

Sense Relations Analysis on Ed Sheeran's Equals Album: A Semantics Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the sense relations and their type of word meanings that found on Ed Sheeran's Equals Album. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative method. Data sources were taken from the song lyrics of the latest Ed Sheeran's album. Some of the meaning words were taken from Cambridge Dictionary and Meriam Webster. The theories used to analyze the data were from Hurford and Heasley theory (1986) and Richard and Schmidt theory (2002). The result of this analysis that there were 5 types of sense relation found on this album. They were synonymy 32.3%, polysemy 10.8%, hyponymy 12.3%, homonymy 9.2%, and antonymy 35.4%. This research inferred that synonymy was the most prevalent of the sense relations found in Ed Sheeran's songs from the album Equals. Antonymy accounted for 35.4% of the total, whereas the other types were lower. The second most common form was synonymy, which accounted for up to 32.3%, followed by polysemy and hyponymy, which accounted for 23.1%. Homonymy was the lowest proportion of up to 9.2%.

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Introduction

Nowadays, it's impossible for people not to listen to music. With a variety of technologies, music can be played through various platforms. Listening to music certainly gives one's own peace of mind. Music can be summed up as a good form of communication in society, and through music, people can express their emotions, feelings, and intentions to everyone. People can tell what's on their minds and how they feel at the time by listening to music. All the emotions and feelings that appear when people listen to music are not only from the instrumental music, but it's also from the lyrics of a song itself. Lyrics in a song convey a meaning that people can understand and feel, because lyrics are certainly related to language.

Language is a systematic method of expressing ideas or sentiments via the use of standardized signs, sounds, gestures, or markings with well-defined meanings. Without language, people can't understand the meanings from a song. There is a scientific study of human language which is linguistics. According to Robert Henry Robins (1989) stated that "Linguistics is concerned with human language as a universal and recognizable part of the human behavior and of the human faculties, perhaps one of the most essential to human life as we know it, and one of the most far-reaching of human capabilities in relation to the whole span of mankind's achievements."

A song is part of literature forms. Griffiee (1992) stated that "Songs have elements in common with speech and poetry, they are a unique form. Both songs and speech are vocally produced, are linguistically meaningful and have melody. Both songs and poetry use words to convey meaning, both are usually written down before publication, both can be put to music and both can be listened to." There are some people in this world who decide to make their own song to express themselves, as we know as song writers. Lyrics are used by songwriters to convey their messages, feelings and thoughts to listeners and even for themselves. A song is usually created based on an experience of the songwriter, where some people must have had almost the same experience. So it can be said that "music is a universal language", where surely that sentence is already familiar to people's ears.

A song that has a deep meaning and imprints on a person's mind/heart certainly cannot be separated from the great selection words for lyrics of the song. One of the best songwriters whose songs have been well known by many people in the world is Ed Sheeran. Ed Sheeran is known for his great song lyrics writing. Ed Sheeran is very famous for his pop, dance, and acoustic music. His songs have been very popular worldwide. 'Thinking Out Loud' is one of the songs that made him very well known in the world. There are also other famous songs, such as Perfect, Shape of You, Castle on The Hill, Photograph, and many more.

In October 2021, he released a new album namely Equals (=). The album debuted at number one in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The singles "Bad Habits," "Shivers," "Overpass Graffiti," "The Joker and the Queen," and a promotional single, "Visiting Hours," were released to promote the album. "Bad habits" is one of the album's most successful singles. "Bad Habits" was a commercial success, reaching number one in 28 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hungary, New Zealand, Switzerland, and South Africa, where it became the official first number-one hit on the newly launched South African music charts. The song was especially popular in the United Kingdom and Ireland, where it spent eleven weeks at the top of both the UK Singles Chart and the Irish Singles Chart, becoming the best-selling single of the year in both countries. The song reached number two on the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States.

This research is about sense relations as the research title from this album because the purposes of this research are to analyze what types and meaning words of sense relations are found in Ed Sheeran's latest album. This research is about Ed Sheeran's newest album as the data because he is well known as one the best songwriter in the world, so this research aims to find out what kind of sense relation is the most found on this album based on the lyrics of every song in this album. This album contains 14 songs that are very interesting to analyze. This article tries to know 1) what sense relations are found on Ed Sheeran's equals album? And 2) what is the meaning of each word of sense relations in this album?

