

LEXICAL RELATIONS IN SASHA ALEX SLOAN'S SELECTED SONG LYRICS

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ABSTRACT. *Lyrics and semantics represent an attractive domain for linguistic research since the language in lyrics is rich with many materials for studying how people convey meaning. This study focuses on the lexical relations present in selected song lyrics from Sasha Alex Sloan's work, she is an American singer and songwriter popularly known for her straightforward and introspective lyrics. While several previous research have examined lexical semantics in poetry and literature, relatively little attention has been paid to the semantic properties of contemporary song lyrics. This gap is significant given music's increasing popularity and cultural relevance as an artistic medium. The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive semantic analysis of Sloan's lyrics to uncover the lexical relations that underpin her storytelling through music. Specific aims include identifying and classifying synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy, and homophones/homonyms within her lyrical content. The study employs a qualitative approach. By illuminating the semantics presented in Sloan's songwriting, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language is artfully crafted to create layers of meaning in modern music.*

Keywords: *Lexical relation; Contemporary music; Song lyrics; Sasha Alex Sloan.*

INTRODUCTION

Semantic analysis in the context of song lyrics offers deep insight into the meaning and message contained therein. This is important because song lyrics often contain complex and implied meanings, which can be expressed through the use of words, metaphors, and distinctive language styles. As Brown (2000) highlighted, semantic analysis opens a window into a deep understanding of how meaning is constructed in particular linguistic and cultural contexts. Lexical relation is the branch of semantics that deals with word meanings and is the study of how lexicons are organized and how lexical meanings are related to one another. Murphy (2003) states that lexical relation is the relationship of meaning between a word and another word. According to Saeed (2003:63), lexical relations can be divided into homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy.

1. Homonymy: Words that are spelled the same but have different meanings
2. Polysemy: The same form that has more than one meaning.
3. Synonymy: More than one form related to one meaning.
4. Antonymy: When a word has the opposite meaning to another word.
5. Hyponymy: a word that contains a specific meaning within the scope of a general meaning.
6. Meronymy: one word that represents a part of another.

Sasha Alex Sloan's song lyrics stand out for their raw honesty and introspectiveness, resonating deeply with worldwide audiences. Her ability to encapsulate complex emotions and personal experiences within her lyrics creates a profound connection with listeners. This emotional resonance makes her songs an ideal subject for semantic analysis. By delving into the semantic layers of Sloan's lyrics, we can uncover the intricacies of human emotion and perception as expressed through language. Her lyrical compositions often employ vivid imagery, metaphor, and symbolism, inviting listeners to interpret and imbue the words with personal meaning. Semantic analysis reveals different levels of meaning, showing all the details and deep themes woven into Sloan's songs. Additionally, examining the lexical relations within her lyrics can provide insights into Sloan's unique artistic vision and narrative style, enhancing our appreciation of her work from linguistic and emotional standpoints.

Previous literature reviews have revealed that semantic analysis in the context of song lyrics is a rich and relevant research field. Research by Sholihah (2018) analyzed the semantic meanings and moral values found in the lyrics of songs in Coldplay's album. This study aimed to expand knowledge in the field of semantics, particularly in the analysis of song lyrics. The results showed various lexical meanings and moral values contained in the lyrics, as well as the use of various figurative language such as metaphor, hyperbole, simile, and others.

Another study by Maulana & Laila (2017) also examined semantic analysis, particularly

in the metaphors found in selected lyrics from artists such as The Script, Katy Perry, and Michael Bublé. This research aimed to identify the types of metaphors, describe the elements compared to those metaphors and explain the functional meaning of the metaphors in the context of song lyrics and their implications in education. Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into semantic analysis in song lyrics, research gaps still need to be filled. One of them is the lack of research specifically focusing on the works of Sasha Alex Sloan. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of selected lyrics from Sloan, which can provide new insights into the use of language and meaning in her work. Additionally, the surgical examination of the limitations or gaps in previous research also justifies the need for this study to complement the understanding of semantic analysis in the evolving context of song lyrics.

The research aims to conduct a comprehensive semantic analysis of selected songs by Sasha Alex Sloan to explore the lexical relations within the lyrics. Specifically, the objectives include identifying and categorizing various types of lexical relations such as synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonyms, and hyponymy. Furthermore, the study investigates these lexical relations' underlying meanings and nuances. By achieving these objectives, the research aims to contribute to understanding the semantic structures and thematic elements in Sloan's songs, thereby enriching scholarly discourse on contemporary songwriting and linguistic analysis.

