



## Semantic Analysis of the Expression of Bliss Throughout Romantic Context in Taylor Swift's Song Lover

Syahla Fatia Zahra<sup>1\*</sup>, Otong Setiawan Djuharie<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1-2</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

Alamat: Jl. A.H. Nasution No. 105A, Cibiru, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Korespondensi penulis: [syahlafatiazahra@email.com](mailto:syahlafatiazahra@email.com)

**Abstract.** *This research investigates the semantic expression of romantic bliss in Taylor Swift's song "Lover," emphasizing how language conveys emotional intimacy and idealized love. The study is based on Geoffrey Leech's (1981) theory of meaning, focusing on three aspects: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, and affective meaning. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze selected parts of the lyrics. The findings reveal that Swift expresses emotional connections and her ideal of love through metaphorical language and symbolic expressions. Lyrics such as "We could leave the Christmas lights up until January" and "You're my, my, my, my, my lover" highlight how ordinary events become important emblems of emotional connection and romantic harmony. According to the study, Taylor Swift's "Lover" is a useful tool for semantic investigation as well as a well-liked love song. By her choice of words, Swift creates a lyrical rendering of love that resonates with audiences, thereby emphasizing how language can effectively convey emotional experiences.*

**Keywords:** *Leech, Semantic, Symbolic, Taylor Swift, Qualitative*

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini mengkaji ekspresi semantik dari kebahagiaan dalam hubungan asmara diungkapkan dalam lagu "Lover" yang dinyanyikan oleh Taylor Swift. Penelitian ini memanfaatkan teori makna dari Geoffrey Leech (1981), yang meliputi konseptual, konotatif serta afektif, penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif kualitatif guna menginterpretasi lirik-lirik tertentu. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa Swift menyampaikan keintiman emosional dan gambaran ideal tentang cinta melalui penggunaan bahasa metafora dan ungkapan-ungkapan simbolis. Lirik seperti "We could leave the Christmas lights up until January" dan "You're my, my, my, my, my lover" menyoroti bagaimana peristiwa biasa menjadi simbol penting dari ikatan emosional dan harmoni romantis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan, lagu "Lover" karya Taylor Swift merupakan alat yang berguna untuk penyelidikan semantik sekaligus lagu cinta yang disukai. Melalui pilihan kata-katanya, Swift menciptakan penggambaran lirik tentang cinta yang resonan dengan pendengar, sehingga menekankan bagaimana bahasa dapat secara efektif menyampaikan pengalaman emosional.

**Kata Kunci:** Leech, Semantik, Simbolis, Kualitatif.

### 1. BACKGROUND

Song is an essential component of literature, representing a deep facet of human culture and expression. With their special combination of melody and poetry, they elevate experiences and celebrate milestones, becoming an integral part of our everyday lives. Song adds an emotional and artistic layer to life, enhancing the significance and completeness of every event, just as spices enhance a dish, making it flavorful and unforgettable (Dudrah, 2008:149).

In understanding the emotional and expressive power of songs, semantic studies offer a valuable framework. Semantic studies are a branch of linguistics that examines the meaning of language, encompassing both literal meanings and more complex, contextual interpretations. Semantic focuses on how words, phrases, or sentences in a language relate to the intended meaning of the speaker and how the listener understands that meaning.

Over time, semantics has expanded beyond just lexical or literal meanings to include broader dimensions such as connotative, symbolic, and figurative meanings. Therefore, semantic analysis plays an important role in various forms of communication, including literary works, song lyric, and other forms of cultural expression (Saifullah, 2019).

As noted by Marisya and Nabillah (2024), figurative meaning is a key focus within semantics because it involves the use of language that goes beyond the literal to convey deeper messages. Figurative language enables speakers to express emotions, experiences, or abstract concepts in a more aesthetic and complex way. In this context, semantics helps explain how figurative meanings are constructed and interpreted in language, whether through word structure analysis, usage context, or the relationships among elements within a text.

