

An Analysis on the Denotative and Connotative Meaning of Lyrics of Creed's Songs

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ABSTRACT

Semantics as the study of meaning stands at the very center of the linguistic quest to understand the nature of language and human language abilities. It is obvious that semantics has an important role in understanding and comprehending a language, especially for English. Semantics not only concern with the study of meaning but also with the relationship between language and culture.

Denotative meaning and connotative meaning: both of them are based on a relationship between words & world. Denotation is the meaning of a word which is primarily refers to the real word, the "dictionary definition" for instance "cow" shows a kind of animal, "house" shows a kind of building.

Connotation meaning is the aspect of meaning added to the denotation of a word it relates to the association that a word has above its denotation. The connotative meaning differs from one society to another. Connotation may be subject to variable exchange from generation to the next. Connotation may be rather subjective and not shared in the same way by all speakers of a language.

Our individual experience of language and its relation to the world is to some extent unique and idiosyncratic. Connotation is not stable. That Creed's songs are analyzed using the descriptive qualitative approach in finding its denotative and connotative meaning. The data are taken from lyric of Creed's songs which consists of 2 lyrics from different albums such as My Sacrifice and Don't Stop Dancing. The writer chooses those lyrics because it contains allusion and a popularly Christian theological concept, of absolute individual belief, usually Monotheistic. It also focuses on questions of faith, Christianity, and eternity.

Finally, the writer suggests to the next writer whom want to concern with the similar topic to analyze denotative and connotative meaning that can be found in newspaper and advertisement on Television etc.

Key Words : Connotative, Denotative Lyrics, Songs

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Words have two main kinds of meaning, denotation and connotation. Denotation is the meaning of a word which is primarily refers to the real word, the "dictionary definition". It is the type of meaning which may be described in terms of a set of semantic properties which serves to identify the particular concept associated with the word in question. For instance "cow" shows a kind of animal, "house" shows a kind of building (Fromkin, 1990: 205).

On the other hand, connotation arises as words become associated with certain characteristics of the items to which they refer, for instance, the burdening of woman for many years with attributes such as *frailty, inconstancy and irrationality* has

resulted in these becoming connotations of the word woman for many people. The words "for many people" are important here because connotation is related to the real word experience that one associates with a word and they will therefore vary (unlike denotative meanings) from individual to individual, and community to community. The word "woman" has different connotations for a *misogynist* than will have for a *feminist* (Fromkin, 1990: 205).

The study of meaning normally refers to Semantics. Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It means that language must have meaning. Language without meaning is useless. In Linguistics, Semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as borne on the syntactic levels of words, phrases, sentences, and even larger units of discourse (referred to as *texts*). As with any empirical science, Semantics involves the

interplay of concrete data with theoretical concepts. Traditionally, Semantics has included the study of connotative *sense* and denotative *reference*, truth conditions, argument structure, thematic roles, discourse analysis, and the linkage of all of these to syntax. Semantics is appropriated to be used on investigating the meaning of lyrics of songs because it deals with the meaning of language used by people in order to convey their intended meaning of speaking or message of a language used.

The writer chooses Creed's songs as the object of study because the word Creed itself (also the band's namesake), denotes a popularly Christian theological concept, of absolute individual belief, usually monotheistic. It also focuses on questions of faith, christianity, and eternity.

Based on the previous explanation, the writer is interested in conducting research about "An Analysis on the Denotative and Connotative Meaning of Lyrics of Creed's Songs" because the writer thinks that Creed's Songs are not just the song but it contains an individual believe and understanding the denotative and connotative meaning of lyrics of Creed's songs will be fascinating.

Statement of Problems

Based on the description above, the writer is going to show that there are some problems related with this study, the problems are as follows:

1. What kinds of denotative and connotative meaning are shown on the lyrics of Creed's songs?
2. What are the dominant words of denotative and connotative meaning found on the lyrics of Creed's songs?

Objectives of the Study

1. Describe the denotative and connotative meaning shown on lyrics of Creed's songs.
2. Describe the dominant words of denotative and connotative meaning found on the lyrics of Creed's songs.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study provide a picture on how words not only have denotative meaning but also connotative meaning. The result of this study is expected to be useful and give new information to the semantic study

especially about the denotative and connotative meaning on lyrics of Creed's songs.

Besides, it is expected to be able to broaden the knowledge in understanding the denotative and connotative meanings of lyrics of songs. Also it is hoped to give contribution for readers who are interested in this study.

