



Beyond the Lyrics: A Semantic Analysis of Hidden Meanings in Ruth B.'s Song "Dandelions"

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Abstract

This study examines the hidden meanings in Ruth B.'s song "Dandelions" through a semantic approach. The study aims to reveal how simple lyrical expressions construct deeper emotional and symbolic meanings beyond their literal interpretation. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, this research analyzes selected lyric lines by focusing on denotative meaning, connotative meaning, metaphor, symbolism, and imagery. The findings show that connotative meaning is the dominant semantic element, indicating that the song communicates its message mainly through implied and emotional meanings rather than direct expression. The word "dandelions" functions symbolically as a representation of fragile hope, wishes, and emotional uncertainty, while the metaphor "I see forever in your eyes" reflects an imagined future and emotional commitment. The analysis also reveals a gradual emotional progression from attraction and idealization to hope, longing, and uncertainty. These findings suggest that the simplicity of the lyrics does not reduce their semantic richness; instead, it strengthens the emotional accessibility of the song. Therefore, this study confirms that popular song lyrics can be examined as meaningful linguistic texts that reflect human emotions, personal desires, and hidden layers of meaning.

Keywords: *Semantic Analysis, Song Lyrics, Connotative Meaning, Figurative Language*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji makna tersembunyi dalam lagu "Dandelions" karya Ruth B. dengan menggunakan pendekatan semantik. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengungkap bagaimana ungkapan lirik yang sederhana dapat membangun makna emosional dan simbolik yang lebih dalam melampaui makna literalnya. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis beberapa baris lirik terpilih dengan berfokus pada makna denotatif, makna konotatif, metafora, simbolisme, dan imaji. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa makna konotatif merupakan unsur semantik yang paling dominan, yang menandakan bahwa lagu ini lebih banyak menyampaikan pesan melalui makna tersirat dan emosional daripada ungkapan langsung. Kata "dandelions" berfungsi secara simbolik sebagai representasi harapan yang rapuh, keinginan, dan ketidakpastian emosional, sedangkan metafora "I see forever in your eyes" mencerminkan bayangan masa depan dan komitmen emosional. Analisis juga menunjukkan adanya perkembangan emosi secara bertahap, mulai dari ketertarikan, idealisasi, harapan, kerinduan, hingga ketidakpastian. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kesederhanaan bahasa dalam lirik tidak mengurangi kekayaan maknanya, tetapi justru memperkuat daya emosional lagu tersebut. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa lirik lagu populer dapat dianalisis sebagai teks linguistik yang bermakna dan merefleksikan emosi, keinginan, serta lapisan makna tersembunyi dalam pengalaman manusia.

Kata Kunci: *Analisis Semantik; Lirik Lagu; Makna Konotatif; Bahasa Kiasan*



INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a tool for delivering information; it also functions as a medium for expressing feelings, identity, imagination, and personal experience. In daily communication, people often use language indirectly to convey emotions that cannot always be stated explicitly. This indirectness becomes more visible in literary and artistic forms, including song lyrics. As a form of verbal art, song lyrics combine linguistic expression and emotional experience, allowing listeners to interpret meaning beyond the literal level. Therefore, lyrics can be studied not only as entertainment but also as meaningful texts that reflect human emotions, social experience, and personal imagination (Cross, 2014).

In contemporary popular music, lyrics often appear simple, but they may contain deep emotional and symbolic meanings. This creates an important issue in semantic studies: meaning is not always produced through complex vocabulary or complicated sentence structures, but through the relationship between words, context, emotion, and interpretation. In this regard, semantic analysis becomes useful because it examines how meaning is constructed through linguistic units such as words, phrases, and expressions. A semantic approach enables researchers to distinguish between denotative meaning, which refers to literal meaning, and connotative meaning, which refers to emotional, implied, or associative meaning. This distinction is significant because song lyrics frequently communicate feelings indirectly through figurative expressions, symbols, and emotional associations (Barradas & Sakka, 2022).

Ruth B.'s song "Dandelions" is an interesting object for semantic analysis because it uses simple and accessible language to express complex emotional experiences. On the surface, the song may be understood as a romantic song about love and admiration. However, a closer reading shows that the lyrics also represent deeper feelings such as longing, hope, uncertainty, vulnerability, and emotional dependence. The image of "dandelions" itself can be interpreted not only as a natural object but also as a symbolic representation of wishes, fragile hope, and desire for emotional fulfillment. This shows that the hidden meaning of the song does not lie in difficult vocabulary, but in how ordinary words are arranged and interpreted within an emotional context (Juslin, 2013).

