

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses five topics related to this study. It includes the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Lyrics in music are a powerful form of expression, and they often carry layers of meaning that communicate emotions, stories, and cultural values. The connotative meanings are commonly seen when analyzing lyrics (Fauziyah, 2024). The connotative meanings relate to the implied, emotional, or cultural significance that goes beyond the literal meaning. In song lyrics, artists often employ connotative language to add depth and resonance to their work. To completely understand the song's creative goal, listeners must comprehend these levels of significance (Satriani, 2023). As viewers decipher the complex meanings in ways that could speak to their own feelings and experiences, it enables a deeper connection with the songs. By reflecting common ideals, challenges, or goals within a society, analyzing the connotative meanings in song lyrics may also provide light on larger cultural and socioeconomic effects on the artist (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

In the realm of popular culture, music lyrics hold a unique and significant place in the expression of human thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Musicians, as artists and wordsmiths, have the ability to craft lyrics that are not only linguistically sophisticated but also emotionally evocative. Taylor Swift, a prominent figure in the world of contemporary music, is well-known for her songwriting prowess. Her songs are celebrated for their lyrical depth, storytelling, and emotional resonance, making her an intriguing subject of study within the realm of semantics (Anisah, 2023; Tearle, 2022).

This study aims to delve into the connotative meanings found in the selected song lyrics of Taylor Swift. These connotations often shape the emotional impact of the lyrics and contribute to the overall message and storytelling in a song (Pratiwi et al., 2020). The choice of Taylor Swift's song lyrics as the subject of this study is

particularly intriguing due to her diverse repertoire that spans multiple genres and themes (Anisah, 2023). Her songs encompass a wide range of emotions and subjects, making it an excellent case study to explore the complexities of semantics within the context of popular music (Fauziyah, 2024). Additionally, Swift's lyrics have been praised for their poetic quality and their ability to resonate with audiences across the world that makes her become a suitable artist for examining the nuances of meaning in music (Tearle, 2022).

Choosing a connotative focus for analyzing Taylor Swift's selected song provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the text that goes beyond literal interpretations (Satriani, 2023). This approach allows for the exploration of emotional and cultural implications embedded within the lyrics, revealing the artist's intent and the societal values reflected in their work (Rais & Fadillah, 2025). By uncovering the feelings associated with specific words and phrases, connotative analysis enhances our understanding of how music connects with listeners on a personal level. Additionally, many song lyrics utilize metaphorical language and imagery that carry significant connotations, which can illuminate deeper themes and messages (Ariyadi et al., 2024). This method also facilitates interdisciplinary connections, bridging fields such as psychology, sociology, and literary studies, thereby enriching the thesis with diverse perspectives. Furthermore, a connotative focus aligns well with existing literature on music and lyrics, fostering a dialogue with previous research and providing a framework for comparing different artists or genres (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Finally, as contemporary songs often address pressing social and political issues, this analytical approach highlights how lyrics reflect and respond to these challenges, making the research timely and impactful. Overall, a connotative focus offers a comprehensive lens through which to examine the complexities of music lyrics, yielding insights that resonate with both academic and popular audiences.

The reason for choosing Taylor Swift's songs for analyzing connotative language is due to her rich imagery and emotional depth, which make the exploration of nuanced meanings particularly engaging (Anisah, 2023). Her lyrics often incorporate literary devices such as metaphors and similes, allowing for

comparisons to classic literature and enhancing students' understanding of these techniques (Fauziyah, 2024). Additionally, Swift's music resonates with a wide audience, especially younger generations, making it a relatable entry point for discussions about language and meaning (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Ultimately, analyzing Swift's songs encourages critical thinking about language, fostering careful reading and articulate writing skills that extend beyond the classroom (Satriani, 2023).

Taylor Swift's fourth studio album, *Red* released in 2012, marked a significant turning point in her career. The album showcased her growth as an artist, exploring themes of love, heartbreak, and self-discovery (Tearle, 2022). Here's an in-depth analysis of *Red*, focusing on the songs *Everything Has Changed* and *All Too Well* are standout track on the album, featuring British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran. The song is about the instant connection and infatuation that can come with falling in love. The lyrics describe the sudden transformation of one's life, with the world appearing brighter and more vibrant due to the presence of this new person (Rais & Fadillah, 2025).

