



An Analysis of Synonym in the Song Lyrics “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran: A Lexical Semantics Study

Santun Saniora Tamba¹, Bernieke Anggita Ristia Damanik²

¹⁻² English Education Department, Faculty Of Teacher Training And Education
Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar

*Penulis Korespondensi: Santunsaniorat@gmail.com, bernieke.damanik@uhn.ac.id

Abstract. *This study explores how synonymy is applied in the lyrics of Ed Sheeran's song "Perfect" through a lens of lexical semantics. The main goal of this research is to identify synonymous words and expressions within the lyrics and assess their impact on meaning and emotional depth. A descriptive qualitative methodology is utilized, focusing on the examination of terms and phrases that share similar meanings in the context of the song. For data collection, relevant lexical selections from the lyrics were recorded and categorized based on their semantic relationships. The results indicate that the employment of synonyms enriches the lyrical experience, avoids repetition, and underscores different aspects of love and connection. Additionally, the inclusion of synonymous expressions enhances both the artistic and poetic elements of the song, rendering it more powerful and attractive to listeners. The findings also imply that synonyms are context-dependent and cannot always be used interchangeably without changing the intended message. Therefore, this research underscores the importance of lexical semantics in understanding how language is creatively deployed in song lyrics to articulate complex emotions and convey ideas..*

Keywords: *synonym, lexical semantics, song lyrics, meaning, Ed Sheeran*

Abstrak. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana sinonimitas diterapkan dalam lirik lagu Ed Sheeran "Perfect" melalui lensa semantik leksikal. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kata dan ungkapan sinonim dalam lirik dan menilai dampaknya terhadap makna dan kedalaman emosional. Metodologi kualitatif deskriptif digunakan, yang berfokus pada pemeriksaan istilah dan frasa yang memiliki makna serupa dalam konteks lagu. Untuk pengumpulan data, pilihan leksikal yang relevan dari lirik direkam dan dikategorikan berdasarkan hubungan semantiknya. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan sinonim memperkaya pengalaman lirik, menghindari pengulangan, dan menggarisbawahi berbagai aspek cinta dan hubungan. Selain itu, penyertaan ungkapan sinonim meningkatkan unsur artistik dan puitis lagu, menjadikannya lebih kuat dan menarik bagi pendengar. Temuan ini juga menyiratkan bahwa sinonim bergantung pada konteks dan tidak selalu dapat digunakan secara bergantian tanpa mengubah pesan yang dimaksud. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya semantik leksikal dalam memahami bagaimana bahasa digunakan secara kreatif dalam lirik lagu untuk mengungkapkan emosi yang kompleks dan menyampaikan gagasan.

Kata kunci: sinonim, semantik leksikal, lirik lagu, makna, Ed Sheeran

1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a crucial instrument for human interaction, allowing people to share thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences. Besides its role in communication, language also holds an aesthetic purpose, especially evident in creative works like poetry and song lyrics. Lyrics, as a type of artistic communication, frequently employ imaginative and thoughtfully chosen language to express profound emotional insights. The exploration of meaning within language, particularly focusing on words, is the

primary focus of lexical semantics, a field in linguistics that investigates how words convey meaning and their interrelations.

A significant element of lexical semantics is synonymy, which defines the connection between words that possess similar or almost identical meanings. While synonyms may be viewed as interchangeable, they actually exhibit variations in nuance, connotation, strength, and contextual application. These subtle distinctions are particularly crucial in artistic writings, where the selection of words is intentional and impactful. Songwriters, for instance, not only turn to synonyms to prevent redundancy but also to enhance the emotional depth and stylistic flair of their lyrics. By incorporating diverse lexical choices, they are able to express intricate emotions more adeptly and craft a more captivating auditory experience.

The song "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran is a widely recognized love ballad that showcases an extensive use of language, particularly in conveying themes of romance, admiration, and closeness. The lyrics encapsulate a profound emotional tale, depicting a personal and sincere narrative. Within this tale, numerous synonymous terms can be found, which enrich the overall significance and emotional resonance of the song. For instance, various word choices are utilized to articulate love, attractiveness, and emotional bonds, with each contributing a unique shade to the intended message.

Examining synonyms in song lyrics is significant as it uncovers how meaning is formed and perceived within a creative framework. By analyzing the use of synonymous words in "Perfect," this research aspires to investigate the impact of word selection on the expression of emotional themes and the enhancement of the lyrical beauty. This analysis also sheds light on how language operates beyond its explicit interpretation, emphasizing the importance of context and stylistic choices in shaping understanding.

Additionally, earlier research in the area of lexical semantics has pointed out that synonyms are seldom completely equivalent and are frequently shaped by various contextual and cultural factors. This aspect highlights the significance of examining synonymy in song lyrics, as songs serve not just as linguistic compositions but also as cultural representations that embody human feelings and societal experiences. Consequently, this research aims to enhance the comprehension of lexical semantics by concentrating on synonymy as a crucial component in interpreting song lyrics.

