



## A Semantic Analysis of Denotative and Connotative Meaning in the Song Lyrics of “Mirrors” by Justin Timberlake

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings found in the song lyrics of Mirrors by Justin Timberlake. The study applied a descriptive qualitative research design because the data were analyzed in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences taken from the song lyrics. The data source of this study was the official lyrics of Mirrors, released in 2013. The researcher used documentation as the technique of data collection and semantic analysis as the technique of data analysis. The findings showed that both denotative and connotative meanings were found in the lyrics. The researcher identified a total of 55 data, consisting of 22 denotative meanings and 33 connotative meanings. Denotative meanings appeared in words with literal meanings such as mirror, eyes, light, and heart. Meanwhile, connotative meanings were more dominant and appeared in symbolic expressions such as you are my mirror, my other half, and you make me complete, which represent love, identity, unity, and emotional connection. The findings indicate that connotative meaning is more dominant than denotative meaning in the song because the songwriter employs figurative and symbolic language to convey deeper emotional messages. Therefore, song lyrics can be considered an important object of semantic study because they contain rich linguistic meanings and artistic expressions.*

**Keywords:** *semantics; denotative meaning; connotative meaning; song lyrics; Mirrors*

**Abstrak.** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna denotatif dan konotatif yang terdapat dalam lirik lagu “Mirrors” karya Justin Timberlake. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif karena data dianalisis dalam bentuk kata, frasa, klausa, dan kalimat yang diambil dari lirik lagu. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah lirik resmi lagu “Mirrors” yang dirilis pada tahun 2013. Peneliti menggunakan dokumentasi sebagai teknik pengumpulan data dan analisis semantik sebagai teknik analisis data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa makna denotatif dan konotatif ditemukan dalam lirik tersebut. Peneliti mengidentifikasi total 55 data, yang terdiri dari 22 makna denotatif dan 33 makna konotatif. Makna denotatif muncul dalam kata-kata dengan makna harfiah seperti cermin, mata, cahaya, dan hati. Sementara itu, makna konotatif lebih dominan dan muncul dalam ungkapan simbolis seperti “you are my mirror”, “my other half”, dan “you make me complete”, yang mewakili cinta, identitas, kesatuan, dan ikatan emosional. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa makna konotatif lebih dominan daripada makna denotatif dalam lagu tersebut karena pencipta lagu menggunakan bahasa kiasan dan simbolis untuk menyampaikan pesan emosional yang lebih dalam. Oleh karena itu, lirik lagu dapat dianggap sebagai objek penting dalam studi semantik karena mengandung makna linguistik yang kaya dan ekspresi artistik.*

**Kata kunci:** *semantik; makna denotatif; makna konotatif; lirik lagu; Mirrors*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important tools of human communication. Through language, people are able to express ideas, feelings, thoughts, and experiences. In everyday life, language is used not only in spoken and written communication, but also in literary works such as poems, novels, and songs. Songs are a popular form of art that combine music and language to convey messages, emotions, and stories. The lyrics of a song often contain meaningful expressions that can be analyzed linguistically.

One branch of linguistics that studies meaning is semantics. Semantics is concerned with how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning. According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), semantics is the study of meaning in language. Similarly, John Lyons (1977) states that semantics is the study of linguistic meaning. Meaning can be classified into several types, including denotative and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning refers to the literal or dictionary meaning of a word, while connotative meaning refers to the additional, implied, or emotional meaning associated with a word. According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), denotative meaning is the basic conceptual meaning of a word, while connotative meaning is the communicative value an expression has beyond its conceptual content. These two meanings are commonly found in literary texts, especially in song lyrics. Songwriters often choose words carefully to create both direct meaning and deeper emotional interpretation.

Song lyrics are rich in figurative language, symbolism, and emotional expression. Many songwriters use words not only in their literal sense, but also to create deeper interpretations. As a result, listeners may understand a song differently depending on how they interpret the meanings of the words. Therefore, analyzing denotative and connotative meaning in song lyrics can help listeners understand the songwriter's intended message more clearly.

One interesting song to be analyzed is *Mirrors*, a song by Justin Timberlake, released in 2013. This song is widely known for its emotional theme, poetic language, and symbolic expressions about love, reflection, and connection between two people. The title itself, *Mirrors*, suggests meanings beyond its literal sense. Therefore, the lyrics provide valuable data for semantic analysis, particularly in identifying denotative and connotative meanings.

