

Denotative and Connotative Meaning on Honne's Selected Songs Lyric for Literature Teaching

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Abstract.

In literary work, denotative and connotative meaning will always side by side. Palmer defined that denotative meaning is the original or literal meaning of a word based on the dictionary. Connotation is part of word meaning which has an implicit meaning. This study aimed to identify denotative and connotative meaning found in Honne's selected songs lyric, to explain denotation and connotation in language, and to elaborate the contribution of the study to the literature teaching. The research design of this study was qualitative research. For collecting the data, the researcher analyzed Honne's selected songs such as location unknown, crying over you, Day one, I might, me & you, and 306. The researcher found that not all song lyrics contained both connotative and denotative meaning. In "Day One" song, the researcher found five words. In song entitled "Location Unknown", it found seven both words and group words. In song, "Crying Over You" the researcher found nine words and group words. The song entitled "I might"; it found four words. In song entitled "Me & You", it found six both words and group words. And in "306" song, the researcher found five words. Honne's songs mostly use denotative meaning than the connotative one. It is suitable to Palmer's theory the lyrics meaning can easily find in real-world experience. The denotative and connotative meaning realized in Honne's selected song lyrics can be used as the reference or alternative source learning to literature teaching. The researcher suggests that the students should learn more about meaning of words. It is not only denotative and connotative meaning but it can be broader. This study is also expected to give worthy contribution for the teacher to teach literature studies by using songs as media.

Keywords: denotative meaning, connotative meaning, Honne' song lyric, literature teaching

Introduction

Meaning plays an important role in communication. It functions for revealing something or some relations or ideas from the communicator to the hearer. Meaning always relates to word. Words are an important part of linguistic knowledge and constitute a component of our mental grammars, but one can learn thousands of words in a language and still not know the language. According to Palmer (2010), word has two types of meaning, namely denotative and connotative meaning. Palmer defined that denotative meaning is the original or literal meaning of a word based on the dictionary. Thus, denotative meaning is "dictionary" meaning. Furthermore, Cruse (2006) defines denotation as a meaning aspect in a linguistic

form which potentially uses as a basis to make a true statement about the world. However, sometimes denotation cannot be interpreted only by concerning the word, but the reader has to concern on the context as well. According to Chris (2001), connotation is part of word meaning which has an implicit meaning. For instance “Rainbow has seven colors.”, in this sentence rainbow can be defined as an arc or circle that exhibits in concentric bands the colors of the spectrum and that is formed opposite the sun by the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays in raindrops, spray, or mist; a multicolored array (cited from: merriemwebster.com), however, it will have different meaning and interpretation in the sentence “You are such a rainbow which colors my life, sweetie.”

Denotative and connotative meaning can be found in many works, one of them is in literary work such as poetry, song, drama script, short story, and novel. In literary work, denotative and connotative meaning will always side by side. They play a significant role in understanding an explicit and implicit meaning in a literary work. Denotative and connotative meaning in literary work especially in a song successfully catches researcher's attention. Everybody listens to the song almost every single day, and they will meet denotative and connotative meaning in it. In order to make the listeners enjoy the song, the composer will compose it with good lyrics. Lyrics can be one of composer's media to reveal his expression, critics, compliment, or everything to the listeners. It also can explain the song's meaning, but it will meet the hard time if the listeners just receive the basic ideas of song lyrics. Therefore, in this study the researcher conducted a research entitled “Denotative and Connotative Meaning on Honne's Selected Songs Lyric for Literature Teaching”.