Definitions of the Key Terms

These key terms are the method to get the right interpretation and understanding of the study.

Semantics: One of the branches of linguistics studying about the meaning and considered as a major branch of linguistics devoted to study of meaning in language (Crystal, 1991:310). According to what has long been the most widely accepted as theory of semantic, meanings are ideas or concepts that can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them, as it were, in the forms of one language or another. (Lyon, 1995:136).

Denotation and Connotation

A word's denotation is its primary or literal significance, whereas connotation is the range of secondary significance which a word commonly suggests.

For instance, the word "sea" denotes a large body of water, but its connotative meaning includes the sense of overwhelming space, danger, instability; whereas "earth" connotes safety, fertility and stability. Of many potential connotations, the particular ones evoked depend upon the context in which words are used. Specific kinds of language (such as archaisms) also have special connotations, carrying a sense of the context in which those words are usually found (<http://The UVic Writer's Guide>. *Connotation and Denotation*)

Creed: Creed was the name of a rock band from Tallahassee, Florida that became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The band won a Grammy Award for Best Rock Song for the song "With Arms Wide Open" in 2001. In June 2004, Creed broke up, and Stapp began recording a solo album, *The Great Divide* with Roadrunner Records recording artist Goneblind. The other band members (including former bassist Brian Marshall) formed a new band, Alter Bridge, with Myles Kennedy (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creed>).

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter presents the research methods of this study. They are research design, research object, data resources, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

The descriptive qualitative method is used to conduct this research because the aim of this research is to describe the denotative and connotative meaning of lyrics of Creed's songs in a complete, detailed description but not to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed (Qualitative). It is called descriptive qualitative because it is natural base, more focusing on process than result, analytic-inductive, descriptive and its scheme is temporal (Moeloeng, 2002:30).

According to Bodgan and Biklen (1982), Qualitative research has the following five features: (1) the natural setting is the data source and the writer is the key data-collection instrument; (2) it attempts primarily to describe and only secondarily to analyze; (3) the concern is with process, that is, with what has transpired, as much as with product or outcome; (4) its data are analyzed inductively, as in putting together the parts of a puzzle; and (5) it is essentially concerned with what things mean, that is, the *why* as well as the *what*.

In the qualitative research, the writer is the most important collector data instrument. Because the research is carried out in discussing lyrics of songs as data, the

writer needs to observe the lyrics of Creed's songs by reading and understanding lyrics of Creed's song. The objective of this research is to describe and identify the denotative and connotative meaning of lyrics of Creed's songs. So, the report will be in the form of descriptive research. The main objective of it is to understand the lyrics more deeply, and then, produce hypotheses to make a form of theory. The analysis in each data required in descriptive form.

Research Object

This study concerned with observing five lyrics of Creed's songs such as My Sacrifice, Don't Stop Dancing, One Last Breath, My Own Prison, What's this Life for.

Data Sources

Data sources that will be used in a case study approach are usually of three types: (1) interviews of various people; (2) Documents such as minutes of meetings, news paper accounts, autobiographies, lyrics, compact disk, tape etc; (3) observation of the phenomena in action. So, documents are suitable data sources for this study. Those documents will be taken from internet in the form of lyrics of songs. The writer gets the lyrics from www.getlyrics.com. After finding Creed's name, the writer chooses *five lyrics* of Creed's songs such as My Sacrifice, Don't Stop Dancing, One Last Breath, My Own Prison, What's this Life for

Research Instrument

Research instrument is important to obtain the result of this study. It is a set of method, which is used to collect the data. In qualitative research, the writer is the key-data collection instrument. In the words, the writer uses Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary by A S Hornby to get deep research and analysis on the denotative meaning of lyrics of Creed's songs.

Data Collection

The data are fully from those five lyrics of Creed's songs. The way to collect the data is finding five lyrics of Creed's songs on internet. After that, the writer:

1. Reads and understands the lyrics and then looks for the denotative and connotative meaning from those five lyrics of Creed's songs.

2. Looks for the dominant word of denotative and connotative meaning found on the lyrics of Creed's songs.

Data Analysis

There are three concurrent flows of activity needed in conducting qualitative data analysis (Stainbeck, 1988:21):

First, *data reduction* refers to the process of selecting words that have denotative and connotative meaning. This first process is finding words, presenting its denotative meaning and showing its connotative meaning based on the theory of J. N Hook.