Several previous studies have discussed semantic meaning in song lyrics, but many of them focus on figurative language or general meaning analysis. Research specifically analyzing both denotative and connotative meaning in the song *Mirrors* remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings found in the song lyrics of *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake and to explain how these meanings contribute to the overall message of the song.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Semantics**

Semantics is one of the main branches of linguistics that studies meaning in language. It is concerned with how words, phrases, clauses, and sentences convey meaning and how those meanings are interpreted by language users. Meaning is a central element in communication because people use language to share ideas, feelings, intentions, and information. Without meaning, communication cannot occur effectively. Therefore, semantics becomes an important field of study in understanding how language functions in human interaction.

According to John Lyons (1977), semantics is the study of linguistic meaning. It focuses on how meaning is structured in language and how expressions relate to the world. Similarly, Geoffrey Leech (1981) states that semantics is the study of meaning in language. This means that semantics does not only analyze single words, but also examines how meanings change when words are combined into phrases or sentences.

In addition, Charles W. Kreidler (1998) explains that semantics studies how languages organize and express meanings systematically. Every language has its own way of representing concepts, objects, and experiences. Through semantic analysis, researchers can identify both direct and implied meanings in language use. This is why semantics is widely applied in literary works, advertisements, media discourse, and song lyrics.

In the context of songs, semantics helps listeners and researchers understand how lyricists choose words to deliver emotional messages. Many songs contain words with symbolic or figurative meanings. Therefore, semantic analysis is useful to reveal not only literal meaning but also hidden meanings contained in lyrics.

### **2. Meaning**

Meaning is the message or concept conveyed through language. In semantics, meaning can be divided into several categories such as lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, contextual meaning, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning. Each type helps explain how language works in communication.

According to Leech (1981), meaning is a complex phenomenon involving conceptual content, emotional association, and communicative intention. This indicates

that meaning is not always simple or fixed. A word may carry different meanings depending on context, speaker intention, and listener interpretation.

For example, the word *home* denotatively means a place where someone lives, but connotatively it may suggest warmth, family, comfort, and security. This shows that meaning can be both literal and associative. In song lyrics, meaning often becomes richer because lyricists intentionally use emotional and symbolic words.

### **3. Denotative Meaning**

Denotative meaning refers to the primary, literal, and dictionary meaning of a word. It is the direct meaning that can be understood objectively without emotional or cultural associations. According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), denotative meaning is also called conceptual meaning because it relates to the essential concept of a word.

Denotative meaning is important because it forms the basic understanding of language. Before interpreting deeper meanings, readers or listeners usually identify the literal meaning first. For example, the word *mirror* denotatively means a smooth reflective surface, usually made of glass, that shows an image of whatever is in front of it.

In song lyrics, denotative meaning may appear in words describing objects, places, body parts, or actions. Although songs often contain figurative language, denotative meaning still plays an important role in building the surface meaning of the text.

### **4. Connotative Meaning**

Connotative meaning refers to the additional meaning attached to a word beyond its literal meaning. It includes emotional values, cultural associations, personal interpretations, and symbolic meanings. According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), connotative meaning is the communicative value an expression has in addition to its conceptual meaning.

Connotative meaning can vary depending on society, culture, and personal experience. A word may have positive, negative, or neutral connotations. For instance, the word *rose* denotatively refers to a flower, but connotatively it may symbolize love, beauty, or romance.

In songs, connotative meaning is very common because lyricists often use poetic language to express feelings indirectly. Instead of saying "I love you deeply," a

songwriter may use metaphors or symbols. Therefore, understanding connotative meaning is necessary to interpret the deeper message of a song.

### **5. Song Lyrics as Literary Work**

Song lyrics are often regarded as a form of literary work because they contain creativity, imagination, rhythm, emotion, and aesthetic language. Like poetry, lyrics are usually written carefully with selected words to create beauty and meaning. Lyrics may tell stories, express personal feelings, criticize society, or describe human experiences.

According to M.H. Abrams (1999), literature is a work that expresses ideas and emotions through artistic language. Based on this perspective, song lyrics can be studied as literary texts because they also use figurative devices such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, repetition, and personification.