Literature Review

Semantics is one of linguistic studies which discuss about meaning in language (Hurford et al., 2007:1). In contrast to morphology or syntax, semantics does not discuss about grammar in language. It is also different from pragmatics which discusses meaning based on the context; semantics discuss all level in language; word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, and discourse. This phenomenon is supported by Riemer (2010) that defining semantics as one of the richest and most fascinating parts of linguistics. The term of semantics was introduced in a paper read to the American Philological Association in 1894 entitled Reflected meanings: a point in semantics (Nilsen & Palmer, 1976). In linguistics history, there are other studies which also discuss about meaning namely semasiology, semology, semiotics, senemics, and semics. However, semantics is more often used in linguistics study because the other studies have wider objects. They do not only discuss about language in text but also in signs or symbols which are not in texts. Meanwhile, meanings which are discussed in semantics are referring to ideas or concepts. It can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them in the forms of one language or another (Martin & Rose, 2007:26). The term concept helps to understand the meaning of meaning itself. People are normally interested in characterizing the conceptual meaning and less concerned with the associative meaning of the words.

Leech (1974:10) said that denotative meaning is called conceptual or cognitive meaning which is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication. Denotation is a definition of word, which is the literal meaning of word. Denotation is related with human awareness or cognition, and also is related to factual information or statements. Words which are not contained suggestive meaning or certain feelings are considered as denotative words,

and the meaning is called denotative meaning or denotation (Prasojo R, 2012). It is what children's native language first learning words. For example, the word "pink" is the denotation of color which intermediate between red and white, as of coral or salmon. It does not have any additional meaning nor feeling. Writers who only want to deliver information scientifically tend to use denotative words because they do not need nor want to give additional interpretations to the readers (Budd, 2018). To avoid additional interpretations by the readers, writers tend to use words which are commonly known or based on true information. For example, sentence "I have ten cats in my house" gives true information about how many cats in the house. The readers will not have to have suggestion about it because the sentence already gives the precise number, which is ten, of cats are there in the house. The information will also be accepted properly because there is no certain feeling in the sentence. According to Kreidler (2013:25), denotation is related with reference because denotation is also considered as referent. Reference is the relation between a language expression such as "this door", "both doors", "the dog", or "another dog". It is the way speakers and hearers use an expression successfully. While denotation is the possibility of a word like "door" or "dog" to enter such language expressions. It is the knowledge which speakers and hearers have to make their communication successful.

Leech (1974:7) stated that connotative meaning is the communicative value and expression by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its conceptual meaning. While the denotation is the straightforward, neutral relation between a word and its referent, the connotation brings in the associations that a word may have for a speaker or a community of speakers (Jackson, 2013). It is created when writers mean something else, something which is initially hidden. The connotative meaning of a word is based on implication, or shared emotional association with a word. It brings out the emotion of the writers to the readers. Sometimes connotation uses figurative language to make the words more poetic so that the readers can feel the emotion which the writers feel when they were writing (Sesanti et al, 2021; Prastikawati et al, 2021). For example, sentence "The baby sleeps in piece" is the connotation of "The baby sleeps quietly without making any sound or move that makes the writer also feel peaceful". The feeling the writer feels is also an emotion which is expressed by the sentence. According to Riemer (2010:3), connotation has to do with secondary factors such as its emotional force, its level of formality, its character as a euphemism, etc. For example, "police officer" and "cop" denotatively mean a male or female member of the police force. However, in connotation, "cop" is the slang version of "police officer", which makes the word "cop" less formal than the word "police officer." Another example is the word "die" and "pass away" denotatively mean to stop living or existing, either suddenly or slowly. However, in connotation, the word "pass away" is considered more pleasant or milder than the word "die."

Based on the Wikipedia, Honne (stylised as HONNE) is an English electronic music duo formed in 2014 in Bow, London, consisting of James Hatcher (producer) and Andy Clutterbuck (singer, producer). Both of them write, record, and produce their music. The band released their first two EPs, *Warm on a Cold Night* and *All in the Value*, on Super Recordings in 2014. In 2015 they released their third EP, *Coastal Love*, on their own Atlantic Records imprint, *Tatema Records*. Honne's debut studio album, *Warm on a Cold Night* (Tatema/Atlantic), was released 22 July 2016; their second, *Love Me/Love Me Not* (Tatema/Atlantic), followed on 28 August 2018. HONNE released their second album, *Love Me/Love Me Not* on 24 August 2018 through Atlantic. Along with the album announcement, they released double single "I Just Wanna Go Back" and "Me & You", in collaboration with