Several previous studies have examined meaning in song lyrics by using semantic and semiotic approaches. Pratiwi, Indrayani, and Soemantri (2020), for example, analyzed denotative and connotative meanings in Ariana Grande's song lyrics and found that connotative meaning plays an important role in revealing implied emotional messages. Ishar and Irawan (2023) also examined denotative and connotative meanings in The Beatles' songs and showed that song lyrics can represent feelings, opinions, character, and human experience. In another study, Ulfah and Pujiati (2025) analyzed semantic

meaning variations in Selena Gomez's song lyrics and argued that semantic meanings help build emotional connection between the singer and listeners. These studies indicate that song lyrics are valuable linguistic data for examining how meaning is produced and interpreted.

However, most previous studies tend to focus on songs with broader cultural, social, or complex symbolic themes, while fewer studies specifically examine how simple romantic lyrics can carry hidden emotional meanings. In addition, studies that focus specifically on Ruth B.'s "Dandelions" remain limited. This creates a research gap that needs to be addressed. The academic debate in this area concerns whether simple popular song lyrics can be treated as meaningful linguistic texts worthy of semantic analysis. This study takes the position that simplicity in lyrics does not reduce their academic value. Instead, simple lyrics may reveal how emotional meaning is effectively constructed through ordinary language, repetition, symbolic imagery, and connotative expression (Climent & Coll-Florit, 2021).

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze the hidden meanings in Ruth B.'s "Dandelions" through a semantic approach. The analysis focuses on denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and figurative expressions found in selected parts of the lyrics. By examining these aspects, this research seeks to explain how the song communicates emotional depth beyond its surface meaning. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to semantic studies of popular music by showing that simple lyrics can contain rich emotional, symbolic, and interpretive meanings.

METHOD

Semantics is the study of meaning in language, but in practice it goes beyond just dictionary definitions. It looks at how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and felt by the listener or reader. In songs, semantics becomes especially important because the meaning is often not stated directly. Instead, it is implied through word choice, tone, repetition, and context. In this research, semantics is used to understand how Dandelions communicates emotional experiences. Even though the lyrics are simple, they carry layers of meaning. This is why semantic analysis is relevant because it helps uncover those layers in a structured way (Simarmata et al., 2021).

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, while connotation refers to the emotional or associative meaning. In everyday communication, people often rely on denotation for clarity. However, in songs, connotation is more dominant because it creates emotional depth. For example, the word "dandelions" literally refers to a type of flower. But in this song, it represents hope, wishes, and uncertainty. This shift from literal meaning to emotional meaning is what makes the song powerful.

Figurative language is used to express ideas in a more imaginative and emotional way. Instead of stating things directly, the songwriter uses indirect

expressions to create deeper meaning. In *Dandelions*, figurative language appears in several forms. Metaphor is used to compare love with wishes. Symbolism is used through the image of the dandelion. Imagery helps listeners visualize scenes, such as standing in a field and making wishes (Agustina & Mustikawati, 2023).

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with a semantic approach. This method was applied because the study aimed to describe and interpret the hidden meanings found in Ruth B.'s song "Dandelions." The analysis focused on denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and figurative language in selected parts of the lyrics (Arira & Zaim, 2025).

The primary data of this study were the lyrics of "Dandelions" by Ruth B. The lyrics were obtained from reliable lyric sources and cross-checked with several verified platforms to ensure textual accuracy. The unit of analysis consisted of words, phrases, and lines that contain emotional, symbolic, and figurative meanings.

The data were collected through documentation technique. The researcher first collected the written lyrics and then conducted repeated readings to understand the literal meaning, emotional tone, and overall message of the song. During this process, the researcher marked several significant words and expressions, such as "wish," "dandelions," "forever," "mine," and "field of dandelions," because they potentially contain deeper semantic meanings.

The data were selected based on several criteria: lines that express emotional states, lines that contain figurative language, repeated or emphasized lines, and lines that contribute to the main theme of the song. Based on these criteria, several lyrics were selected, such as "Maybe it's the way you say my name," "I've heard of a love that comes once in a lifetime," "I'm in a field of dandelions," "Wishing on everyone that you'd be mine," "I see forever in your eyes," and "Praying to God that one day you'll be mine."