METHODS

This research employs a descriptive-qualitative approach to data collection. This method analyzes the data formed in the text. The descriptive-qualitative method creates descriptive data in words and linguistic forms while attempting to grasp confounding phenomena that do not readily lend themselves to quantification (Ariska et al., 2020:178).

The study aims to identify the various types of lexical relationships found within a selection of Sasha Alex Sloan's songs and determine the most prevalent relation employed by the artist. The analysis focuses on the categories of lexical relations according to Saeed's theory (2003:63),

namely homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, meronymy, and hyponymy. There are several ways to analyze the data obtained. First, the author chose to analyze five songs by Sasha Alex Sloan, namely "Older," "Until It Happens To You," "Matter To You," "House With No Mirrors," and "Dancing With Your Ghost." Second, those song lyrics were collected by identifying lexical relations in them. Third, the data was classified by the types of lexical relations into five types according to the theory of Saeed (2003:63). Furthermore, dictionary aid, such as from Merriam-Webster and Cambridge Dictionary, is used to locate and confirm the specific meanings and relationships of the words. And finally, the data analysis was written in the form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The lexical relation analysis of some of Sasha Alex Sloan's song lyrics that the author has done will be explained below.

1. Synonymy

The synonyms that were found from the analysis are 2 words that have relations. The analysis has been listed below:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>Yelling at the sky</i> | <i>Dancing with</i> |
| 2. Screaming at the world | <i>Your Ghost</i> |

In the song "Dancing with Your Ghost," the terms "yelling" and "screaming" can be considered synonymous, as they both refer to a loud and aggressive mode of communicating. However, even if these words might be used together, they have subtle differences in meanings and connotations. "Yelling" generally refers to loudly raising one's voice, commonly used to express wrath or dissatisfaction. In contrast, the term "screaming" conveys a heightened and piercing tone, typically linked to emotions of fear, misery, or great distress.

Within the realm of lyrics, the expressions "yelling at the sky" and "screaming at the world" create powerful mental images of a person passionately conveying deep emotions with uncontrolled intensity. The songwriter skillfully emphasizes the notion of intense and passionate expressiveness in the narrative by specifically comparing these similar terms. The song's grammatical clarity intensifies its emotional effect, connecting deeply with listeners and eliciting empathy for the protagonist's distress. Therefore, when it comes to writing lyrics, the

deliberate choice and expert use of synonyms can effectively evoke emotional reactions and express deeper themes.

2. Antonymy

The antonyms found from the analysis are 6 pairs of words with relations. The analysis has been listed below:

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| 1. But I was just a kid back then. The older I get the more that I see | Older |
| 2. I used to be mad but now I know | Older |
| 3. The world's so big and I'm so small | Matter to You |
| 4. Somebody unimportant . I feel better being there, like I'm somebody important | Matter To You |
| 5. I stay up all night , tell myself I'm alright | Dancing with Your Ghost |
| 5. Where the walls didn't pick me apart . Maybe my skin would be thicker | House with No Mirrors |

The song "Older" explores the nuanced relationship between the terms "kid" and "older," clearly showing the concept of antonymy. The lyrical narrative compares the speaker's past self, referred to as a "kid back then," with their current identity, "the more that I see," as they have grown older. This comparison highlights the fundamental difference between young age and adulthood, childishness and wisdom, capturing the essence of oppositeness. The intentional arrangement of these opposite words in close proximity highlights the speaker's process of personal growth and the passage of time.

Furthermore, the song precisely shifts attention to the opposing words "mad" and "know," successfully illustrating the movement from a state of emotional conflict to a state of enlightenment and comprehension. This contrasting relationship acts as a guiding light, revealing the speaker's outstanding transformation. The deliberate arrangement of these distinct concepts quickly establishes a powerful comparison, intensifying the theme of individual development and intellectual enlightenment. The songwriter's progression from a state of "madness" to achieving a state of "knowledge" represents a profound change from chaos to clarity.

Along with adding to the lyrical material, this dynamic interaction of antonyms is an important tool for interpreting the song's emotional impact and underlying meaning. The sharp contrast between "mad" and "know" indicates a dramatic change in viewpoint and emotional balance. Presented from this angle, the song's story has a greater transforming force since it swiftly and perceptively negotiates the difficult terrain of human experience.