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Tom Misch. The duo previously released double single "Day 1" / "Sometimes" on 29 March 2018. Honne released their third double single "Location Unknown" featuring British singer Georgia and "306". They announced their world tour for this album starting in North America and have added Europe/UK, Asia, and spring North America dates along the way. In this

study, the selected songs from Honne's album are Day 1, Location Unknown, Crying over You, I might, me & You, and 306.

Method

This study used qualitative research method with descriptive analysis. The object of the study is Honne's selected song lyrics namely "Location Unknown", "Day One", "Crying Over You", I might, me & You, and 306. The researcher focused on analyzing the denotative and connotative meaning found in selected song's lyrics. Source of the data in this study is song lyrics. For getting the lyrics the researcher search it on the internet. For the song entitled "Location Unknown", the researcher accessed on azlyrics, for the song entitled "Crying over You", the researcher accessed on musixmatch and for the song "Day One" the researcher accessed on genius. The researcher also accessed the song entitled I might, Me&You, and 306 on musixmatch.

Finding and Discussion

The researcher analyzed a Honne's album entitled "*Love Me / Love Me Not*", from 16 songs, he analyzed three songs entitled "*Day 1*", "*Location Unknown*", "*Crying Over You*", "*I might*", "*Me & You*", and "*306*". For analyzing the denotative and connotative meaning, the researcher used Palmer's theory. He defined that connotative meaning could be discovered by relating the language composition in a sentence with an experience of the real world. It indicates that denotative meaning explicates a literal meaning of the word and it contains a revealed meaning of the sentence structure, whereas connotative meaning has concealed the meaning of the word. The researcher explained by using Palmer's theory in which relating the words with the real word.

a. *Day One* Song

1) You'll always be my day one

The group words "day one" here has both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, adapting from Merriam Webster "day one" means *it can be the first day of a week, or a month, or century, decade, year; the first day or very beginning of something. However, connotatively it means fundamentally about commitment, and being with someone right from the beginning. If we implement the words to the real world involving the lyric "You'll always be my day one" it means that the song writer's life partner will be always his everlasting love since the first time.*

2) Day zero when I was no one

"Zero" word in this song also has denotative and connotative meaning. According to Merriam Webster, "zero" words denotatively means a symbol of 0 which indicates the absence of measurable quantity (n); being a zero (adj); to determine the zero of something (v). On the other hand, in connotative meaning, it means that the song's writer partner is always on his side even from a point in which nothing has been done yet. It means that she is always with him in any conditions.

3) I'm nothing by myself

Denotatively, cited from Merriam Webster “nothing” word means no thing; not anything; not at all; something that does not exist. On the other hand, connotatively, “nothing” word in this song has meaning that the song writer feels despair and faded before he meets with the one he loved.

4) I won big the day I came across you

The word “big” has both denotative and connotative meanings. “Big” literally has meaning means large in amount or size, important; popular; additional emphasis; older (cited from Cambridge dictionary). Whereas, connotatively, it means the day which something important happens. If it is involved in real world, the song writer feels so lucky he can meet his mate. It happened as if he won lottery in his life.

5) I don't feel blue

Literally, the word “blue” cited from Merriam Webster means kind of color, to dye, tint, or paint (something) blue, color seems like the clear sky: the color blue. Connotatively, it means sad, feeling sad, depressed, to miss something or someone to a great extent. In this song, the song's writer has not got sad, or missed someone anymore since he found his true love.