Secondly, *data display* is an organized assembly of information that permits drawing and action taking. After analyzing whole data founded from the lyrics, the writer displays the result of the analysis on the descriptive form based on each category of denotative and connotative meaning.

The third step of analysis is *drawing conclusion* or *verification*. It is put after presenting the whole findings of the analyzed data that aimed to clarify and note the most important points to avoid vagueness.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Findings of Denotative and Connotative Meanings

Lyric of My Sacrifice

My Sacrifice

Hello my friend we meet again

It's been awhile where should we begin

Feels like forever

Within my heart a memory

A perfect love that

you gave to me

Oh I

remember

Choru

s:

When you are with me

I'm free I'm careless I believe

Above all the others we'll fly this brings tears to my eyes My sacrifice

We've seen our share of ups and downs

Oh how quickly life can turn around

In an instant

It feels so good to reunite Within yourself and within your mind Lets find peace there

CHORUS:

When you are with me

I'm free I'm careless I believe

Above all the others we'll fly this brings tears to my eyes My sacrifice

I just want to say hello again

I just want to say hello again

My sacrifice

Analysis

Friend (n)

Denotative Meaning

This word has six related meanings; first, a person one knows and likes, usually somebody who is not a member of one's family, second, a person who supports a particular cause, organization or charity, e.g. by contributing money or being a member, third, a person who is of the same country or group as oneself and can be considered to have the same views or interests, fourth, a thing that is very helpful or familiar, fifth, a member of the society of friends, sixth, a person who is being talked about or addressed in public (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.473).

Connotative Meaning

When we read whole text of the lyrics, we can find that beside its denotative meaning, the word "friend" also has connotative meaning. It means "God" because the words after it indicated to Christian's belief such as the word "sacrifice". According to Christian's belief, it is about the sacrifice of Christ.etc. So, the word "friend" includes positive connotation.

Fly (v)

Denotative Meaning

The word "fly" in this text means; (1) to move through the air, using wings, (2) to move through air or space, to travel in an aircraft or spacecraft, (3) to direct or control the flight of an aircraft, to transport goods or passengers in an aircraft, (4) to go or move quickly; to rush, to move suddenly and with force, to pass very quickly, (5) to make a kite rise and stay in high in the air,

to raise a flag so that it is displayed, (6) to move about freely; to be carried about in the air, (7) to escape from somebody or something, (8) (of stories, rumors, etc) to be talked about by many people, to be current (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.453).

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The word "fly" includes neutral connotation. Human being has no wings so they cannot fly like a bird. So, this word connotes "becoming better or greater than others".

Tears (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "tears" means a drop of salty water that comes from the eye when one cries, etc (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1226). **Connotative Meaning**

The word "tears" includes negative connotation. Someone or something is impossible to bring tear to someone's eyes. It means "pain or sorrow".

Eyes (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "eye" means; 1 (a) each of two organs on the face that are used for seeing, (b) the visible colored part of this, 2 (a) [often Pl] the power of seeing, the ability to see, (b) [usual sing] the ability to make good judgments about something one sees, 3 a thing like an eye (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.410).

Connotative Meaning

This word contains neutral connotation. The word "eye" represents the meaning of "our lives" because we see the world with our eyes.

Sacrifice (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "sacrifice" means; (1) the action of giving up something that one values for the sake of something more important or valuable or a thing that one gives up in this way, (2) the offering of something valuable to a god, often an animal killed in a special ritual (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1035).

Connotative Meaning

The word "sacrifice" includes negative connotation. This word means "giving up or surrender". According to Christian's belief, the word "sacrifice" is about the sacrifice of Christ.

Ups and downs

Denotative Meaning

The word "ups and downs" can mean; (1) in one direction and then in the opposite direction, (2) moving upwards and downwards, (3) sometimes good and sometimes bad, (4) good and bad luck, experiences, events, etc (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1312).

Connotative Meaning

The word "ups and down" includes neutral connotation because it is impossible for people to share in one direction and then in the opposite direction. Therefore, this word connotes "happy and sad, good or bad".

Reunite (v)

Denotative Meaning

This word has two related meanings; first, to cause two or more people to come together again, second, to join together again separate areas or separate groups within an organization (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1005).

Connotative Meaning

The word "reunite" includes neutral connotation. This word means "come together or meet". According to Christian's belief, the word "reunite" means reunite with God.