In the song "Matter To You," the singer adeptly employs the antonymy technique, arranging phrases with different meanings next to one another to express complex themes. An example of this is found in the lyric "The world's so big and I'm so small," where the terms "big" and "small" serve as stark antonyms, vividly contrasting the vastness of the world with the narrator's own sense of diminutiveness. This lyrical technique highlights the sharp dichotomy between the two opposing states and poignantly communicates the narrator's feelings of insignificance in the face of the enormity of existence.

Furthermore, the song explores antonymy in more depth with the lyric, "Somebody unimportant. I feel better being there, like I'm somebody important." In this context, the terms "unimportant" and "important" represent a clear contrast, reflecting the narrator's inner conflict regarding their value and acknowledgment. The songwriters' creative application of antonymy enables them to capture intricate feelings concisely. By pairing opposing phrases, the emotional intensity of the narrator's reflection is increased.

The songwriter adeptly incorporates antonymy into the song's lyrics, engaging the listener and encouraging them to reflect on how complex human existence is. The song digs deeply into existential topics by employing this rhetorical technique, prompting listeners to reflect on their situation within the wide thread of life.

In the song "Dancing with Your Ghost," the songwriter skillfully employs antonymy, a literary device that contrasts words with opposite meanings, to convey the narrator's complex emotional landscape. One notable instance occurs in the lyrics "I stay up all night, tell myself I'm alright," where the phrases "stay up all night" and "I'm alright" stand in stark contrast to each other. This deliberate pairing highlights the internal turmoil of the narrator,

who grapples with conflicting emotions. On one hand, the insistence on staying up all night suggests restlessness or anxiety, while the assertion of being right portrays a façade of normalcy or composure. This distinction underscores the narrator's inner conflict, revealing the tension between their external appearance and internal conflict.

Furthermore, the use of antonymy accurately portrays the intricacy of human emotion. The songwriter effectively conveys the duality of the narrator's mental state by using contrasting terms such as "awake" against "asleep" and "ill" versus "healthy." The contradicting terminology used in their outer attempts to convince themselves of their well-being reveals an actual underlying anxiety and struggle.

Within the track of "House with No Mirrors," the writer found 2 words that are opposites, *pick me apart* and *thicker*. The line "Where the walls didn't dissect me." The phrase "Maybe my skin would be thicker" illustrates antonymy, which refers to the interaction between words with contrasting meanings. The expressions "pick me apart" and "skin would be thicker" are antonyms, symbolizing opposing conditions of susceptibility and fortitude. The lyrics employ this juxtaposition to convey the narrator's desire for a mental environment where they would not experience such vulnerability and exposure. The use of antonymy enables the songwriter to effectively express the narrator's desire to cultivate a more resilient emotional disposition, in contrast with their present encounter of being picked apart by their society. This rhetorical method emphasizes the narrator's challenge in dealing with sensitivity and their desire for increased emotional safeguarding.

3. Polysemy

The polysemy that was found from the analysis is 2 words. The analysis has been listed below:

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| 1. I put the record on, wait 'til I hear our song | Dancing with Your Ghost |
| 2. Every night, I'm dancing with your ghost | Dancing with Your Ghost |

The writer found polysemy in only 1 Sloan song, Dancing with Your Ghost. First, the line "I put the *record* on, wait 'til I hear our song" is categorized as polysemy, which refers to a

word having multiple related meanings. In this case, the word "record" is polysemous, as it can refer to a physical vinyl or CD recording and the act of capturing or documenting something. The songwriter plays on these two related meanings by using the word "record" in this context. The narrator is physically putting on a vinyl or CD recording to hear a specific song, but the word "record" also suggests the act of preserving a memory or moment shared with someone. This polysemous use of the word creates an additional layer of meaning, evoking the nostalgic and sentimental aspects of revisiting a shared experience through music. The multiple interpretations of "record" allow the lyric to resonate more deeply and express the emotional weight behind the narrator's actions.

Second, the line "Every night, I'm dancing with your *ghost*" is also categorized as polysemy. In this case, the word "ghost" is polysemous, as it can refer to the supernatural spirit of a deceased person and a metaphorical "presence" or memory of someone who is no longer physically present. The songwriter plays on these two interconnected meanings by using the word "ghost" in this context. The narrator is describing a literal, supernatural experience of dancing with the ghost or spirit of a lost loved one. However, the word "ghost" also suggests the more abstract idea of the person's memory, their lingering emotional presence, and the narrator's ongoing struggle to cope with their absence. This polysemous use of "ghost" adds depth and complexity to the lyric, allowing it to evoke both the tangible and intangible aspects of grief and loss.