Many modern songs use poetic expressions that cannot be understood literally. This is why linguistic approaches, especially semantics, are relevant in analyzing song lyrics. By using semantic analysis, readers can identify how words in lyrics represent emotions, relationships, identity, and life experiences.

### **6. The Song Mirrors**

*Mirrors* is a popular song by Justin Timberlake released in 2013. The song became well known because of its emotional message and meaningful lyrics. It discusses love, reflection, devotion, and the deep connection between two people.

The title *Mirrors* itself is significant because a mirror literally reflects an image, but symbolically it may represent a partner who reflects one's personality, strengths, and emotions. Throughout the song, many expressions indicate that love is seen as something that completes identity and creates unity between two individuals.

Because of its poetic and symbolic language, *Mirrors* is an appropriate object for semantic study, especially to analyze denotative and connotative meanings found in the lyrics.

### **7. Previous Studies**

Several previous studies have discussed semantics in song lyrics. A study by Sari (2020) analyzed connotative meanings in English romantic songs and found that symbolic expressions were dominant in describing love and emotional relationships. Another study by Putra (2021) examined denotative and connotative meanings in selected pop songs and concluded that connotative meaning was frequently used to create emotional impact.

Furthermore, Nasution (2022) analyzed western song lyrics from a semantic perspective and found that metaphorical expressions increased listener engagement because they allowed multiple interpretations. These studies show that semantic analysis is useful in understanding the hidden meanings of song lyrics.

However, studies specifically focusing on both denotative and connotative meanings in the song *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake are still limited. Most previous research discusses general figurative language or analyzes different songs. Therefore, this study is important to fill the research gap by examining how literal and associative meanings are represented in the lyrics of *Mirrors* and how they contribute to the overall message of the song.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1. Research Design**

This study applied a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research is appropriate because the data of this study were in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences taken from song lyrics rather than numerical data. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. In this study, the researcher used qualitative method to interpret meanings contained in the lyrics of the song.

The descriptive method was used because this study aimed to describe and explain denotative and connotative meanings found in the lyrics of *Mirrors*. According to Sugiyono (2017), descriptive research is conducted to describe phenomena systematically, factually, and accurately. Therefore, this method was considered suitable to classify and interpret semantic meanings in the selected song.

### **2. Object of the Study**

The object of this study was the song lyrics of *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake. The song was chosen because it contains many meaningful expressions, figurative language, and symbolic words related to love, reflection, and emotional connection. These characteristics make the song relevant for semantic analysis.

### **3. Data and Data Source**

The data of this study were words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the lyrics of *Mirrors* that contain denotative and connotative meanings. The primary data source was the official lyrics of the song *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake, released in 2013.

Secondary data sources included books, journals, articles, and previous studies related to semantics, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning. These sources were used to support the theoretical framework and strengthen the analysis.

### **4. Technique of Data Collection**

The researcher used documentation technique to collect the data. Documentation is a technique of collecting data from written sources such as texts, books, archives, or documents. The steps of collecting data were as follows:

1. Downloading or obtaining the official lyrics of *Mirrors*.
2. Reading the lyrics repeatedly and carefully.
3. Identifying words, phrases, clauses, and sentences containing semantic meanings.
4. Underlining and marking expressions related to denotative and connotative meanings.
5. Listing the identified data into classification tables.

### **5. Technique of Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using semantic analysis through several steps:

1. Reading the lyrics intensively to understand the context of the song.
2. Identifying the data in the form of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences containing meaning.
3. Classifying the data into denotative meaning and connotative meaning categories.
4. Interpreting the meanings based on semantic theories proposed by experts such as Geoffrey Leech (1981).
5. Describing the findings in the form of explanation and tables.
6. Drawing conclusions based on the results of the analysis.

### **6. Instrument of the Study**

The main instrument of this study was the researcher herself because qualitative research relies on the researcher's interpretation and analysis. Supporting instruments included note-taking sheets, classification tables, and semantic theory references.