Literature Review

Semantics is the study of meaning, which can be expressed through words or sentences. Kroeger (2018) stated that “The term of semantics is described as the study of meaning. It can also be said as the study of the relationship between forms in linguistics and their meanings (p.4)”. It is a broad field with strong ties to philosophy and psychology in terms of creating and transmitting meaning. The study of how languages organize and express meaning is known as semantics. It means that in linguistic terms, meaning semantics is required if we are to limit ourselves to expressing meanings in a single language. Based on Kreidler (2002: 3), Semantics is the study of how language organizes and conveys meaning. The meaning of a word is influenced by its interaction with other words, which is referred to as the relational aspect. The sense of a lexeme or word is determined by the connections with other lexemes with which it is related inside utterances.

According to Lyons (1977: 241), Sense relations are concerned with the meaning relations words contract with each other in the meaning system of the vocabulary of a language. A sense relation is a relationship that exists between words and predicates. The sense relation denotes the relationship between the meaning and sense of words. It also has an impact on whether these senses and meanings are similar or dissimilar. The sense of expression is the relationship that exists between an expression (a word, phrase, or lexeme) and its referent. In other words, sense is the relationship that exists between form-meaning and between meaning-meaning. According to Hurford and Heasley (1986) as cited in Anwar and Tanggoro (2018: 179) stated that “These relations result in synonymy (more than one form having the same meaning), polysemy or homonymy (the same form having more than one meaning), and hyponymy (the inclusion of one meaning in another meaning), also the oppositeness is in some way present in the mind of the speaker and hearer during an act of utterance, which brings forward the notion of antonymy”.

Synonymy is the state or phenomenon in which words with different sounds, pronunciation, and phonemes but similar or identical meanings to another word or phrase exist. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002: 553) stated synonymy as “a word which has the same sense or nearly the same as another word”.

Examples: - His friend speaks with a broad Swedish accent.
 - His friend speaks with a wide Swedish accent.

In the examples above, the word “broad” and “wide” have a same synonym relation because these two words have the same meaning.

Polysemy is a state or phenomenon in which words have more than one meaning or multiple meanings at the same time. Based on Richards and Schmidt (2002: 406) defined Polysemy as “word having two or more closely related meanings”.

Examples: - bank (refers to building)
 - bank (refers to seashore)

In the examples above, the word “bank” on the first line refers to financial institution/building and means as place to save money. However, the word “bank” on the second line refers to seashore and means as a place at riverside. Therefore, these two words have polysemy relation.

Hyponymy is the most generic word that comes to mind after hearing a specific category of objects. Richard and Schmidt (2002: 243) defined hyponymy as “a relationship between two words, in which meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word”.

Examples: - color = red, blue, black
 - bird = raven, crow, dove

In examples above, color is said to be the superordinate/ hyperonym of red, blue, and black, bird is the superordinate of raven, crow, and dove. Also, based on the examples above, co-hyponyms are also used to describe the relationships between the colors red, blue, and black.

Homonymy is a phenomenon that refers to words that have the same pronunciation or spelling but have different meanings. Homonymy can be divided into two categories based on word similarities. It can be in written or spoken form. Based on Richard and Schmidt (2002: 241) stated homonymy as “words which are written in the same way or sound alike but which have different meanings”.

Examples: - whole/hole
 - went/when

In the examples above, the pair of words has the same pronunciation, but it has different meaning from each other. Therefore, these are the examples of homonymy relations.

The phenomenon of antonyms refers to words that have opposite sense relationships to one another. According to Lyons (1977) defined antonym as “the words which are opposite meaning and “antonymy” as the oppositeness between words”.

Examples: - dead/alive
 - hit/miss

In the examples above, the pair of these words have the opposite meaning. First example, the word “dead” means someone/something is no longer breath/alive. The word “alive” means someone/something still live or breath as human being/ other things. So, these are the examples of antonymy relation.