6) I got mad love for you and you know it

The word “mad” has both the meanings. Literally according to the dictionary, mad means easily angry; arising from; indicative of; or marked by mental disorder; unable to think something clearly. Whereas, the word “mad” means extremely love about something or someone. In this song, the song's writer is so in love with his mate until he lost control for his feeling.

b. *Location Unknown* Song

1) I ain't seen you in ages

The word “ages” denotatively means one stages of life; to become old; a long of existence; lifetime (cited from Merriam Webster). However, connotatively it means that the song's write has been so long time he doesn't meet his love. It is often over exaggerated in English.

2) My mind's running wild

Literally, the word “wild” cited from Merriam Webster means inhabitant; growing without any aids; living in untamed nature; uncivilized. Whereas, in this song wild connotatively has different meaning. Because the song's writer is far away from his love, he cannot control his mind. As a result, he is overthinking about his love, what she is doing, where she is, and many more.

3) Location unknown

The word “unknown” has both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, according to “Merriam Webster” it means that a person that is little known by the

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public, something which need to be discovered. However, in this song the word “unknown” has mentioned many times as this is the reff. It means that the song’s writer does not know where he is exactly how his feeling is since he is so far away from his love.

4) Tryna find a way back home

The word “home” always has many interpretations. According to Merriam Webster, the word “home” literally means a place for stay or residence; habitat; a place of origin. On the other hand, connotatively home is a person. It is about a person which is chosen to return over and over again. The place that is even when painful, it means the most. In this song, the song writer is lost his home because if he is in long distance relationship, he is so far away from his love, as a result he felt as if he lost a place to return. Or he has lost his home because he had broken up with his girlfriend. He lost a place for sharing and caring.

5) Given that I'm miles away

“Miles away” also contains both meanings. According to Merriam Webster, it means any various of units distance; a great distance. Whereas, connotatively it means that it is so far away. The song's writer's position is so far from his love. It takes times and distances if they want to meet. Therefore it needs first flight of plan for making up.

6) Don't want to throw away my life, I need you

Denotatively, “throw away” means disposable; something designed without cares or interest, so it is designed to be thrown away. Connotatively, “throw away” in this song means that the song writer does not want to waste his life without his love. He is unable to live without his love since he loves her the most.

c. *Crying over You* Song

1) You don't mean to be a problem

The word “problem” get both denotative and connotative meanings. According to Cambridge dictionary, problem means something that needs to be solved; something that causes difficulty or hard to deal with. However, connotatively, problem here means that someone who causes a problem. The song writer interpreted that his love doesn't mean causing a matter for their relationship.

2) You don't mean to 'cause me pain

The word “mean” has both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, according to Cambridge dictionary, pain means a feeling of physical suffering because of injury; emotional or mental suffering. Whereas, connotatively it means someone who cause the song writer hurt. It is about mental suffering. The song writer assumed that his love is not who cause him pain. His love is too good for doing that, thus it is impossible.

3) I thought we were plain sailing

Denotatively “plain sailing” is a group of word or idiom which has a meaning smooth, straightforward, uninterrupted, and/or easy movement, progress, and development. Connotatively, it means that their relationship goes smoothly and effortless progress, but the reality is wrong.

4) That I'm gonna feel broken for a bit

According to Cambridge dictionary, literally the word “broken comes from the word “break”, it means interrupted; damaged or unable to work; destroyed; damaged. On the other hand, connotatively it means that the song writer feel so sad and suffering emotional pain which can change all his mood or even his life. He is so broken since their love relationship has been over.

5) It could be any minute

The word “minute” has both two meanings. According to Cambridge dictionary, minute means one of hour part which consisting 60 seconds; short time. However, according to the song “minute” here means very soon. The song writer asked his ex for not crying since she will find new lover soon from wherever and whenever she never expected before.

6) But I'm reading from the same book all over again

The idiom “same book” literally means that two people has same agreement, opinion, and direction on something. On the other hand, connotatively, it means that the song writer still cannot move on from his past. He still stuck with his love. Even he considers that he remains that everything is always better if they are still together.

7) All different covers

“Different cover” denotatively means the outside part of a book or magazine which usually made of thick paper with has various designs or colors. Connotatively, in this song it means that the love story of them has changed. It is different from the day one. It has been over, they decide to break their relationship for some reasons.