Lyrics of popular songs frequently reflect human emotions, particularly in romantic situations. Taylor Swift is one of the well-known modern artists whose emotionally charged lyrics depict the nuances of love and relationships. Her song "Lover" (2019), in particular, captures a deep feeling of romantic happiness through symbolic and literary expression. This study aims to analyze the semantic expression of bliss in the lyrics of "Lover," with an emphasis on the interaction between literal and metaphorical interpretations. The study aims to reveal more nuanced meanings of the lexical selections and stylistic elements employed by Swift in depicting an idealized romantic relationship through a semantic analysis method. Gaining a wider understanding of how language works in popular music to elicit emotional resonance and cultural narratives of love is facilitated by comprehending such phrases.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research utilizes Geoffrey Leech's (1981) theory of meaning for semantic analysis. Leech identified seven categories of meaning—conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative, and thematic—but this study examines only three: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, and affective meaning. These three are deemed the most significant for investigating romantic and emotional expressions in song lyrics.

Conceptual meaning plays a vital role in grasping the straightforward or dictionary interpretations of the terms found in the lyrics.

Connotative meaning delves into the additional and symbolic associations that extend beyond the literal, which is important for understanding the artistic and metaphorical elements of love.

Affective meaning represents the emotional reactions and personal sentiments conveyed through language, which is crucial for capturing the feelings of joy and closeness within a romantic setting.

The decision to omit the other four types—social, reflected, collocative, and thematic meanings—stems from their reduced significance concerning the emotional and linguistic focus of this research. The song "Lover" emphasizes personal emotions and metaphorical expressions over variations in language style, idiomatic phrases, or discourse analysis. Thus, using these three chosen categories creates a clear and streamlined approach for examining how language conveys romantic joy in a poetic framework.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

As a part of linguistics, semantics deals with the study of meaning in language. Semantics, according to Lyons (1995), is the study of word, phrase, and sentence meaning both separately and in context. Semantics in literary and musical analysis aids in discovering more profound emotional, cultural, and metaphorical meanings that might not be immediately evident. This is especially important when analyzing songs whose lyrics heavily rely on poetic devices like connotation, symbolism, and metaphor, things that are frequently found in song lyrics.

According to Crystal (2003), semantics examines both the denotative (literal) and connotative (emotional or associated) meanings of words. This distinction is crucial for comprehending romantic concepts in song lyrics, where words are often imbued with feeling and individual significance. For instance, the word "home" might refer to a place of residence, but in romantic contexts, it might conjure up feelings of warmth, safety, or affection. Semantic analysis becomes an essential technique for analyzing lyrical pieces like Taylor Swift's "Lover," as it helps illustrate how specific word selections and linguistic patterns evoke feelings of joy.

In analyzing how a songwriter conveys emotional states, the various types of meaning that Leech (1981) identifies—conceptual, connotative, affective, thematic, and others—are particularly relevant. Scholars may gain a deeper overall understanding of a text by using these semantic categories, which help them comprehend not just the literal meaning but also the intentions and emotions behind it.

As a result, integrating semantic theory into the analysis of romantic song lyrics enables a more nuanced understanding of how language conveys emotional depth. It allows us to examine how metaphorical and symbolic expressions of emotions like love, happiness, or bliss are formed and expressed.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

With a special focus on conceptual, connotative, and affective meaning (Leech, 1981), this study uses Geoffrey Leech's semantic framework to analyze the semantic representation of romantic joy in Taylor Swift's *Lover*. These three layers of significance show how emotionally nuanced and symbolically important simple words can be. The researcher found 14 data lyrics from the song *Lover*.

The line "We could leave the Christmas lights up 'til January" acts as a starting metaphor for household closeness. Conceptually, it describes a commonplace behavior: keeping holiday decorations up after the festivities. Affectively, it conjures up shared comfort and playful defiance in a couple's intimate setting, while connotatively, it conveys a want to extend a happy experience.

The conceptual significance of "And this is our place, we make the rules suggests a shared, real environment. Connotatively, it highlights emotional freedom in relationships, and affectively, represents a loving safe space that symbolizes emotional trust and self-directed intimacy,

The phrase "And there's a dazzling haze, a mysterious way about you, dear" metaphorically conveys the captivating atmosphere of love. It theoretically conveys a dreamlike, possibly pictorial impression. The "dazzling haze" connotes fascination, while it conveys emotional intoxication and admiration affectively—feelings that are typical in the early stages of falling in love.