In light of this context, the study is directed towards the goal of discovering and analyzing synonymous phrases in the lyrics of the song "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran. It also intends to clarify how these synonymous terms operate within the song's framework to express meaning and emotional depth. Through this examination, it is anticipated that a more profound insight into the connection between language, meaning, and artistic representation can be attained, especially in the realm of lexical semantics.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

1. Relevant Theories

This research is rooted in lexical semantics, which concentrates on exploring the meanings of words and the connections among lexical elements. Leech (1981) posits that meaning incorporates both conceptual and associative dimensions, both of which play a vital role in comprehending how words operate within context. In the context of song lyrics, these dimensions work together to generate both direct and emotional interpretations.

A principal idea within lexical semantics is synonymy. Saeed (2009) characterizes synonymy as the link between words that have comparable meanings in specific situations. Nonetheless, complete synonymy is uncommon since words frequently differ in their subtleties, implied meanings, and applications. Likewise, Yule (2010) points out that while synonyms may share the same fundamental meaning, they can differ in emotional force and stylistic connotation. This distinction is especially significant in literary works such as song lyrics, where the selection of words influences interpretation.

Cruse (2000) divides synonyms into absolute synonyms, cognitive synonyms, and near-synonyms. Near-synonyms are frequently utilized in everyday language, particularly in artistic expressions, due to their capacity for nuance and varying meanings. Jakobson (1960) further highlights the artistic role of language, asserting that in creative texts, including songs, the aesthetic nature of language is vital. Thus, employing synonyms in song lyrics serves not only a semantic purpose but also a stylistic one, enhancing rhythm, tone, and emotional resonance.

2. Previous Studies

Numerous earlier investigations have explored how lexical semantics, especially synonyms, are utilized in musical lyrics and literary works. Research conducted by Putri in 2020 examined the use of synonyms in lyrics of English pop songs and discovered that they were employed to emphasize themes and prevent redundancy while ensuring coherence. Additionally, the research pointed out that near synonyms are prevalent in lyrical works due to their adaptability in conveying feelings.

Another analysis by Rahman in 2019 concentrated on semantic interpretation in love songs and uncovered that the selection of words, including synonyms, significantly impacts the expression of emotional subtleties like affection, desire, and closeness. The results showed that various synonymous phrases can affect how the audience perceives a song’s message.

Furthermore, a study carried out by Sari in 2021 looked into lexical connections within song lyrics and determined that synonymy enhances both the depth of meaning and aesthetic appeal. The findings underlined that songwriters deliberately choose words with related meanings to introduce variety and amplify artistic expression.

These earlier studies were reviewed through academic sources like Google Scholar and organized with reference management software such as Mendeley. They offer substantial validation for the present research by illustrating that synonymy is a key linguistic characteristic in the analysis of song lyrics.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the use of synonyms in the song lyrics “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran from the perspective of lexical semantics. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because this research focuses on interpreting meanings, understanding linguistic phenomena, and analyzing words and phrases rather than dealing with numerical data.

The data source of this study is the lyrics of the song “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran. The data consist of lexical items, specifically words and phrases that exhibit synonymous relationships within the context of the lyrics. These data were obtained through

documentation techniques by carefully reading, identifying, and selecting relevant expressions from the song.

The process of gathering data consisted of multiple steps. Initially, the researcher carefully read through the song lyrics to develop a basic understanding of the content. Next, the researcher pinpointed words and phrases that might contain synonymy. The identified data were then documented and categorized according to their semantic similarities. For the analysis of the data, this study employs lexical semantic analysis. The steps include identifying synonymous expressions, categorizing them into types of synonymy (like near-synonyms), and examining their meanings within context. Additionally, the researcher interprets how these synonyms enhance the emotional depth and aesthetic appeal of the song lyrics.

To guarantee the credibility and consistency of the results, the research employs theoretical triangulation by consulting established theories of lexical semantics from multiple scholars. Furthermore, the researcher verifies the interpretation of meanings against pertinent literature to reduce subjectivity.

Ultimately, this approach enables the researcher to systematically examine synonymy in the song lyrics and comprehend how lexical selections operate in conveying meaning and enriching artistic expression.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Presentation of Research Findings

This research investigates the application of synonymy in the lyrics of "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran from a lexical semantics viewpoint. The focus of this analysis is on pinpointing words and phrases with comparable meanings and exploring how these lexical selections enhance the overall message conveyed in the song. According to the gathered data, it was revealed that the lyrics include numerous examples of synonymy, especially in terms related to love, admiration, emotional ties, and closeness.

The results show that most of the synonymous phrases present in the lyrics belong to the category of near-synonyms. These are words or phrases that share similar fundamental meanings but vary in subtleties, connotations, and uses in different contexts.

The existence of near-synonyms illustrates the songwriter's intentional attempt to introduce variety in language while keeping the thematic unity intact.