The song's narrative is structured around the day after meeting this new love interest. Taylor Swift's lyrics convey her desire to know him better, with lines like "I just wanna know you better, know you better now" and "I just wanna know you, know you, know you". The song's chorus, "All I know is we said 'hello' / and your eyes look like coming home," captures the sense of familiarity and comfort that can arise from a new connection (Tearle, 2022). The song's production handled by Butch Walker, is characterized by a guitar-led folk-pop sound, which complements the intimate and personal nature of the lyrics (Anisah, 2023). The song received mixed reviews from critics, but it has become a fan favorite and a staple of Swift's live performances (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

The second song is "All Too Well" is a fan favorite and a highlight of the 'Red' album. The song is a poignant and emotional ballad that explores the pain and heartache that can come with the end of a relationship (Satriani, 2023). The lyrics are deeply personal and introspective, with Swift reflecting on the memories and emotions that linger long after a breakup (Rais & Fadillah, 2025). The song's

narrative is structured around a series of vignettes, each capturing a moment or memory from the relationship. Swift's lyrics are marked by their vivid imagery and storytelling, with lines like "You used to be a little kid with glasses in a twin-sized bed" and "You used to be a little kid with glasses in a twin-sized bed / and your mother's telling stories about you on the tee-ball team" (Fauziyah, 2024). This simplicity allows the listener to focus on the emotional intensity of the lyrics and Swift's delivery. "All Too Well" has been praised for its raw emotion and honesty, with many fans considering it one of Swift's best songs (Ariyadi et al., 2024).

By investigating the connotative meanings in Taylor Swift's lyrics, this study aims to shed light on how semantics operates in the world of music and contributes to the power of lyrical storytelling. The findings of this research may not only deepen our understanding of the linguistic aspects of songwriting but also provide insights into how language is used to convey emotional depth and connect with a diverse audience. Moreover, this study has the potential to offer a new perspective on the artistry of Taylor Swift and her contribution to the field of music and linguistics.

Novelty of this research lies in the focus on analyzing connotative meanings in selected songs of Taylor Swift using the perspective of Roland Barthes theory which is still limited in previous studies. Connotative language plays an important role in song lyrics because it functions to express implied emotions, strengthen symbolic messages, and help listeners interpret deeper meanings beyond literal words. Previous research related to connotative meaning in song lyrics mostly discusses general semantic analysis or other artists' works. This study specifically examines the layers of meaning in Swift's selected songs and how connotative language functions to construct emotional and narrative messages. The contribution of this research is expected to enrich semantic studies in music lyrics by providing deeper interpretation of connotative expressions and offering academic reference for future researchers who are interested in lyric analysis. Connotative language functions to create implied emotional, cultural, and symbolic meanings that go beyond literal interpretation. These allowing listeners to experience the message of the song more personally and interpretively. Therefore this research is conducted to

identify how connotative meanings are used in the selected songs and to ensure that the analysis is clearly presented by using appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions can be formulated as follow:

1. What types of connotative meanings are found in Taylor Swift's selected song lyrics?
2. How do the lyrics of Taylor Swift's selected songs utilize connotative meanings?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of connotative meanings found in Taylor Swift's selected song lyrics.
2. To analyze how the lyrics of Taylor Swift's selected songs utilize connotative meanings.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The writer hoped that this study could give a new offer and make informational contributions to a larger body of knowledge, especially the linguistics study on connotative and denotative in song's lyrics.

2. Practically

This study provides practical contributions for several groups. For English Literature students it offers a clear analytical model for identifying denotative and connotative meanings in song lyrics using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory which can be applied to other literary texts. For lecturers it serves as a teaching reference in Semantics and Literary Criticism courses by using popular song lyrics to explain abstract concepts. For future researchers it provides a structured methodological framework for analyzing

connotative meanings in modern texts. Additionally for general readers and music listeners this study encourages a deeper and more critical understanding of the symbolic and emotional meanings in song lyrics especially in representing themes of love and heartbreak.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the connotative meanings found in the selected song lyrics of Taylor Swift, namely *Everything Has Changed* and *All Too Well* from the *Red* album. The analysis is conducted using Roland Barthes' theory of connotation to identify the types of connotative meanings and to analyze how these meanings are utilized in conveying emotional and narrative messages through the lyrics.

This study is limited to the analysis of the lyrics of *Everything Has Changed* and *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift. It only examines connotative meanings based on Roland Barthes' theory and does not discuss other aspects of semantics, such as denotative meaning, pragmatics, stylistics, or discourse analysis. In addition, this study does not analyze the musical composition, audience reception, or Taylor Swift's entire discography. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the selected song lyrics and cannot be generalized to all of Taylor Swift's songs.