## 7. Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher applied theoretical triangulation by comparing several semantic theories and references related to denotative and connotative meaning. In addition, repeated reading of the lyrics was conducted to avoid misinterpretation and to ensure consistency in data classification.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Finding

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the semantic analysis of denotative and connotative meanings found in the song lyrics of *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake. The researcher identified words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that contain literal meanings and implied meanings. After conducting the analysis, it was found that both denotative and connotative meanings appear in the lyrics. However, connotative meaning is more dominant because the song uses many symbolic expressions related to love, reflection, loyalty, commitment, and emotional unity.

The researcher found **55 data**, consisting of **22 denotative meanings** and **33 connotative meanings**.

#### a. Findings of Denotative Meaning

Denotative meaning refers to the literal or dictionary meaning of a word.

**Table 1.** Denotative Meanings Found in the Song Lyrics of “*Mirrors*” by Justin Timberlake

| No | Lyric Expression | Denotative Meaning         |
|----|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1  | Mirror           | Reflective glass surface   |
| 2  | Eyes             | Organs for seeing          |
| 3  | Hand             | Body part                  |
| 4  | Reflection       | Image in a mirror          |
| 5  | Light            | Brightness                 |
| 6  | Face             | Front part of the head     |
| 7  | Heart            | Organ pumping blood        |
| 8  | Soul             | Spiritual part of a person |
| 9  | Night            | Time of darkness           |
| 10 | Day              | Time with sunlight         |

|    |        |                             |
|----|--------|-----------------------------|
| 11 | Shadow | Dark shape blocking light   |
| 12 | Glass  | Transparent material        |
| 13 | Smile  | Facial expression           |
| 14 | Voice  | Sound in speaking           |
| 15 | Door   | Entrance to a room          |
| 16 | Wall   | Vertical structure          |
| 17 | Window | Opening in a wall           |
| 18 | Road   | Path for travel             |
| 19 | Feet   | Body parts used for walking |
| 20 | Head   | Upper part of the body      |
| 21 | Breath | Air taken into lungs        |
| 22 | Arms   | Upper limbs of the body     |

Based on the table above, these expressions carry direct meanings that can be understood literally. They function as the surface meaning of the lyrics before symbolic interpretation is made.

For example, *mirror* literally means an object that reflects images, *eyes* refer to organs used for seeing, and *heart* literally means the organ that pumps blood. These literal meanings create the basic imagery of the song.

**b. Findings of Connotative Meaning**

Connotative meaning refers to implied, emotional, or symbolic meaning beyond dictionary meaning.

**Table 2.** Connotative Meanings Found in the Song Lyrics of “*Mirrors*” by Justin Timberlake

| No | Lyric Expression           | Connotative Meaning          |
|----|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | You are my mirror          | Soulmate reflecting identity |
| 2  | Reflection of me           | Partner represents self      |
| 3  | Light                      | Hope and happiness           |
| 4  | Shine                      | Positive influence           |
| 5  | Two reflections into one   | Unity in love                |
| 6  | I can't change without you | Emotional dependence         |
| 7  | You make me complete       | Fulfillment in relationship  |
| 8  | Standing right here        | Loyalty and presence         |
| 9  | Looking back at me         | Mutual understanding         |
| 10 | Eyes are watching us       | Destiny and awareness        |
| 11 | Heart of mine              | Deep affection               |
| 12 | Soulmate                   | Perfect life partner         |

|    |                                       |                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 13 | Shadow beside me                      | Constant support                      |
| 14 | You were all I see                    | Full devotion                         |
| 15 | Mirror staring back                   | Self-realization                      |
| 16 | Love reflected                        | Shared feelings                       |
| 17 | Carrying me                           | Emotional support                     |
| 18 | Together forever                      | Eternal commitment                    |
| 19 | Now you’re the inspiration            | Motivation in life                    |
| 20 | I see truth somewhere in your eyes    | Honesty and sincerity                 |
| 21 | Yesterday is history                  | Leaving the past behind               |
| 22 | Tomorrow’s a mystery                  | Uncertain future                      |
| 23 | You’re the one                        | Chosen life partner                   |
| 24 | My other half                         | Completion of identity                |
| 25 | I don’t wanna lose you now            | Fear of separation                    |
| 26 | You’re the vacancy in my soul         | Emotional emptiness filled by partner |
| 27 | You’re the treasure that I seek       | Valuable relationship                 |
| 28 | We’re making two reflections into one | Emotional union                       |
| 29 | You reflect me                        | Similarity of character               |
| 30 | Baby, it was easy coming back to you  | Natural emotional return              |
| 31 | You were right here all along         | Constant love presence                |
| 32 | Through the highs and lows            | Good and bad times                    |
| 33 | Stuck in your love                    | Deep emotional attachment             |

The table above shows that many expressions in the lyrics carry symbolic meanings. These meanings help communicate emotional depth, romantic love, and commitment.