4. Hyponymy

The hyponymy that was found from the analysis has 5 words and a phrase. The analysis has been listed below:

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| 1. To every little fight , 'cause neither one was right | Older |
| 2. I hate busy parties | Matter to You |
| 3. Head up in the clouds | Dancing with Your Ghost |
| 4. Yelling at the sky | Dancing with Your Ghost |
| 5. Screaming at the world | Dancing with Your Ghost |
| 6. I'd throw on some jeans , not know the size | House with No Mirrors |

First, the line “To every little fight, ‘cause neither one was right” in the song “Older” illustrates the linguistic theory of hyponymy, which explains the connection between a more particular term (a hyponym) and a more broad term (a hypernym). Within this particular context, the term “fight” functions as a subset or subordinate category of the more encompassing notion of “problems.” A “fight” refers to a certain type of challenge or disagreement between persons involving a range of interpersonal disagreements and conflicts. Through the strategic use of the term “fight” in this verse, the songwriter adeptly focuses attention on a particular set of problems, infusing the story with vibrant visuals and deep emotional impact. This hyponymic connection not only clearly illustrates the specific type of challenge that the narrator is considering but also maintains a thematic coherence with bigger concerns being discussed. By applying hyponymy, the songwriter carefully combines together individual hardships and universal concepts, encouraging listeners to think about the intricacies of human connections and the difficulties that come with them.

Second from the song titled “Matter To You.” The lyric “I hate busy parties” demonstrates hyponymy, where a more specific term (a hyponym) falls under a more general category (a hypernym). In this case, the term “parties” is a hyponym of the broader concept of “city.” Parties are specific social gatherings or events usually occurring in an urban, city-like environment. The author employs the phrase “parties” in this line to refer to a distinct subgroup within the broader context of urban existence. The hyponymic relationship between “parties” and the hypernym “city” enables the lyrics to concentrate on a relevant and actual example that symbolizes a broader context. The utilization of hyponymy allows the songwriter to effectively express the narrator’s aversion towards a specific element of city life while still upholding the overarching thematic link to the difficulties and intricacies of metropolitan settings. The particularity of “parties” establishes the lyrics’ subject matter within a recognizable context. At the same time, the broader category of “city” implies a wider range of events and circumstances that the narrator may be dealing with.

Third from the song titled “Dancing with Your Ghost.” The lyric “*Head up in the clouds*”

demonstrates hyponymy, where a more specific term (a hyponym) falls under a more general category (a hypernym). In this case, the phrase “head up in the clouds” is a hyponym of the broader concept of “daydreaming.” The phrase “head up in the clouds” is a frequently used expression that describes a condition of absent-mindedness or being preoccupied with one’s own ideas rather than being attentive to the current situation. This particular representation of being mentally “up in the clouds” is a striking portrayal of the overall phenomenon of daydreaming - allowing one’s mind to wander and disconnect from the present world. The songwriter invokes a specific example of daydreaming by employing this hyponymic term. The particularity of the phrase “head up in the clouds” anchors the lyrical content in a real and tangible illustration that the listener can readily visualize. However, this hyponym also relates to the broader thematic idea of the narrator being mentally preoccupied or diverted from their current situation.

Fourth, it is still from the “Dancing with Your Ghost” song. The lyric “*Yelling at the sky, screaming at the world*” demonstrates hyponymy, where more specific terms (hyponyms) fall under a broader category (a hypernym). In this case, the words “yelling” and “screaming” are hyponyms of the general concept of expressing anger or frustration vocally. Yelling and screaming express intense emotions such as rage or distress. Using this precise terminology, the songwriter generates a vivid and audible portrayal of the narrator’s emotional condition. The hyponymic words used in the text vividly depict the intensity and physicality of the narrator’s vocal expression, providing a relatable and tangible experience for the reader. Simultaneously, the fundamental category encompassing “verbally expressing anger or frustration” implies a broader spectrum of possible methods by which the narrator could release their emotions. The distinctiveness of “yelling” and “screaming” enhances the impact of the lyrics. At the same time, the hierarchical relationship between the two words allows for a broad interpretation that can be applied to different situations involving emotional distress.

