

**ANALYSIS OF CONNOTATIVE AND
DENOTATIVE MEANINGS ON
THE SONG LYRICS IN
JUNGKOOK'S ALBUM
'GOLDEN'**

Fadhilla Cahya Rahmawati ¹

Yuniar Fatmasari ²

¹ the Graduate of English Education Study Program
Universitas Peradaban Bumiayu – Brebes
Email: fadhillarahma13@gmail.com
Phone: +62 85162590613

² the Lecturer of English Education Study Program
Universitas Peradaban Bumiayu – Brebes
Email: yuniarfatmasari.up@gmail.com
Phone: +62 82138550007

Abstract

This study analyses the connotative and denotative meanings found in the lyrics of Jungkook's debut solo album GOLDEN (2023). The research applies Geoffrey Leech's (1981) semantic theory and uses a descriptive qualitative method with data taken from five selected songs: Hate You, Shot Glass of Tears, Yes or No, Please Don't Change, and Too Sad to Dance. Data are collected through

documentation and observation, then analysed by identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the meanings of each lyric line. The findings reveal a total of 101 units of meaning, consisting of 44 connotative meanings and 57 denotative meanings. Denotative meaning appears as the dominant type, showing that the lyrics often use straightforward and literal expressions, while connotative meaning emerges through figurative language, metaphors, and symbols that add emotional, cultural, and symbolic depth. This study concludes that Jungkook's GOLDEN combines clarity and symbolism, making the lyrics both accessible and rich in layered interpretation.

Keywords: *Semantics, Connotative Meaning, Denotative Meaning, Song Lyrics, GOLDEN album*

A. Introduction

Humans use language as the primary tool of communication to convey feelings, thoughts, and information. In addition, language can also be considered as a tool to express or clarify things that are unclear in our minds. According to Pratiwi (2020: 231), language serves as a primary tool for human communication, using spoken or written forms to convey messages, ideas, and emotions. Without meaning, language is useless.

Song is one of the way people communicate. Song can express the songwriter's messages. People enjoy the song not only for entertainment but can also to get the messages of the lyrics of the song. To understand the meaning of the song, people use some theories one of it is Semantics.

Semantics is a branch of Linguistics that studies meaning in language, including how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning. Semantic can be divided into several fields, such as lexical Semantics,

and Pragmatics. According to Kreidler (1998:3) in Purnamasari (2018:157), the study of meaning is called Semantics, and linguistic. Semantics is about how language organizes and expresses meaning. According to Crystal (1991) in Nabila (2022:136), Semantics is a branch of Linguistics that focuses on the study of language meaning and aims to explain it.

One important aspect studied in Semantics is connotative and denotative meaning. Connotative meaning refers to the associations it carries with messages, culture, or personal experiences. According to Leech (1981) in Manueke (2022: 20), connotative meaning is the communicative value of an expression over and above its purely conceptual content. It is something that goes beyond the mere referent of a word and hints at its attributes in the real world. It is something more than the dictionary meaning.

Meanwhile, the explanation of denotative meaning aligns with the concept of conceptual meaning proposed by Leech (1981), which also emphasizes the importance of basic and objective meaning in linguistic communication. According to Leech's explanation in his book *Semantics: The Study of Meaning* (1981: 9–19), conceptual meaning also referred to as denotative or cognitive meaning is the fundamental and central meaning of a linguistic expression. To get the messages of the song, we can use Leech (1981) theory regarding to the connotative and denotative meaning.

In this study, song lyrics especially those in popular music albums are the main object of analysis. Songs as narrative media often employ figurative language to convey emotions, build atmosphere, and strengthen messages. Lyrics that are rich in connotative

and denotative meanings can reflect not only the personal experiences of the songwriter but also the cultural identity of a generation. Songs have a primary function in building emotional relationships with listeners, as they communicate stories, meanings, and moral values through artistic expression. The use of figurative language in song lyrics is therefore an effective tool for delivering philosophical messages to a global audience.

GOLDEN (2023) is Jungkook's debut solo album that known for its deep and emotional themes. Through eleven tracks spanning pop and R&B genres, the album portrays an emotional journey that explores love, heartbreak, self-reflection, and resilience. The lyrics resonate with listeners because they combine simple expressions with layered meanings, making them both relatable and open to interpretation. With its global commercial success and rich linguistic content, GOLDEN serves as a valuable source for semantic analysis, particularly in examining how connotative and denotative meanings function in contemporary song lyrics.

B. Literature Review

The study of meaning in language is commonly referred to as Semantics. According to G. Leech (1981) in Pratiwi (2020: 232), the study of meaning and the core of linguistic communication is called Semantics.

