained or deteriorated friendship. It implies that there has been a significant shift or breakdown in the relationship, contrasting with previous claims of being friends. The phrase carries an undertone of disbelief or frustration, highlighting the stark difference between what was once claimed and the current state of affairs. It expresses a feeling of betrayal or hurt caused by actions that contradict previous statements about relationship, that's why this is a negative connotation.

3. "You gave me your word"

Based on Cambridge dictionary word is a unit of language that has meaning and can be spoken or written. From the lyric above the connotative meaning which is delivered by the singer to the listeners are the word "your word" in connotation means promise. Promise is a verbal commitment by one person to another agreeing to do (or not to do) something in the future. The connotation of the phrase "you gave me your word" suggests a sense of trust, reliability, and commitment. It implies that one is making a promise or guarantee to fulfill a certain agreement or expectation. This phrase has emotional weight, indicating that there is an understanding between both partners of the importance and sincerity of the spoken commitment. The word "your word" has positive connotation because this evokes positive vibes.

4. "Show her off like she's a new trophy"

Before seeking connotation meaning, the meaning of the trophy by Oxford is something that obtained or given in victory or conquest especially when preserved or installed as a memorial. But the meaning is different than connotative meaning told by the Olivia in the lyric above, where the trophy symbolize as pride on display. In that lyric Olivia sees that her ex-boyfriend is showing off his new girlfriend to everyone like new trophy, something that he was very proud of. Because to gain the trophy there must be an achievement, so the word trophy in this lyric classifies as positive connotation.

d. Song Title "Happier"

1. "You've **moved on** found someone new, one more girl who brings out the better in you "

According to the Cambridge dictionary “moved on” is leaving the place where you live and going somewhere else. The connotation of the phrase “you've moved on, found someone new” suggests a sense of acceptance and progress in romantic relationships. It implies that the person being referred to has successfully let go of past attachments or feelings and has entered into a new relationship with someone else. The phrase carries a tone of moving forward and embracing change, indicating that Olivia's ex's new boyfriend has had a positive impact on her ex's life, bringing out their best qualities and inspiring them to be better versions of themselves. “Moved on” can be perceived as positive connotation because it implies progress, growth, and acceptance. When someone says they have “moved on,” it typically means they have let go of a past situation or relationship that may have caused them pain or heartache.

2. “ *And I thought my heart was detached from all the **sunlight** of our past* ”

According to Oxford, the meaning of sunlight is the light that comes from the sun during the day. But the meaning conveyed by Olivia Rodrigo is different from the true meaning. In the lyrics above the songwriter referred “sunlight” which connoted to the life but it is also known to typify energy, power, positivity, and clarity. Meanwhile, the word sunlight in the lyric “And I thought my heart was detached from all the sunlight of our past” is connoted to something better and brighter like the sun. She thought that everything that makes her happy is over. From the explanation above the lyric song is included in positive connotative meaning because sunlight represent as a source of glory or inspiration or understanding.

3. “ *But she’s so **sweet**, she’s pretty* ”

Based on Oxford dictionary the dennotative meaning of word sweet tells something that very pleasant smell, sound, or appearance. The word sweet in that sentence does not mean that she sweet like sugar or something like a sweet food or drink. But it's about being subtle, patient, compassionate, emotional, passive, gentle and so on. She is here, described as someone who has very good behavior. She is also beautiful, and maybe she is the definition of why she is better than his ex. From that explanation the word sweet included in positive connotative meaning because the word sweet evoke to something that pleasant.

4. “ *She probably gives you **butterflies*** ”

According to Oxford, Butterflies are beautiful and majestic creatures that evolved from dull black caterpillars to winged insects with

a kaleidoscope of colors on their paper-thin wings. But the meaning that conveyed by Olivia in word butterflies is not about the animal. In this lyric the researcher found the connotative meaning of that lyric is giving happiness. Because the butterfly is a beautiful animal that symbolizes all things extraordinary. From that sentence it is obviously that butterflies connote as positive connotation. Because the butterfly is a symbol of positivity and personal transformation.

5. “ *An eternal love **bullshit** you know you’ll never mean* ”

The word "bullshit" consists of two words, "bull" and "shit". Bull itself means an animal, while "shit" means dirt in Oxford. When articulated that way, it will have the meaning shit of the bull. But the research not tell about the dennotative meaning of each word. The meaning that conveyed by Olivia Rodrigo is saying things that are not true. In this case he said that he totally loved her forever, but actually he is not. Those are just holly crap. From the explanation above the connotation within the song’s lyric song is classified as negative connotative meaning, because bullshit is a disrespectful word.

e. Song Title “Enough for you”

1. “ *Tried so hard to be **everything** that you like* ”

The definition of Everything in Oxford dictionary means a thing there is that can be seen and cannot be seen. The word everything in this stanza means that writer wants to be everything and do anything for a special person. The connotation of "everything" is often associated with a sense of completeness, totality, or inclusivity. It implies the entirety or the full extent of something. It suggests that nothing is excluded or left out. It can connote a feeling of abundance, wholeness, or encompassing all aspects. So in this lyric the writer wants to be the most important part of someone's life. It is type of positive connotation because "everything" can symbolize fulfillment, satisfaction, and having all one needs or it may represent an ideal state where nothing is lacking.

2. “ *Don’t you think I love you too much to be used and **discarded*** ”

According to Cambridge dictionary discarded is to throw something away or get rid of it because it is no longer wanted or needed. While, discarded in that lyric means unneeded people. The connotation of the phrase "don't you think I love you too much to be used and discarded" carries a strong emotional tone, conveying feelings of self-worth, protectiveness, and vulnerability. The meaning conveyed by Olivia Rodrigo in that lyric is her ex can not taken advantages then he left Olivia just because Olivia loves him too much. So this is kind of

negative connotation because it often evokes feelings of sadness, loss, or insignificance.