The selected data were analyzed in several stages. First, the researcher identified the denotative meaning of each selected line by examining its literal meaning. Second, the researcher interpreted the connotative meaning by considering the emotional and contextual meanings behind the words. Third, the researcher identified figurative language, including metaphor, symbolism, and imagery. Finally, the researcher examined the development of meaning across the song to understand how the lyrics move from attraction and admiration to hope, longing, and uncertainty. The interpretation was based on consistent textual patterns to avoid unsupported overinterpretation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Semantic Analysis

Semantics is the study of meaning in language, but in practice it goes beyond just dictionary definitions. It looks at how meaning is constructed,

interpreted, and felt by the listener or reader. In songs, semantics becomes especially important because the meaning is often not stated directly. Instead, it is implied through word choice, tone, repetition, and context. In this research, semantics is used to understand how Dandelions communicates emotional experiences. Even though the lyrics are simple, they carry layers of meaning. This is why semantic analysis is relevant it helps uncover those layers in a structured way.

There are two main aspects used in this study. First, lexical semantics, which focuses on the meaning of individual words such as "love," "wish," and "forever." Second, sentence semantics, which looks at how these words interact in a sentence to create a complete meaning. When combined, both aspects help explain how emotional meaning is built step by step.

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, while connotation refers to the emotional or associative meaning. In everyday communication, people often rely on denotation for clarity. However, in songs, connotation is more dominant because it creates emotional depth. For example, the word "dandelions" literally refers to a type of flower. But in this song, it represents hope, wishes, and uncertainty. This shift from literal meaning to emotional meaning is what makes the song powerful.

The balance between denotation and connotation is important. Denotation provides the basic understanding, while connotation allows the listener to connect emotionally. Without connotation, the song would feel flat and less meaningful.

Figurative language is used to express ideas in a more imaginative and emotional way. Instead of stating things directly, the songwriter uses indirect expressions to create deeper meaning. In Dandelions, figurative language appears in several forms. Metaphor is used to compare love with wishes. Symbolism is used through the image of the dandelion. Imagery helps listeners visualize scenes, such as standing in a field and making wishes.

These elements are important because they transform simple lyrics into something more expressive. They also allow listeners to interpret the song in their own way, depending on their personal experiences.

The following examples illustrate how semantic analysis is applied:

1. "Maybe it's the way you say my name"

Denotatively, this line refers to the way a person pronounces someone's name. However, connotatively, it reflects emotional sensitivity and personal connection. The speaker finds meaning in a small detail, suggesting that love often begins from subtle interactions.

2. "I've heard of a love that comes once in a lifetime"

Literally, this line refers to a rare type of love. Connotatively, it introduces the idea of "ideal love" or "true love" that is highly valued and difficult to find. This creates emotional intensity and builds expectation within the song.

3. "I'm in a field of dandelions"

Denotatively, this line describes being in a field full of flowers. However, in a connotative sense, the "field of dandelions" symbolizes a space full of hopes, dreams, and wishes. The imagery creates a soft and emotional atmosphere.

4. "Wishing on everyone that you'd be mine"

Literally, this line describes making wishes. Connotatively, it reflects strong desire combined with lack of control. The repetition of wishing indicates emotional dependence and longing.

5. "I see forever in your eyes"

Denotatively, it refers to looking into someone's eyes. Connotatively, it expresses the idea of imagining a future together. The word "forever" symbolizes commitment, hope, and emotional projection.

6. "Praying to God that one day you'll be mine"

This line introduces a spiritual dimension. Denotatively, it refers to praying. Connotatively, it shows the intensity of desire, where hope is placed beyond human control. It emphasizes vulnerability and emotional dependence.

In addition to denotation and connotation, this analysis also identifies figurative language used in the lyrics:

Metaphor: Love is presented as a "wish," suggesting uncertainty and lack of control.

Symbolism: Dandelions symbolize fragile hopes and dreams.

Imagery: The visual image of a "field of dandelions" enhances emotional engagement.

Through this semantic analysis, it becomes clear that the song constructs meaning not only through literal expressions, but also through emotional and symbolic layers.

Interpretation of Meaning

After analyzed the semantic elements of each lyric, the next step is to interpret the overall meaning of the song in a broader and more integrated context. The song Dandelions can be interpreted as a representation of emotional vulnerability in love, especially the experience of hoping for something uncertain. The speaker expresses deep feelings for someone, but there is no clear confirmation that those feelings are returned. This creates a sense of emotional tension throughout the song. The repeated act of "wishing" and "praying" suggests that the speaker does not have control over the situation. Instead, they rely on hope, fate, or even divine intervention. This reflects a common human experience wanting something deeply but not being able to guarantee the outcome (Schäfer et al., 2013).