Theory of Leech (1981) divides meaning into seven types, but two of the most fundamental, namely:

1. Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning refers to an additional or figurative meaning of a word or phrase that arises from certain feelings, associations, or personal experiences, and not from its actual or literal (denotative) meaning. Connotative meaning is often

found in songs or song lyrics. For example, in song Too Sad To Dance, the line “Last week I found a message in a bottle” means a symbol of despair and loneliness, like someone sending a message to an uncertain world, hoping someone will respond.

2. Denotative Meaning

Denotative meaning is the same as conceptual meaning, as stated by Leech (1981) in his book *Semantics: The Study of Meaning* (1981: 9-19), where he explains that conceptual (denotative) meaning is the central part of meaning which is communicated by the literal use of a word. For example, in song Shot Glass of Tears, the line “Need something strong for the sorrow” means the singer needs something strong to overcome sadness.

GOLDEN is a 2023 pop and R&B album by South Korean singer Jungkook, a member of the global music group BTS. It is released by BigHit Music and co-produced by several international producers such as Andrew Watt, Jon Bellion, and Ed Sheeran. The album consists of eleven tracks, including singles like Seven, 3D, and Standing Next to You, which achieve remarkable global success on music charts. The lyrics explore universal themes such as love, heartbreak, loneliness, and resilience, reflecting Jungkook’s personal journey as a solo artist. With its combination of literal expressions and figurative language, GOLDEN provides rich material for semantic analysis, particularly in examining how denotative and connotative meanings are used to communicate emotions and cultural values.

C. Method of Investigation

The writers use descriptive qualitative method. The source of data of this research is obtained from the song lyrics of Jungkook's album GOLDEN. To collect the data, the writers apply observation by listen the songs. Then, the writers take the lyrics from the website www.azlyrics.com by which the writers apply documentation as a technique of data collection. Thus, the writers apply two techniques of data collect the data in this study, namely observation and documentation.

D. Findings and Discussion

The writers present the findings of this study. The findings contain the connotative and denotative meanings of the song lyrics in the album GOLDEN.

The writers analyse based on Leech's (1981) theory to identify connotative and denotative meanings on the song lyrics in the GOLDEN album.

In the first finding, the writers identify a total of 101 units of meaning in the selected songs from Jungkook's album GOLDEN. The meanings are divided into 44 connotative meanings and 57 denotative meanings. From these results, it can be seen that the most dominant type of meaning found in the lyrics is denotative meaning, with 57 data. Denotative meaning is expressed through straightforward and literal lines that are easy to understand without hidden interpretation.

The next type of meaning that frequently appears is connotative meaning, with 44 data. Connotative meaning emerges through figurative language, metaphors, and symbols that carry emotional or cultural associations. This type of meaning enriches the lyrics and provides multiple layers of interpretation for listeners.

In the song Hate You, the writers find several connotative expressions, such as “*Paint you like the villain that you never were,*” which symbolizes constructing hatred to cope with pain. At the same time, denotative meanings also appear, for example in “*I wish you kissed someone I know,*” which literally refers to betrayal by someone familiar.

In Shot Glass of Tears, connotative meaning is represented in “*Got a shot glass full of tears,*” which compares sorrow to alcohol. Denotative meaning appears in “*Till I’m sick to my stomach,*” which literally describes physical discomfort.

The song Yes or No contains connotative meaning in the line “*All the traffic in my head’s going crazy,*” symbolizing confusion and inner turmoil while denotative meaning is found in “*Say yes or no, yes or no, yes or no*” a literal request for clarity.

In Please Don’t Change, the line “*Lights on camera*” is a connotative expression symbolizing fame and exposure, while “*I’ll be the same*” functions as denotative meaning, literally means that the singer stays the same.

Lastly, in Too Sad to Dance, the writers find connotative meaning in “*Last week I found a message in a bottle,*” which symbolizes despair and isolation. Denotative meaning appears in “*And this Christmas, I got no gifts*” a straightforward statement about not receiving presents.

From the results above, it can be seen that the dominant type of meaning in Jungkook’s lyrics is denotative meaning, total 57 units. This shows that the lyrics are mostly written in a direct and literal style, making them clear and accessible to listeners. However, the presence of 44 connotative meanings

demonstrates that Jungkook also uses figurative language to add depth and symbolic resonance to his songs.

E. Conclusion

In conclusion, the writers draw several inferences related to the research question and objective of this study. This study analyzes the connotative and denotative meanings found in the lyrics of Jungkook's GOLDEN album.