"Have I known you twenty seconds or twenty years?" conveys a sense of timeless emotional depth. Although the conceptual meaning implies a time paradox, connotatively it suggests soulmate intimacy. Affectively, it emphasizes the feeling of romantic fate by highlighting an emotional connection that is so strong that time becomes irrelevant.

In the line "Can I go where you go? The term implies conceptually a true desire to be physically present with someone. Connotatively, though, it communicates a wish for emotional intimacy and stability as well as a will to share every experience with one's partner both emotionally and bodily. By showing vulnerability and dependence grounded

in great affection and a romantic yearning for togetherness, the affective meaning heightens this emotional attraction.

Another line employing seasonal imagery to represent the length and joy of a romantic connection is, "I've loved you three summers now, honey, but I want 'em all. " The conceptual meaning points to a particular length: three years of love. Suggesting that the love shown is not only everlasting but also very fulfilling, the phrase "summers" suggests warmth, happiness, and carefree times. The emotional component of this line stresses devotion and tenderness, therefore presenting a happy dedication meant to go on forever.

Possessive affection is shown by the refrain "You're my, my, my, my lover." It, in theory, determines who is loved. The sense of belonging and closeness is enhanced connotatively by the repetition. Affectively, it conveys an intense love and the relinquishment of one's emotional being to someone else.

"We could let our friends crash in the living room," which conceptually depicts a real act of hospitality, portrays everyday intimacy. It connotatively suggests ease and liberty in a communal setting. Emotionally, it conveys a sense of relaxed companionship and openness, implying that romantic happiness is based on simplicity and mutual choices.

In the line "This is our place; we make the rules," Swift develops a metaphorical setting that promotes emotional freedom and closeness. The song implies a real or metaphorical location both physically and conceptually. It connotes a love- and self-determined shared universe free from external criticism and societal norms. This word's affective connotation suggests comfort, empowerment, and a sense of community—all of which are vital for romantic happiness.

Emotional vulnerability is exposed by the statement, "I'm highly suspicious that everyone who sees you wants you." It conceptually symbolizes possessive jealousy. Connotatively, it emphasizes the partner's desirability, and affectively, it reveals a profound emotional commitment and connection, adding nuances of insecurity to the complexity of romantic happiness.

In "I've loved you three summers now, honey, but I want 'em all," the temporal metaphor is used. The line alludes to previous time conceptually. "Three summers" connotatively represent love and warmth. Emotionally, the longing for all summers reveals the speaker's desire to immortalize romantic love and their wish for perpetual joy.

"With every guitar string scar on my hand, I take this magnetic force of a man to be my lover" combines intense attraction with personal devotion. It implies dedication and

experience in principle. It implies an inescapable attraction and historical difficulties connotatively. Effectively, it conveys a mature, accepting form of love that welcomes both intensity and imperfections.

In "My heart's been borrowed and yours has been blue / All's well that ends well to end up with you," Swift references classic wedding sayings. It denotes emotional healing and conclusion connotatively, and it symbolically alludes to symbolic deeds conceptually. Affectively, it communicates a sense of fulfillment and closure, representing a romantic happiness attained after overcoming emotional challenges.

The line "Swear to be overdramatic and loyal to my love" captures a mix of honest feelings and fun. It promises in theory to embrace both genuine expression and dramatic emotion. Connotatively, the word "overdramatic" is recontextualized as a passionate means of expression, proving the speaker's unapologetic honesty. With its sincere and joyful tenor, this statement implies total dedication and emotional openness.

In the line "I take this magnetic force of a man to be my lover" gives a crisp image of great attraction. Conceptually, it refers to physical magnetism. The term "magnetic force" connotatively denotes an irresistible emotional and spiritual connection between two people, which may suggest fate or destiny. Emphasizing the emotional gravity of the romantic relationship is the ardent and reverent affective quality shown in this line. Through rich semantic layers, these lyrics together demonstrate Taylor Swift's expression of emotional intimacy and romantic pleasure. Leech's theory offers a more nuanced view on how *Lover* creates a picture of love that is both idealized and familiar using figurative and emotionally resonant language. Every lyric minute resonates with emotional intensity, proving that musical meaning transcends only interpretation and invites the audience into a shared, emotionally engrossing experience.