Method

In analyzing sense relations on Ed Sheeran's Equals album, this research employs a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative method is an approach that does not rely on a large number of statistics, as the quantitative method does. Creswell (2014: p.197-200) stated that using qualitative techniques entails following the six phases of data preparation and organization in order to conduct an easy analysis. Exploring and coding the database clarifies and perfects the data. Finding and developing themes clarifies the data, allowing the data source and authenticity to be held accountable. According to Ervina and Aulia (2019) stated that a descriptive analysis method is one that methodically explains something by categorizing, analyzing, and explaining data. This research of this study uses song lyrics rather than numbers of statistics. The source of the lyrics is from website lyrics www.genius.com. The sources of words meaning are from Cambridge Dictionary and Meriam Webster. The following are the steps in data analysis: analyzing the sense relations use some expert theories which are synonymy, polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, or antonymy, describing each meanings analysis, and reaching a conclusion.

Results and Discussion

In this sense relation study, the researcher provides the findings of this investigation that have previously been examined using some expert theories, which are Hurford and Heasley's theory (1986) and also Richard and Schmidt's theory (2002). The results provided are an analysis of sense relations, namely synonymy, polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, and antonymy, as found on Ed Sheeran's Equals, his most recent album, which was published in November 2021. The data for this study were derived from the lyrics of 14 songs on the Equals album.

1. Synonymy

There are 21 cases of synonymy in Ed Sheeran's album Equals, which are as follows: father- daddy, afraid- scared, know- understand, youth- child, moment- time, always- forever, say- talk, way- road, thunder- lightning, guy- man, real- true, way- road, stop- cut out, disappear- fade, change- turn, fantasize- dream, baby- darling, picture- photograph, low- down, evening- night, celebration- party.

The following are some examples of the analysis:

Data #1

- “I have grown up, I am a father now” (Tides)
- “Daddy made your bed and your lullaby” (Sandman)

These two words in verses above have the synonymy relation because the word “father” in the first line and the word “daddy” in the second line have the same meaning. The word “father” in the verse means a man who just become a parent because he just has a child. Meanwhile, the word “daddy” is a term used by for young children to refer to their father. Therefore, these two words are similar as a term for a man who already has a child. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word “father” means a male parent, while the word “daddy” means a child's words for father.

Data #2

- “You know I've never been afraid of death” (Tides)
- “I'd tell you that I'm scared of turning out a failure” (Visiting Hours)

Both of the verses above have the synonymy relation because the word “afraid” in first line and the word “scared” in second line have same meaning. The word “afraid” is adjective which means filled

with fear or concern over an unwanted situation. Meanwhile, the word “scared” is also adjective which means the situation that makes us being in a state of fear, fright, or panic. Based on Cambridge Dictionary, the word “afraid” means feeling fear, or feeling worry about the possible results of a particular situation. While, the word “scared” means frightened or worried.

Data #3

- “How was I to know? It's a crazy thing” (The Joker and The Queen)
- “I know it can change from day to day, but this love'll keep alight” (Leave Your Life)
- “It's hard to understand it” (Leave Your Life)

The words in verses above have the synonymy relation because the word “know” in the first and second line and “understand” in third line have the similar meaning. The word “know” means to have information / understanding about something in one’s mind. The word “understand” also almost has the meaning which is to know the meaning of information/ something or to know why/ how something happens. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word “know” means to used to ask someone to tell you a piece of information, while the word “understand” means to know why or how something happens or works.

2. Polysemy

There are 7 cases of polysemy in Ed Sheeran’s album Equals, which are as follows: right- right, like-like, love- love, miss- miss, around- around, way- way, lose- loose.

The following are some examples of the analysis:

Data #4

- “Oh, it's a lonely life thinkin' you're right and always shiftin' blame” (Stop The Rain)
- “Except this beauty in her dress right now” (2step)

These words in verses above have polysemy relation because of the two words “right”. They have different meaning. The word “right” in the first line means considered fair or morally acceptable by people about something. While, the word “right” in the second line means indicating a present time. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the meaning of “right” in the first line means if someone is correct about something or someone or someone’s judgement or statement. While, the word “right” in the second line based on Cambridge Dictionary means telling someone about the present time.