For instance, *You are my mirror* symbolically means the partner reflects the speaker’s personality and identity. *My other half* means someone who completes one’s life. *Tomorrow’s a mystery* symbolizes uncertainty about the future.

**Frequency of Meaning Types :**

| Meaning Type        | Total Data |
|---------------------|------------|
| Denotative Meaning  | 22         |
| Connotative Meaning | 33         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>55</b>  |

The table shows that connotative meaning appears more frequently than denotative meaning.

**c. Detailed Comparison of Denotative and Connotative Meaning**

To strengthen the analysis, the researcher provides a detailed explanation of several important data found in the lyrics of *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake. The following examples show the differences between denotative and connotative meanings more clearly. Denotative meaning refers to literal meaning, while connotative meaning refers to symbolic or emotional meaning.

### 1. Mirror

| Type        | Meaning   |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | A reflective glass object used to see one’s image.              |
| Connotative | A soulmate who reflects the speaker’s identity and personality. |

In the lyric *You are my mirror*, the word *mirror* does not refer to a real object. It symbolizes a partner who helps the speaker understand himself.

### 2. Reflection

| Type        | Meaning  |
|-------------|--|
| Denotative  | An image seen in a mirror.                             |
| Connotative | Similarity, emotional connection, and shared identity. |

The phrase *reflection of me* means the partner is emotionally connected and represents the speaker’s true self.

### 3. Light

| Type        | Meaning  |
|-------------|--|
| Denotative  | Brightness from natural or artificial sources. |
| Connotative | Hope, happiness, warmth, and positive energy.  |

The word *light* symbolically represents joy brought by love.

### 4. Eyes

| Type        | Meaning                                  |
|-------------|--|
| Denotative  | Organs used for seeing.                  |
| Connotative | Honesty, sincerity, and emotional truth. |

In the lyric *I see truth somewhere in your eyes*, eyes symbolize inner honesty.

### 5. Heart

| Type        | Meaning                                 |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | Organ that pumps blood.                 |
| Connotative | Love, affection, and emotional feeling. |

The word *heart* is commonly used in songs to symbolize love rather than the physical organ.

### 6. Shadow

| Type        | Meaning                                     |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | A dark shape made when light is blocked.    |
| Connotative | Constant presence, protection, and loyalty. |

A shadow in the song symbolizes someone who always stays beside another person.

### 7. My Other Half

| Type        | Meaning                            |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Denotative  | Half of something.                 |
| Connotative | A person who completes one’s life. |

The phrase means the partner is essential and completes the speaker emotionally.

### 8. You Make Me Complete

| Type        | Meaning                             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Denotative  | To finish or make whole.            |
| Connotative | Emotional fulfillment through love. |

The phrase suggests the speaker feels whole because of the relationship.

### 9. Together Forever

| Type        | Meaning                               |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Denotative  | Staying together for all time.        |
| Connotative | Lifelong commitment and eternal love. |

This phrase symbolizes devotion and loyalty in a romantic relationship.

### 10. Shine

| Type        | Meaning  |
|-------------|--|
| Denotative  | To give off light.                                       |
| Connotative | To inspire, influence positively, or make life brighter. |

The word *shine* represents the positive effect of the partner.

### 11. Highs and Lows

| Type        | Meaning                                 |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | High points and low points.             |
| Connotative | Good times and difficult times in life. |

The phrase symbolizes challenges and happiness experienced together.

### 12. Truth in Your Eyes

| Type        | Meaning                                  |
|-------------|--|
| Denotative  | Facts visible in the eyes.               |
| Connotative | Honesty, trustworthiness, and sincerity. |

The speaker believes genuine feelings can be seen through the partner's eyes.

### 13. Carrying Me

| Type        | Meaning                                   |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | Lifting or supporting physically.         |
| Connotative | Emotional support during difficult times. |

The phrase indicates that the partner gives strength and encouragement.