The fifth and last part is from a song titled “House with No Mirrors.” The lyric “I’d throw on some jeans, not know the size” demonstrates hyponymy, where a more specific term (a

hyponym) falls under a broader category (a hypernym). At this point, the word “jeans” is a specific type of clothing, which falls under the broader category of “clothing.” Jeans are a distinct variety of trousers belonging to the specialized apparel classification. The lyricist employs the term “jeans” in this line to invoke a tangible and familiar garment that the narrator would put on. The hyponymic relationship between “jeans” and the broader hypernym “clothing” enables the lyrics to center around a common, daily article of clothing while establishing a link to the wider attire category.

5. Meronymy

The meronymy that was found from the analysis has 3 cases. The analysis has been listed below:

I lived in a house with no mirrors	House with No Mirrors
I put the record on, wait ‘til I hear our song	Dancing with Your Ghost
You can have a friend lose somebody close	Until It Happens To You

The line “I lived in a house with no mirrors” demonstrates meronymy, a lexical relation where one term represents a constituent part or element of a bigger concept. The term “mirrors” in this instance exhibits a meronymy relation with the term “house.” Mirrors are often seen as components within houses, serving as an essential part of the overall construction. The songwriter builds a meronymy relation between the concepts of “mirrors” and “house” by mentioning them together. The utilization of meronymy in this situation enables the singer to create a vivid picture by specifically mentioning a distinct component of a house, while also using the wider setting of the living space. The meronymy relationship between “mirrors” and “house” effectively conveys information about the narrator’s surroundings and personal encounters without explicitly mentioning every feature of the house’s structure.

The line “I put the record on, wait ‘til I hear our song” illustrates the concept of meronymy. The term “song” is a meronym of the word “record” in this situation. A song is an individual component or composition that forms the entirety of a recording, such as a vinyl record, CD, or digital album. The

performer builds a meronymy relationship between the ideas of “song” and “record” by associating the act of putting on a record with the presence of a song. By applying meronymy, the lyric directs its attention to the particular component (the song) that carries importance for the narrator while also placing it within the broader entity (the record) as a whole. The meronymy relation clearly indicates that the narrator’s act of playing the record is driven by a need to listen to a meaningful song.

The line “You can have a friend lose somebody close” demonstrates the concept of meronymy. The word “somebody close” is related to the concept of a “friend.” When someone is referred to as “close” to a buddy, it indicates a deep and personal connection or bond. This close relationship is a core component of the greater concept of friendship. The singer builds a meronymy connection between these two concepts by using the word “somebody close” to refer to a buddy. The lyrics acknowledge that in the broader context of a friendship, the loss of particularly close and essential interpersonal connections can have a profound impact. The use of meronymy in this context enables the lyric to emphasize the significant importance of losing an inherent component of one’s social network or support system. The meronymy relation implies that the loss occurs beyond a simple acquaintance and instead involves breaking a fundamental element in a friend’s life.

6. Homonymy

Unfortunately, after an in-depth reading of Sasha Alex Sloan’s song lyrics, no homonyms were found. This absence shows that the singer limited the investigation to four lexical relations, focusing her songwriting on other relations. Even in cases when homonymy is absent, substitute lexical relations enhance the lyrical landscape and provide opportunities for additional examination and interpretation.

CONCLUSION

In examining Sasha Alex Sloan’s song lyrics, the analysis revealed a predominant presence of antonymy, with twelve cases of word relations observed. This was followed by hyponymy, which exhibited six cases, meronymy with three cases, and synonymy and polysemy manifested in two cases. Interestingly, despite the absence

of homonymy within Sloan's selected songs, her adept utilization of other lexical devices surpassed expectations. Through clever wordplay and semantic maneuvering, Sloan provides a spectrum of emotive experiences that endure in the listener's psyche long after the music subsides.

This study gave insight into the approaches used to analyze song lyrics, with lexical relations as the theoretical basis. This study advances our understanding of lyrical interpretation by comprehending lexical correlation's complexities and words' contextual importance. Because this inquiry produces useful insights, it is a base for future efforts in this field. This study enriches scholarly discourse by introducing readers to the concept of lexical relations and providing an outline for aspiring linguists. This study, which serves as an important resource in the field of English linguistics, enables academics to improve their analytical skills and widen their understanding.

Moving forward, this research will serve as an example for anyone looking into the variety of textual analysis. This study is a valuable reference for scholars, educators, and students alike, as it thoroughly examines various lexical relations throughout song lyrics. As readers explore the maze of song lyrics or any text, they can use the insights from this research to figure out the underlying specifics of lexical relations, improving their interpretative skills.

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