3. “ Cause all I ever wanted was to be **enough** ”

Based on Cambridge dictionary enough means in the amount or level required. The connotation of the phrase "cause all I ever wanted was to be enough" expresses a deep longing for self-acceptance and validation. It implies that the person has been striving to meet certain expectations or standards in order to feel worthy or valued. There is an underlying sense of vulnerability and a desire to be recognized, in other words, Oliva feels enough and is grateful for what she has, grateful to have her partner, so this is a positive connotation.

2. **Type of Connotative Meaning in Olivia Rodrigo’s Lyrics**

Positive connotative meaning is a word that implies emotions and associates in a positive direction and delivered in a pleasant way. Positive connotations refer to the favorable or positive associations, emotions, or implications connected with a particular word, phrase, or idea. Words with positive connotations evoke pleasant emotions and convey favorable qualities, experiences, or characteristics. For example, words such as "love", "success", "beautiful" and "fun" usually carry positive connotations, as they evoke feelings of happiness, accomplishment, attractiveness and pleasure. While, Negative connotative meaning is a word that implies emotions and associations in a negative direction. Negative connotations refer to the unfavorable or negative associations, emotions, or implications connected with a particular word, phrase, or idea. For example, words like "fail", "ugly", "disgusting" and "sneaky" usually carry negative connotations because they evoke feelings of disappointment, disgust, dishonesty or undesirable traits.

Table 1. Kind of Connotative Meaning

No.	Song Title	Song Lyrics	Kind of Connotative
1.	Brutal	“Where’s my fucking teenage dream? ”	Negative
2.	Brutal	“They say these are the golden years ”	Positive
3.	Brutal	“This the kinda thanks I get? Unrelentlessly upset ”	Negative
4.	Deja Vu	“I bet she’s bragging to all her friends saying you’re so unique ”	Positive
5.	Deja Vu	“She thinks it’s special but it’s all reused ”	Negative
6.	Deja Vu	“Don’t act like we didn’t do that shit too”	Negative
7.	Traitor	“ I play dumb but I always knew ”	Negative
8.	Traitor	“ And ain’t it funny how you said you were friends? Now it sure as hell don’t look like it”	Negative

9.	Traitor	“ You gave me your word ”	Positive
10.	Traitor	“ Show her off like she’s a new trophy ”	Positive
11.	Happier	“ You’ve moved on found someone new, one more girl who brings out the better in you ”	Positive
12.	Happier	“ And I thought my heart was detached from all the sunlight of our past ”	Positive
13.	Happier	“ But she’s so sweet , she’s pretty ”	Positive
14.	Happier	“She probably gives you butterflies ”	Positive
15.	Happier	“An eternal love bullshit you know you never’ll never mean”	Negative
16.	Enough for You	“ Tried so hard to be everything that you like ”	Positive
17.	Enough for You	“ Don’t you think I love you too much to be used and discarded ”	Negative
18.	Enough for You	“ Cause all I ever wanted was to be enough ”	Positive

2. Discussion

The researchers analyzed five popular songs by Olivia Rodrigo using Abdul Chaer's theory. They found that Olivia's songs have more positive connotations than negative connotations. In addition, Armawansyah (2016) also found positive connotations as the dominant meaning in Maher Zein's songs. This is because Maher Zein's song is a religious song which certainly contains more positive than negative meanings. In contrast to Assidiqy (2021) who analyzed Bon Jovi's song, he found more negative connotative meanings. Because Bon Jovi's song is a metal genre song. Therefore, it is certain that his research contains more negative connotative meanings. The previous studies approached lyric interpretation from different perspectives. However, they all aim to explain the hidden meaning of the song lyrics. In previous studies, each song lyric was given a direct meaning. Whereas in this study, the researcher decapitates the words and describes the meaning explicitly to find the connotation meaning. The difference between previous research and this study is that researchers explain in more detail about giving meaning to each word, phrase or sentence that contains connotation meaning and researchers use the object of Olivia Rodrigo's song which researchers have not found other researchers who use this song as an object of research.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

This research reveals that language in literary works can be unique. Olivia Rodrigo's song lyrics have eighteen connotative meanings, with ten positive connotations and eight negative connotations. Positive connotations convey happiness, achievement, or praise, while negative connotations express

annoyance, anger, sadness, criticism, or warning. Understanding the power of positive and negative connotations helps communicate messages effectively and consider the impact of word choice on others' perceptions. The five songs in this study explore different themes. In "Brutal," Rodrigo explores the pressures of growing up in the public eye, navigating fame, and dealing with societal expectations. "Deja vu" brings a sense of familiarity mixed with longing. In "Traitor," Rodrigo expresses hurt, disappointment, and distrust, while "Happier" evokes longing, nostalgia, and sadness. The final song, Enough for You, evokes self-doubt, frustration, and longing for validation. Overall, Rodrigo's lyrics effectively convey messages and convey emotions in a unique way.

2. Suggestion

In the end of the thesis, the researcher wants to give some suggestions. The researcher suggests that other researchers have a better understanding of the context and content of the song by reading the entire text. Other researchers should also develop connotation analysis to increase their knowledge of connotative meanings and lyrics of Olivia Rodrigo's song. The researcher acknowledges that this thesis has many mistakes and suggests that other researchers can expand their knowledge beyond the researcher's study.

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