Lyrics of Don't Stop Dancing

Don't Stop Dancing

At times life is wicked and I
just can't see the light
A silver lining
sometimes isn't enough
To make some wrongs
seem right Whatever
life brings
I've been through

everything
 And now I'm on my
 knees again
 But I know I
 must go on
 Although I hurt I
 must be strong
 Because inside I know that
 many feel this way

[Choru
 s:]
 Children don't
 stop dancing
 Believe you
 can fly
 Away...a
 way
 At times life's unfair and you know it's plain to
 see Hey God I know I'm just a dot in this world
 Have you forgot about me?
 Whatever life
 brings
 I've been through
 everything
 And now I'm on my
 knees again
 But I know I
 must go on
 Although I hurt I
 must be strong
 Because inside I know that
 many feel this way

[Chorus]
 Am I hiding in the shadows? Forget the pain
 and forget the sorrows
 Am I hiding in the shadows? Forget the pain
 and forget the sorrows
 But I know I
 must go on
 Although I hurt I
 must be strong
 Because inside I know that
 many feel this way

[Chorus]
 Am I hiding in
 the shadows?
 Are we hiding in
 the shadows?

Analysis

Wicked (adj)

Denotative Meaning

This word means; 1 morally bad; evil, 2 intended to harm or capable or harming somebody, 3 tending to annoy or shock people in a playful way, 4 very good (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1363).

Connotative Meaning

This word includes negative connotation. This word means "bad and evil".

Light (n)

Denotative Meaning

This word has six related meanings; first, the natural force that makes things visible, an amount or quality of this, second, a source of light, especially an electric lamp, third, a device used to produce a flame or spark, fourth, understanding, fifth, a window or opening to let light in, sixth, a part of a picture that is brighter than the areas around it (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.681).

Connotative Meaning

The word "light" includes neutral connotation. This word means "to understand or accept something after much difficulty or doubt".

Silver Lining (n)

The word "silver (n)" means; (1) a chemical element, (2) coins made of silver or of a metal looking like it, (3) dishes, ornaments, etc made of silver (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1102).

The word "line (n)" means; (1) a long thin mark on the surface of something, (2) a mark like a line on the skin, (3) a general shape; an outline, (4) a mark on the ground to show the limits of a playing area, running track, etc, a boundary, (5) a series of defensive position where an army is fighting, (6) a row of people or things, (7) a series of people following one another in time, especially generations of the same family, (8) a row of words on a page of writing or in print, a letter, especially the short one, the words spoken by a particular actor, a punishment in which a child is told to write out a certain sentence a number of times, (9) a length of thread, rope, etc used for a particular purpose, (10) a telephone or electricity wire or connection, (11) a single track of a railway, (12) a course of action, behavior or thought, (13) a direction or course, (14) a company that provides transport for people or goods with a number of ships, aircraft, buses, etc, (15) the line [sing] (a) (in British army) the regular soldiers

fighting on foot, (b) (in the US army) the regular fighting units of all kinds, (16) [sing] (a) an area of activity or business, (b) a type of product (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.684-685). Connotative Meaning

The word "silver lining" includes neutral connotation. This word means "dream or hope without action".

Knees (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "knee" means; 1 (a) the joint between the upper and lower parts of the leg, where it bends, (b) the upper surface of the top part of somebody's leg when they are sitting, 2 the part of a garment covering the knee (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.653).

Connotative Meaning

The word "knee" includes neutral connotation. It means "falling or failed" because someone who fails to do something sometimes expresses it by sitting and looking his knees.

Dance (v)

Denotative Meaning

The word "dance" means; 1 (a) to move in a series of steps, alone or with a partner or in group, usually in a way that matches the speed and rhythm of music, (b) to perform a particular dance, 2 to move in a lively way, usually up and down (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.292).

Connotative Meaning

The word "dance" includes positive connotative meaning because it indicates of happiness etc. This word means "do something or survive".

Fly (v)

Denotative Meaning

The word "fly" is this text means; (1) to move through the air, using wings, (2) to move through air or space, to travel in an aircraft or spacecraft, (3) to direct or control the flight of an aircraft, to transport goods or passengers in an aircraft, (4) to go or move quickly; to rush, to move suddenly and with force, to pass very quickly, (5) to make a kite rise and stay in high in the air, to raise a flag so that it is displayed, (6) to move about freely; to be carried about in the air, (7) to escape from somebody or something, (8) (of stories, rumors, etc) to be talked about by many people, to be current (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.453).