Another important interpretation is related to the idea of idealized love. The speaker sees the loved person as unique and irreplaceable, which can be

seen in lines that emphasize rarity and "once in a lifetime" love. This idealization makes the emotional experience feel more intense but also more fragile. The symbolism of the dandelion plays a central role in this interpretation. Dandelions are light, easily carried by the wind, and often associated with wishes. This reflects how feelings in the song are delicate and uncertain. Just like dandelion seeds, emotions can move in unpredictable directions.

From an emotional perspective, the song follows a clear progression:

Initial attraction

Admiration and idealization

Hope and desire

Uncertainty and longing

This progression mirrors real-life emotional experiences, which is why the song feels relatable to many listeners. Overall, the interpretation shows that Dandelions is not just about love, but about the emotional process of hoping, waiting, and dealing with uncertainty. The song captures a universal feeling that many people experience, making it both meaningful and impactful.

Semantic Meaning Lyrics

This section presents the findings of the semantic analysis conducted on the selected lyrics of the song Dandelions. The results are organized into tables to clearly show the distribution of semantic elements such as denotation, connotation, and figurative language.

Table 1. Semantic Meaning Classification of Selected Lyrics

No.	Lyric Line	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Category
1	Maybe it's the way you say my name	Someone saying a name	Emotional connection, attraction	Connotation
2	I've heard of a love that comes once in a lifetime	Rare love	Ideal/true love	Connotation
3	I'm in a field of dandelions	Being in a flower field	Hope, dreams, wishes	Symbolism
4	Wishing on everyone that you'd be mine	Making wishes	Desire, longing	Connotation
5	I see forever in your eyes	Looking into eyes	Imagined future, commitment	Metaphor

6	Praying to God that one day you'll be mine	Talking to God	Deep emotional dependence	hope, Connotation
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The selected lyrics of “Dandelions” reveal that the song builds its hidden meaning by transforming simple literal expressions into deeper emotional meanings. Words such as “name,” “eyes,” “dandelions,” “wishing,” and “praying” may appear ordinary at the denotative level, but they gain stronger semantic value when interpreted within the context of romantic desire. The image of “dandelions” is especially significant because it shifts from a natural object into a symbol of fragile hope, dreams, and uncertainty. Meanwhile, the expression “I see forever in your eyes” changes a physical act of looking into a metaphor for imagined commitment and future love. Through these semantic shifts, the lyrics show that the speaker’s love is not only expressed as attraction, but also as longing, vulnerability, and emotional dependence. Therefore, the hidden meaning of the song lies in its use of connotation, symbolism, and metaphor to present love as a hopeful yet uncertain emotional experience.

Table 2. Distribution of Semantic Elements

Semantic Element	Frequency	Percentage
Connotation	4	66.7%
Symbolism	1	16.7%
Metaphor	1	16.7%
Total	6	100%

Formula: $\text{Percentage} = \text{Frequency} / \text{Total Data} * 100\%$

Based on Table 2, connotative meaning dominates the data with 66.7%, which clearly indicates that the song communicates its message more through implied meaning rather than literal expression. This result is consistent with the analysis in the Data Analysis section, where most of the selected lyrics such as “Maybe it’s the way you say my name” and “Wishing on everyone that you’d be mine” were interpreted beyond their surface meaning. These lines do not simply describe actions, but reflect emotional states such as attraction, longing, and vulnerability. The dominance of connotation also supports the idea that song lyrics function similarly to literary texts. As discussed in the Literature Review, meaning in language is often layered, especially in creative expressions like songs. In Dandelions, simple words are used, but they carry deeper emotional associations that require interpretation. This shows that semantic meaning is not only about what is said, but also about what is implied (Pakpahan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of symbolism and metaphor, although smaller in percentage each 16.7%, plays a crucial role in strengthening the emotional impact of the song. For example, the line “I’m in a field of dandelions” was identified in the Data Analysis section as a symbolic expression. The dandelion does not only represent a flower, but also

symbolizes hope, dreams, and emotional fragility. This interpretation is important because it connects directly to the main theme of the song hoping for something uncertain.