In the first finding, the writers identify a total of 101 units of meaning across the selected songs: Hate You, Shot Glass of Tears, Yes or No, Please Don't Change, and Too Sad To Dance. From these, 44 are connotative meanings and 57 are denotative meanings. The result show that denotative meanings is the dominant type used in the lyrics, as many expressions are delivered in a literal and straightforward way.

In the second finding, the writers explain the connotative and denotative meanings based on the context of the lyrics. Connotative meanings add emotional, symbolic, and cultural depth to the songs, while denotative meanings provide clarity and directness. It is indicated that the interpretation of the lyrics depends on both the literal expressions and the figurative associations created by the songwriter. This balance between denotative and connotative meanings reflects the artistic quality of Jungkook's GOLDEN, making the lyrics both accessible and rich in layered interpretation.

Acknowledgement

The writers would like to express the deepest gratitude to Dr. Muh. Kadarisman, S.H., M.Si as the Rector of Universitas Peradaban, Mrs. Eka Farida Fasha, S.Si., M.Pd as the Dean of Educational Sciences and Teachers' Training Faculty and Mr. Akhmad Nurkholis, S.S., M.Pd as the Head of English Education Study Program of Universitas Peradaban.

Bibliography

- Alfiani, Hilda N., & Moh. Ilhami H. 2024. *A Connotative Meaning Analysis on Olivia Rodrigo's Song Lyrics in Sour Album*. Jurnal Dialektika Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, 11(2), pp.140- 148.
- Anggraeni, Gina, M. Bahri A., & Famala E. S. R. 2022. *An Analysis of Semantic Deviation in Maroon 5's Song Lyrics in Album V*. Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya, 6(2), pp.310-321.
- Dharma, Farhan M. S. 2023. *The Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Pamungkas Song Lyrics "Queen of the Hearts"*. Journal of Classroom Action Research (JCAR), 2(1), pp.7-17.
- Fauziyah, Nina I., Chyntia H. W. P., & Meiga R. T. 2024. *A Semantic Analysis of Connotative Meaning in Ben How Ard's Song Lyrics*. Aisyah Journal of English Language Teaching, 3(1), pp.254-261.
- Gee, Rosnita, Rebbeca E. L., & Tatema T. 2022. *An Analysis of Denotative and Connotative Meaning Selected Justin ft. Kid Laroi Songs Lyrics*. Research on English Language Education (Relation Journal), 4(2), pp.1-7.
- Hadi, Irfan. 2021. *Denotative and Connotative Meaning Analysis in the Greatest Showman Album*. BIP: Jurnal Bahasa Indonesia Prima, 3(2), pp.181-189.
- Handayani, Indah S. 2020. *A Morphological Analysis Of Compound Words Used In Novel 'With Eyes Closed: The Color Of Drowning' By Jason Miranda*. A Thesis. English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty. IAIN Metro: Not published.

- Hidayah, Annisa G. D., & Muhammad R. B. 2023. *Analysis of Denotation and Connotation Meanings in the Song Lyrics "La La Lost You" by Nicole Zefanya (Niki)*. Mahadaya, 3(1), pp.41-48.
- Jakautama, Kharisma D., & Muhammad R. B. 2022. *Denotative and Connotative Meaning in the Sentence of "You Got Me Feeling Like A Psycho" as the Line of Red Velvet Song Lyric*. Mahadaya, 2(2), pp.207-212.
- Kurniati, Nur U. S., & Shita Dewi R. P. 2024. *Connotative Meanings in the Selected Ariana Grande's Song Lyrics*. Journal Albion: Journal of English Literature, Language, and Culture, 6(1), pp.32-37.
- Leech, G. 1981. *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Lestari, Indah, & Dwi Nitisari. 2022. *Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Lyric "Mockingbird" Song by Eminem*. Journal Social Humaniora dan Pendidikan, 1(2). pp.20-26
- Luthfiani, Q., & Nungki H. 2023. *Semantic Analysis of Olivia Rodrigo's Song "Drivers License" Using Contextual Meaning Theory*. Mahadaya, 3(1), pp.107-116.
- Manueke, E. G. Y., Yayuk C., Silvia S., Maryam M. L., & Dayu W. W. 2022. *Connotative Meaning Found in Taylor Swift's Selected Songs*. Global Science, 3(1), pp.1-11).
- Mawaddah, Andi M., & Subhan R. 2023. *Semantic Analysis of Meaning in The Song Lyrics "Life Too Short"*

By Aespa. *Strata Social and Humanities Studies*, 1(1), pp.30-35.