8) All different colors

According to Cambridge dictionary, the word “color” means the appearance which is a result of reflecting the light; a substance of a paint or dye; showing things in all colors not only white and black. However, in this song, still continuing from the first lyric before, the love relationship of them has ended, their love story automatically changed. Perhaps, the actor of love story is different as well.

9) We thought we gave each other a whole world

The word “word” has both denotative and connotative meanings. “World” denotatively means whole physical universe; the earth and all the people, places, and things on it; a group of things such as animal, human activity and more. Connotatively, it means that the song writer thought he and his lover had shared everything, given everything, trusting each other, but actually it is a lie. It turns out such they do not know a thing at all.

d. *I might* Song

1) Yeah, I might

“might” word in this song also has denotative and connotative meaning. According to Merriam Webster, “might” word denotatively is used to express permission, liberty, probability or possibility in the past. On the other hand, in connotative meaning, it means that the song’s writer hesitates to leave the difficult situation and start the new journey.

2) Gotta carry out of this hole

Denotatively, cited from Merriam Webster “hole” word means a small or unpleasant place. On the other hand, connotatively, “hole” word in this song has meaning that the song writer tries to leave the difficult situation and find the problem solving.

3) So we could start a whole new life

The word “new life” has both denotative and connotative meanings. “new life” literally has meaning as the existence of an individual human being or animal. Connotatively, it means the day which are full of new energy, hope and vitality. If it is involved in real world, the song writer wants to start the new journey with positive energy after leaving the difficult situation.

4) Cause apple seed don't work for me

Literally, the word “apple” cited from Merriam Webster means the round fruit of a tree of the rose family, which typically has thin red or green skin and crisp flesh. Whereas, in this song will connotatively has different meaning. Because the song's writer feels like there will not people who always help him in difficult condition except himself. He needs to struggle by his own self.

e. *Me & You* Song

1) You came into my life with no warning like a flash of light

The word “flash of light” denotatively means to break forth in or like a sudden flame of flare (cited from Merriam Webster). However, connotatively it means that the song's writer is impressed by the girl who just coming into his life.

2) I was so steady, I'm a feet but now I'm up in the air

Literally, the word “feet” cited from Merriam Webster means the lower extremity of the leg below the ankle on which a person stands or walks. Whereas, in this song will connotatively has different meaning. Because the song's writer feels like he is floating in the air. The song writer is so glad and he imagines for living forever with his girl.

3) We can see our love's up here, we can conquer the color here

The word “color” has both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, according to Merriam Webster; the word “color” means the visual perception that enables one to differentiate otherwise identical objects. However, in this song the word “color” refers to how falling in love looks like. It means that the song's writer wants to spend together with his love one and enjoy their happiness.

4) We can spend the rest of our days way up here just me and you

The words “rest of our day” always has many interpretations. According to Merriam Webster, the words “rest of the day” literally means a day which is set aside for rest or on which one departs from a normal or usual routine. On the other hand, connotatively “rest of the day” means the song writer wants to spend his old age together. .

5) It feels I can't shake off, I'm in your orbit and I will never drop

“Orbit” also contains both meanings. According to Merriam Webster, it means a path described by one body in its revolution about another (as by the earth about the sun or

by an electron about an atomic nucleus). Whereas, connotatively it means the song's writer is in his girl's control. The song's writer's position is so deep with his love. He is willing to do anything to keep his love alive.

6) You're worth every penny, yeah I'll pay all I can

Denotatively, "penny" means a similar monetary unit of any of various countries. A coin represents one penny. Connotatively, "penny" in this song means every little action of his girl is so precious. He must be grateful to have her because the girl is perfect.

f. 306 Song

1. One LP down and I'm still driving this 306 I thought by now I'd upgrade put it on my plastics

The words "306" get both denotative and connotative meanings. According to Cambridge dictionary, "306" means a number or a sum of units. However, connotatively, "306" here means the old thing which save many moments in the song writer's life.