And finally, the line "And you'll save all your dirtiest jokes for me / And at every table, I'll save you a seat" conveys a sense of familiarity and exclusivity. In idea, it explains regular presence and private humor. Connotatively, it suggests loyalty and lasting partnership. Affectively, it conjures up feelings of emotional security and shared happiness, which are essential to the idea of enduring romantic happiness.

By incorporating semantic richness into her language, these lyrics demonstrate how Taylor Swift creates a complex depiction of love. Through conceptual clarity, symbolic depth, and emotional resonance, the song "Lover" transforms into a poetic expression of personal freedom and intimate happiness in a romantic relationship.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the semantic expression of romantic bliss in Taylor Swift's song *Lover* using Leech's (1981) semantic theory, which includes conceptual, connotative, and affective meanings. The findings indicate that romantic bliss is expressed through various lexical and figurative terms that represent idealized love, personal freedom, and emotional closeness. Phrases such as "Can I go where you go?", "You're my, my, my, my lover", and "This is our place, we make the rules" capture not just the literal meaning but also deeper emotional nuances that convey trust, companionship, and affection.

Leech's framework showed that Taylor Swift creates an emotionally strong romantic story by using both conventional and poetic language. The symbolic and figurative vocabulary studied in this work exposes the great and continuous character of romantic bliss across several aspects of a relationship, from emotional pledges to living conditions. As a result, the lyrics of "Lover" are not just musical expressions but valuable linguistic texts illuminating the modern semantics of love and happiness in songwriting rather than only musical expressions.

## REFERENCES

- Bouti, S., Podungge, R., Umar, I., & Dasinsingon, M. (2023). Figurative language in Taylor Swift's songs (a semantic analysis). *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya*, 13(1).
- Fatimah, S., & Ramadhan, A. R. (2023). Analisis makna konotatif pada lirik lagu pop Indonesia tahun 2020-an. *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Nusantara*, 5(1), 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/abcd1>
- Frida, K. Y., & Zuraida, I. (2022). Metaphor in the *Folklore* album by Taylor Swift: A semantics study. *Journal of English Language and Literature (JELL)*, 9(2).
- Kholilah, N., Lismawarni, S., Mesra, S., & Dina, P. (2025). A semantic analysis of Taylor Swift's songs: Leech's seven types of meaning. *JOLIES: Journal of Linguistic and English Studies*, 2.
- Manueke, E. G. Y., Christiany, Y., Sangeroki, S., Lughu, M. M., & Wildayanto, D. W. (n.d.). Connotative meaning found in Taylor Swift's selected songs. *Global Science: The Journal of Research and Development*, 3.
- Nugraheni, D. A., & Suprpto, H. (2022). Makna figuratif dalam lirik lagu K-Pop: Pendekatan semantik. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 12(2), 133–142. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jib.v12i2.2022>

- Prasetyo, R., & Astuti, S. P. (2020). Analisis makna leksikal dan gramatikal pada lirik lagu populer di Indonesia. *Lingua Cultura*, 14(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v14i1.5981>
- Rachmawati, Y., & Suryani, M. (2021). Tinjauan semantik terhadap penggunaan majas dalam lirik lagu remaja Indonesia. *Jurnal Kajian Bahasa dan Sastra*, 9(3), 215–224.
- Sulkhan, M. D. (2024). Semantic analysis of the expression of bliss throughout romantic context in Taylor Swift's song *Lover*. *Journal of Literature and Language Studies*, 5(2), 123–145.
- Syahid, A., Wulandari, A. O., & Sudewi, N. K. P. N. (2024). Semantic analysis of the expressions interpretation of bliss throughout romantic context in Taylor Swift's songs. *Humanitatis: Journal of Language and Literature*, 11(1).
- Umagandhi, R., & Vinothini, M. (2017). Leech's seven types of meaning in semantics. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 4(3), 71–72.