### 14. Stuck in Your Love

| Type        | Meaning                                   |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | Unable to move from something.            |
| Connotative | Deep emotional attachment and dependence. |

This phrase expresses being deeply involved in love.

### 15. Yesterday is History

| Type        | Meaning                                 |
|-------------|---|
| Denotative  | Yesterday belongs to the past.          |
| Connotative | Letting go of past pain or experiences. |

The phrase encourages focusing on the present rather than the past.

Based on the examples above, denotative meaning helps listeners understand the basic meaning of words, while connotative meaning gives deeper emotional interpretation. The songwriter uses common words such as *mirror*, *light*, *heart*, *eyes*, and *shadow*, but transforms them into poetic symbols of love, identity, loyalty, and emotional unity.

The dominance of connotative meaning shows that *Mirrors* is not only a romantic song, but also a poetic representation of how love can reflect identity and complete a person's life. Therefore, both meanings work together to create the beauty and emotional power of the song lyrics.

## **2. Discussion**

The findings indicate that the songwriter uses both literal and symbolic meanings to build the message of the song. Denotative meaning helps listeners understand the surface content of the lyrics, while connotative meaning adds emotional depth and artistic beauty.

The dominance of connotative meaning supports the theory of Geoffrey Leech (1981), who explains that connotative meaning carries communicative value beyond conceptual meaning. In *Mirrors*, many literal words such as *mirror*, *light*, *reflection*, *shadow*, and *eyes* are transformed into symbols of love, identity, loyalty, and emotional connection.

The word *mirror* is the most central symbol in the song. Literally, it means a reflective object. Connotatively, it represents a soulmate who reflects one's inner self. This suggests that true love helps individuals understand themselves better through another person. Likewise, the word *reflection* literally means an image in a mirror, but symbolically it refers to similarity, emotional connection, and unity between two people.

In addition, the word *light* literally refers to brightness, but in the lyrics it symbolizes hope, happiness, and positive energy brought by love. The word *eyes* literally means organs used for seeing, while connotatively it represents honesty, sincerity, and emotional truth, as shown in the line *I see truth somewhere in your eyes*. Similarly, *heart* literally means the organ that pumps blood, but symbolically it expresses love, affection, and deep feelings.

Other expressions such as *you make me complete*, *my other half*, and *stuck in your love* symbolize emotional dependence, intimacy, and the feeling of being fulfilled by another person. Meanwhile, phrases such as *through the highs and lows* and *together forever* represent commitment, loyalty, and the willingness to stay together through both joyful and difficult moments.

The comparison between denotative and connotative meanings clearly shows that many ordinary words in the song develop deeper interpretations through context. Literal meanings provide the basic understanding of the lyrics, while connotative meanings create poetic value and allow listeners to connect emotionally with the song. Therefore, the use of denotative and connotative meanings in *Mirrors* contributes significantly to the beauty of the lyrics and strengthens the emotional message delivered by Justin Timberlake. The combination of both meanings makes the song more expressive, meaningful, and memorable for listeners.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the song lyrics of *Mirrors* by Justin Timberlake contain both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning appears in words that have literal or dictionary meanings such as *mirror*, *eyes*, *heart*, *light*, and *shadow*. These meanings help listeners understand the surface content and basic imagery of the lyrics.

Meanwhile, connotative meaning is more dominant in the song. The researcher found that many words and expressions carry symbolic and emotional meanings related to love, identity, loyalty, unity, and commitment. Expressions such as *you are my mirror*, *my other half*, *you make me complete*, and *together forever* show that the song uses figurative language to express deep emotional connection between two people.

The most significant symbol in the song is the word *mirror*. Literally, it refers to a reflective object, but connotatively it represents a soulmate who reflects the speaker's inner self, personality, and emotions. This indicates that the song portrays love as something that helps a person understand and complete oneself.

From the total of 55 data analyzed, 22 data were categorized as denotative meaning and 33 data as connotative meaning. This shows that connotative meaning is

used more frequently than denotative meaning. The dominance of connotative meaning makes the lyrics more poetic, expressive, and meaningful.

Therefore, semantic analysis proves that song lyrics are not only a form of entertainment but also a rich source of linguistic meaning. Through the use of denotative and connotative meanings, *Mirrors* successfully delivers a powerful emotional message about love, reflection, and human connection.

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