The identified data are presented in the following table:

No	Data (Word/Phrase)	Synonym	Type of Synonym	Meaning in Context
1	love	darling	Near-synonym	Deep emotional affection and intimacy
2	beautiful	pretty	Near-synonym	Expression of admiration with different intensity
3	heart	soul	Near-synonym	Emotional and spiritual center of feelings
4	hold	carry	Near-synonym	Physical and emotional support
5	dancing	moving	Near-synonym	Joyful physical expression
6	whisper	say softly	Near-synonym	Gentle and intimate communication
7	found	discovered	Near-synonym	The act of encountering someone meaningful
8	girl	woman	Near-synonym	Reference to a female figure with slight difference in maturity
9	alone	by myself	Near-synonym	State of being without others
10	wait	stay	Near-synonym	Indication of persistence and patience

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation

The examination of the information shows that synonymy in the song “Perfect” is not just a variation in language but acts as a vital means of shaping meaning and deepening emotional expression. The inclusion of nearly similar words enables the

songwriter to convey subtle differences in emotions, thus allowing for a richer and more intricate understanding of the lyrics.

A key discovery is the employment of terms linked to love and affection, such as "love" and "darling." Although both terms refer to affection, "love" signifies a wider and more universal idea, while "darling" presents a more close and personal sentiment. This distinction reflects the songwriter's aim to express various layers of emotional connections. It also supports the idea that synonyms rely on context and cannot always be swapped without changing meaning.

In a similar vein, the usage of "beautiful" and "pretty" shows how synonyms can vary in degree and emotional impact. The term "beautiful" tends to convey a deeper and more genuine admiration, while "pretty" implies a lighter, more casual appreciation. This difference improves the descriptive nature of the lyrics and allows the listener to feel a range of emotional reactions.

Another significant point is the employment of abstract synonyms like "heart" and "soul." These words share a close meaning but have distinct connotations. "Heart" usually relates to emotions and sentiments, while "soul" suggests a deeper, more spiritual bond. The combination of these words enriches the emotional story of the song, illustrating the complexity of love and human interactions.

Additionally, the analysis highlights action-related synonyms such as "hold" and "carry." Both of these terms imply physical closeness, but "hold" emphasizes affection and tenderness, while "carry" indicates protection and responsibility. This difference strengthens the theme of care and commitment present in the relationship portrayed in the song.

The use of synonyms also plays a key role in enhancing the artistic and poetic quality of the lyrics. By varying word choices, the songwriter prevents redundancy and ensures a smooth and pleasing flow. This aligns with Jakobson's idea of the poetic function of language, where emphasis is placed on form and artistic merit of the message. The thoughtful selection of synonymous words enriches both the meaning and the musicality of the song.

Moreover, synonyms such as “whisper” and “say softly” highlight the significance of tone and intimacy in communication. These phrases foster a sense of closeness and emotional warmth, which resonate with the romantic theme of the song. Similarly, “found” and “discovered” accentuate the notion of fate and significant encounters, adding a narrative aspect to the lyrics.

From a perspective of lexical semantics, these results affirm that synonymy is a fluid and context-sensitive phenomenon. Words that seem similar can lead to diverse interpretations based on their context, emotional tone, and stylistic setting. This underscores the necessity of examining language not just at the word level but also within its larger context.

To sum up, the findings and conversation show that synonymy in “Perfect” acts as a tool for both meaning and style. It deepens the significance of the lyrics, boosts emotional expression, and adds to the song's overall beauty. The research also supports the notion that word selection is an important part of creative language, especially in artistic works like song lyrics.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the findings and discussions, it can be stated that the incorporation of synonymy in Ed Sheeran's song lyrics "Perfect" is vital in expressing meaning and boosting emotional expression from a lexical semantics viewpoint. The examination reveals that most synonymous phrases present in the lyrics fit into the near-synonyms category, which have similar main meanings but vary in subtlety, implication, and contextual employment.

The results show that terms like “love” and “darling,” “beautiful” and “pretty,” along with “heart” and “soul,” are utilized to convey different dimensions of love, admiration, and emotional richness. These distinctions enable the songwriter to articulate complicated emotions in a more refined and expressive manner. The application of such word variations also highlights that synonyms cannot be fully substituted, as each term possesses a unique meaning shaped by context and emotional undertone.

Moreover, synonymy greatly enhances the song's aesthetic and poetic nature. By using distinct words with comparable meanings, the songwriter prevents redundancy and

fosters a more lively and captivating lyrical framework. This aligns with the idea of the poetic function of language, where word selection and arrangement are crucial for creating artistic results.

Additionally, this research validates that lexical semantics offers a useful approach for analyzing meaning in song lyrics. By exploring synonymy, it becomes clear that language in music serves not only for communication but also for artistic creation and emotional influence.

In summary, synonymy in the song “Perfect” acts as both a semantic and stylistic tool, enhancing meaning, deepening emotional subtleties, and improving the overall artistic quality of the lyrics. Future studies are encouraged to investigate other semantic relationships, like antonymy or polysemy, in various songs to gain more insight into the function of language in musical expression.

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