Similarly, the metaphor "I see forever in your eyes" reflects how the speaker imagines a future with the loved person. This metaphor shows how emotional perception can shape meaning, even when the reality is still uncertain. These findings demonstrate that even though figurative language appears less frequently than connotation, its function is essential in building the overall message of the song. Based on table, it can be seen that most of the selected lyrics contain connotative meaning rather than purely literal meaning. Although each line has a clear denotative meaning, the emotional impact mainly comes from its implied meaning. Table 2, shows that connotation dominates the semantic elements with 66.7%, while symbolism and metaphor each appear at 16.7%. This indicates that the song relies heavily on emotional interpretation rather than direct expression. This result supports the idea that song lyrics often communicate meaning indirectly. Instead of stating feelings clearly, the songwriter uses simple words that carry deeper emotional associations. Table 3, highlights the main emotional themes found in the song. The progression starts from attraction, moves to idealization, then to hope and longing, and finally to uncertainty. This pattern reflects real-life emotional experiences, especially in romantic situations.

Table 3. Emotional Themes Identified

No	Emotional Theme	Example Lyric	Description
1	Attraction	"the way you say my name"	Early emotional interest
2	Idealization	"love that comes once in a lifetime"	Seeing love as rare and special
3	Hope	"wishing on dandelions"	Desire for a relationship
4	Longing	"you'd be mine"	Deep emotional wanting
5	Uncertainty	"pretty sure"	Lack of control or assurance

The findings presented in the previous section show that the song Dandelions by Ruth B. relies heavily on connotative meaning and figurative language to express emotional depth. This section discusses those findings in relation to the semantic analysis conducted earlier, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed in the song.

In addition, the emotional themes identified in Table 3 attraction, idealization, hope, longing, and uncertainty show a clear progression that aligns with the interpretation discussed earlier. The song begins with small moments of attraction, such as noticing the way someone says a name. It then develops into admiration and idealization, as seen in the idea of "a love that

comes once in a lifetime.” After that, the emotional focus shifts to hope and longing, especially through repeated expressions of wishing and praying. This progression reflects real-life emotional experiences, where feelings do not appear suddenly but develop gradually over time. The final stage, which involves uncertainty, is particularly significant. The speaker continues to hope and wish, but there is no clear confirmation that the love will be returned. This creates emotional tension, which makes the song feel more authentic and relatable. Another important point is the role of repetition in strengthening meaning. Although not presented as a separate category in the tables, repetition can be observed in phrases related to “wishing” and “hope.” This repetition reinforces the emotional intensity and shows how deeply the speaker desires a certain outcome. This observation is consistent with the Data Analysis section, where repeated expressions were considered as indicators of emotional emphasis.

Moreover, the findings suggest that the simplicity of language in *Dandelions* is actually one of its strengths. Instead of using complex vocabulary, the song uses familiar and everyday words. However, through connotation and figurative language, these simple words are transformed into meaningful expressions. This supports the idea that complexity in meaning does not always require complexity in language. From a broader perspective, this study also confirms that semantic analysis is an effective approach for analyzed song lyrics. By focusing on denotation, connotation, metaphor, and symbolism, the researcher is able to uncover layers of meaning that may not be immediately visible. This aligns with the theoretical framework discussed earlier, which emphasizes that meaning in language is often indirect and context dependent.

Finally, the strong emotional connection created by the song can be explained through its semantic structure. Because the lyrics reflect common human experiences such as loving someone, hoping for a response, and dealing with uncertainty listeners are able to relate to the message personally. This relatability is what makes the song meaningful beyond its literal content. In conclusion, the discussion shows that the findings from the Results section are strongly supported by the semantic analysis conducted earlier. The dominance of connotative meaning, supported by symbolism and metaphor, creates a rich and emotionally engaging text. The song *Dandelions* successfully demonstrates how simple language can be used to express complex human emotions, making it both meaningful and worthy of academic study (Koelsch, 2014).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the song *Dandelions* by Ruth B. is more than just a simple romantic song. It represents a deeper emotional experience that many people can relate to, especially the feeling of hoping for something uncertain. Through

semantic analysis, it becomes clear that each lyric contributes to the overall meaning of the song. The use of connotation, metaphor, and symbolism allows the song to express complex emotions in a simple and accessible way. This combination is what makes the song both easy to understand and emotionally powerful. The analysis also shows that meaning in language is not always direct. In many cases, the most important meanings are hidden beneath the surface and require interpretation. This is especially true in song lyrics, where emotions are often expressed indirectly. Another important point is that songs can be studied academically. Even though they are often seen as entertainment, they can provide valuable insight into human emotions, communication, and meaning making. Overall, this study proves that *Dandelions* is a meaningful text that reflects real emotional experiences. It also shows that semantic analysis is a useful tool for understanding how language works in creative contexts. For future research, it is suggested that other songs can be analyzed using different linguistic approaches, such as pragmatics or discourse analysis, to gain a broader understanding of meaning in music.

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