- Nabila, Indah, Husni T., Supian, & Erik R. 2022. *An Analysis of BTS's Selected Song Lyrics: A Study of Denotative, Connotative, and Myth Meaning*. *English Education & Applied Linguistic (EEAL) Journal*, 5(3), pp.135-147.
- Nurjanah, Mila S., & Ria N. 2023. *The Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Happier Song Lyrics by Olivia Rodrigo*. *TheGist Jurnal Sastra dan Bahasa*, 6(1), pp.1-7.
- Pasingi, W., Ana M., & Dahlia H. 2022. *A Semantic Analysis on Maroon 5 Songs*. *Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistic, and Literature Studies*, 2(1), pp.231-243.
- Pratiwi, Desy R., Lia Maulia I., & Ypsi S. S. 2020. *The Analysis of Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Ariana Grande's Song Lyrics: A Semantic Study*. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 3(2), pp.231-235.
- Purnamasari, Ita. 2018. *An Analysis of Connotative Meaning on Justin Bieber's Song Lyrics*. *PIONEER*, 10(2), pp.156-169.
- Putri, Andini P., Syifa F. A., & Aveny S. A. 2022. *Analysis of Connotative Meanings in the Songs on The Konspirasi Alam Semesta Album by Fiersa Besari*. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 10(2), pp.181-195.
- Putri, Beby F. 2023. *The Influence of English Song to Improve English Skills for Students*. *Journal of Language Education Development*, 6(1), pp.1-11.

- Putra, Aidil S., Nurul L. Q., & Ika S. M. 2024. *Lexical Semantic Analysis on the Lyrics of Niki's Song "Oceans and Engines"*. Variable Research Journal, 1(2), pp.575- 584.
- Rabi'ah, Rafidah P., Diana A., & Dini W. 2023. *The Analysis of Semantics Meaning Found in Comments of Instagram Account of Info Denpasar*. Scripta: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa, 5(1), pp.101-110.
- Rahmat, Nafiza M., & Dianita. 2024. *Metaphor on Song Lyrics in The Album "Born To Die" by Lana Del Rey: A Semantic Analysis*. English Journal Literacy Utama, 8(1), pp.46-56.
- Romadhon, M. I., Deny K., & Ari A. 2024. *Exploring Denotative and Connotative Meanings in NF's 'The Search' Album: An In-Depth Analysis*. EL2J (English Language and Literature Journal, 3(1), pp.1-14.
- Salam, Alifsyah, & R. Myrna N. S. 2024. *The Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Song Lyrics Entitled "Sandals" by Khai Dreams*. Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature, 4(2), pp.127-138.
- Sari, Rahma K. 2023. *The Analysis of Semantics Meaning Found in Comments of Instagram Account of Infosumbar Based on Leech' Theories*. CELTI: Conference on English Language Teaching, 3, pp.905-915.
- Siahaan, Desta G., Anselmus S., & Fridensia N. M. 2023. *Improving the Students' Listening Comprehension*

of the Seventh Grade of SMP Kristen Kefamenanu Through English Songs. Language, Education, and Development (LEAD) Journal, 3(2), pp.7- 23.

Sujarwati, Iis, Nova P. S. 2021. *Connotative Meaning in Michael Jackson's Song Lyric "Heal The World": A Semantic Study.* Corolla International Conference, pp.8-15.

Suryanti, Harto M., Zaedun N., Everhard M. S., & Zarkasi. 2023. *Hermeneutics Study: Analysis of Denotative and Connotative Meaning in the Song Berita Kepada Kawan by Ebiet G. Ade.* RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa, 9(3), pp.350-364.

Swarniti, Ni Wayan. 2021. *The Analysis of Semantics Meaning Found in Comments of Instagram Account of Info Denpasar.* Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik dan Sastra (SEMNALISA), pp.193-199.

Wismawati, Nur I., Muly U. N., & Emma B. 2022. *Connotative and Denotative Meaning in the Lyrics of BTS Song "Permission to Dance" (Semantic Analysis).* Journal Karya Ilmiah Mahasiswa (KIMA), 1(2), pp.10-16.

Zahro, Vita F., As'ari, & Siti S. 2024. *A Semantic Analysis of Modality in the Lyrics of Taylor Swift's Songs.* Journal of Humanities, 1(1), pp.10- 25.

Zulaikah, Nurul H., Dwi A., & Endang K. 2024. *An Analysis of Lexical Semantic Meaning in Album "Lover" by Taylor Swift.* Professional Journal of English Education, 7(2), pp.312-319.