Connotative Meaning

The word "fly" includes neutral connotation.

This word means "becoming better or greater than others".

Unfair (adj)

Denotative Meaning

This word means; 1 not right or just; not fair, 2 not following normal rules or principles (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1301).

Connotative Meaning

This word takes account of negative connotation. This word means "bad, wicked, and evil".

Dot (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "dot" means; 1 a small round mark, 2 suck a mark used as a symbol in writing, 3 a tiny distant object (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.347).

Connotative Meaning

The word "dot" includes neutral connotative meaning. This word means; worthless or paltry.

Shadows (n)

Denotative Meaning

The word "shadow" has six related meanings; 1 (a) a dark area on a surface caused by an object standing between direct light and that surface, (b) darkness caused by an object blocking direct light, 2 a dark patch or area, 3 (a) a person or animal that constantly follows somebody, (b) a person, eg a detective, who follows and watches somebody closely and often secretly, 4 [sing] ~of something (usually in negative sentence) a very small amount of something, 5 a thing that is not real or impossible to obtain, 6 [sing] the ~ of somebody/something, the strong influence of somebody or something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, p.1079).

Connotative Meaning

The word "shadow" includes negative connotation. This word means "fear or hopeless".

The Dominant Words of Denotative and Connotative Meaning Found on the Lyrics of Creed's Songs

Based on the finding, the writer finds that the dominant words found on the lyrics of Creed's songs are the word "Fly". This word found on lyrics of My Sacrifice and Don't Stop Dancing. Another word is the word "light" which is found on lyrics of Don't Stop Dancing and My Own Prison. The word "thunder" is found on lyrics of One Last Breath and My Own Prison. The word "Eyes"

is found on lyrics of My Sacrifice and One Last Breath.

So, it can be concluded that there are many words having denotative and connotative meaning found on lyrics of Creed's songs.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the finding and discussion, the summary is concerning with An Analysis on Denotative and Connotative Meaning of Lyrics of Creed's Songs. There are some conclusions:

In lyrics of Creed's songs, there are many words, phrases, and sentences refer to the Christian theological concept such as;

- Their bands name "Creed", according to Christianity the word "Creeds"; (from Latin *credo* meaning "I believe") are concise doctrinal statements or confessions, usually of religious beliefs. They began as baptismal formulas and were later expanded during the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries to become statements of faith.
- Sacrifice refers to the sacrifice of Christ
- God's grave, Protestantism teaches that Eternal Salvation is a gift that comes to an individual by God's grace, sometimes defined as "unmerited favor" on the basis of one's personal belief in and dependence on the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Salvation in this sense refers to God's activities in bringing humans into right relationship with God and with one another through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the belief that one can be saved (rescued) from sin and eternal death. Other concepts used in the study of how salvation is accomplished include conversion, faith, justification, regeneration, and others. Many Protestants believe in the "assurance of salvation" that God can give the confidence that a believer in Jesus as the Christ has truly received salvation.
- Afterlife and Eschaton, Most Christians believe that human beings experience divine judgment and are rewarded either with eternal life or eternal damnation. This includes the general judgment at the Resurrection of the dead (see below) as well as the belief (held by Catholics, Orthodox and some Protestants) in a

judgment particular to the individual soul upon physical death. And this entire concept makes many people called Creed as Christian Band.

On the other hands, many times Creed's songs are questioning God. And asking why God does such unpleasant things to people if he supposed to be so good. It also focuses on questions of faith, Christianity, and eternity. Nevertheless, it has not been confirmed that the songs were meant to be Christian songs.

The Suggestion

In accordance with the finding of this research described previously, there is a point that could be suggested; two points need explain while talking about connotation.

The 1st point connotation is far more intermediate than denotation on one hand. Connotation may be subject to variable exchange from generation to the next.

Connotation may be rather subjective and not shared in the same way by all speakers of a language. Our individual experience of language and its relation to the world is to some extent unique and idiosyncratic. Connotation is not stable.

The 2nd point is the extent to which we relate the lexeme itself rather than to the entity that a lexeme denotes. The connotation of a word to us must reflect our experience of the entity to which the word refers and to the place this entity has in our belief system.

For the students, who study about semantics especially denotative and connotative meaning, are expected to have good comprehension on the content and context of the text by reading the whole text. It will be able to avoid wrong choice of appropriateness meaning of denotative and connotative meaning.

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