2. One record down and I'm riding in this piece of shit

The word "shit" has both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, according to Cambridge dictionary, shit means something of little value or poor quality. Connotatively, it means he is struggling on this damn world. The song writer wants to upgrade his life to be better.

3. But we all know that we gotta start somewhere

Denotatively "somewhere" is in, at, from, or to a place unknown or unspecified. Connotatively, it means that the song writer can change his life by doing best in every opportunity. He realizes everything needs process to get a better life. It does not need to wait the moment. The moment should be created.

4) You could guzzle down the juice and never wake up

According to Cambridge dictionary, literally the word "juice" has the meaning as the liquid obtained from or present in fruit or vegetables. On the other hand, connotatively it means that the song writer feels pessimistic to get rid of wounds. He wants to survive in life, but it's hard. Many obstacles come to his life.

5) Will take blood will take sweat will take tears

The word "blood" has both two meanings. According to Cambridge dictionary, blood means the red liquid that circulates in the arteries and veins of humans and other vertebrate animals, carrying oxygen to the hearth and carbon dioxide from the tissues of the body. However, according to the song "blood" here means the sacrifice. The song writer went through a few very difficult condition where he felt like failure. But, he believes that every step toward the goal of success requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle.

Honne's songs mostly use literal meaning than the connotative one. The message of the songs is delivered straightforwardly to the listeners, thus it makes them easy to understand the lyrics. Therefore, it is suitable that the researcher used Palmer's theory because the lyrics

meaning can easily find in real-world experience. It does not need deep understanding even the language style is so rare. For instance, in one song, it found only 20% of connotative meaning with the comparison of 80% for denotative meaning. For analyzing the denotative meaning, the researcher used Merriam Webster and Cambridge Dictionary.

Furthermore, since this study was done successfully and the finding was presented, readers or students, especially those who learn about literature can adopt the steps to analyze denotative and connotative meanings listed in this study to analyze their own topic. Also, the students or lectures can use this result of the study to indicate how to analyze denotative and connotative meanings from song lyrics. This object of study also can be explored broadly as the authentic material for literature teaching. Using song lyrics as the material for literature teaching give some benefits, particularly by using Honne's song. Honne is so popular in Indonesia after Gempita Nora Marten sang their song which was viral in the social media until Gempi performed together with them (ussfeed.com). Some benefits that can be got by utilizing song as learning material are making learning activity more engaging and immersive; providing chances for vocabulary practice; turning the song into a language learning activity; and having a basic sentence structure that can become embedded in the learner's mind. When the instructor uses music lyrics instead of textbook or other instructional resources, the students are more interactive and interested in the classes. Song lyrics will help them develop their interpersonal skills (Akbar et al, 2018). Providing of that, in the statement of the problem, the researcher stated that the result of the study can be a contribution literature study. The denotative and connotative meaning realized in Honne's selected song can be used as the reference or alternative source learning to literature study. The students will be more enthusiastic to study literature through song lyrics. Furthermore, the lecturer has to deliver the material in an interesting way in order to make the students engaged to it. For instance, he/she can ask one of students to give an opinion about denotative and connotative meaning used in the other English songs.

Conclusion

Not all song lyrics contained both connotative and denotative meaning. In "*Day One*" song, the researcher found five words. In song entitled "*Location Unknown*", it found seven both words and group words. In song, "*Crying Over You*" the researcher found nine words and group words. The song entitled "*I might*"; it found four words. In song entitled "*Me & You*", it found six both words and group words. And in "*306*" song, the researcher found five words.

Honne's songs mostly use denotative meaning than the connotative one. It is suitable to Palmer's theory the lyrics meaning can easily find in real-world experience.

The denotative and connotative meaning realized in Honne's selected song lyrics can be used as the reference or alternative source learning to literature teaching.

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