Data #5

- “I still know people I don't like and I should cut them out” (Tides)
- “I never kissed a mouth that tastes like yours” (Shivers)

These two words in the verses above have polysemy relation because there are the same words “like” but they have different meaning. On the first line, the word “like” is a verb which means to enjoy or approve of something or someone. While, the word “like” on the second line is a preposition or conjunction which means thing that similar to something or in the same way or manner as something. According to Meriam Webster, there are several meaning the word “like”, first based on the first line “like” (verb) means to feel attraction toward or take pleasure in. While, “like” (adjective) in the second line means the same or nearly the same (as in appearance, character, or quantity).

Data #6

- “I will always love you for what it's worth” (Overpass Graffiti)
- “We made love in the sky” (Collide)

These two words “love” have polysemy relation because they are the same word but they have different meaning. The word “love” in the first line is a verb which means to like someone and be emotionally and sexually attracted to them, or to have strong affection for someone, such as a friend or family member. While, the word “love” in second line is a noun which can be refers to the feeling of liking someone or having sex.

3. Hyponymy

There are 8 cases of hyponymy in Ed Sheeran’s album Equals, which are as follows: sweet-taste, place- Brooklyn- Tokyo, drink- Whiskey- red wine, feeling- sad- loved, time- evening- morning, human-father- grandma, song- lullaby, situation- depressed- failure.

The following are some examples of the analysis:

Data #7

- “I never kissed a mouth that tastes like yours” (Shivers)
- “You look so sweet, my child” (Sandman)

- "Strawberries and a somethin' more" (Shivers)

The words "taste" and "sweet" have hyponym relation. The word "sweet" is taste of a food/drink that contains sugar or the other definition such as looks pleasant/ smells pleasant. The "strawberries" are small fruits that taste sweet or sour. The term "taste" refers to the property that various meals and beverages have that allows you to distinguish them when you put them in your mouth, it can be sweet/sour. As a result, "sweet" and "strawberries" are "taste" hyponyms.

Data #8

- "Oh, we should head out to the place where the music plays" (2step)

- "The first drink, red wine, on a step in Brooklyn" (First Times)

- "Fumbled in cubicles in Tokyo" (Collide)

The words "place", "Brooklyn", and "Tokyo" have hyponym relation. The word "place" means an area, town, city, or country. Brooklyn is borough of New York City in United States. While, Tokyo is capital city of Japan. As the result, Brooklyn and Tokyo are hyponymy of place. According to Meriam Webster, the word "place" means a particular region, center of population, or location.

4. Homonymy

There are 6 cases of homonymy in Ed Sheeran's album Equals, which are as follows: true- through, ride- right, hard- heart, fill- feel, four- for, too- to- two.

The following are some examples of the analysis:

Data #9

- "Nothin' happens after two, it's true, it's true" (Bad Habits)

- "Cause now I have a child, I know one day that she'll go through it" (Tides)

These two verses have two same words pronunciation which are "true" and "through". Obviously, they have different meaning. The word "true" in that verse means the fact/ statement about something is right and not wrong. The word "through" means from one place/side/point of something to the other and indicate a period of time for something.

Data #10

- "Come along for the ride" (Sandman)

- "We forget that we're here right now" (2step)

- "I feel like I got nothin' left right now" (2step)

The word "ride" and "right" have similar pronunciation, and they have different meaning. The word "ride" in the verse means a journey on a horse or in a vehicle to place where someone wants to go. The word "right" in the verse means indicating a present time.

Data #11

- "I never thought that I could love this hard" (Shivers)

- "And I will close the door, but I will open up my heart" (Visiting Hours)

These two words have homonymy relation because the word "hard" and "heart" have the same pronunciation but they are different word and meaning. The word "hard" is an adjective which means anything tough to comprehend, feel, accomplish, experience, or cope with. While, the word "heart" in the second line is a noun which refers to the area within a person where feelings or emotions are said to originate.

5. Antonymy

There are 23 cases of antonymy in Ed Sheeran's album Equals, which are as follows: same- different, hot- cold, go- stay, queen- king, forget- remember, easy- hard, open- close, slow- fast, all day- all night, morning- night, high- low, far- close, down- up, in- out, back- front, inside- outside, always- never, wrong- right, long- short, first- last, with- without, light- dark, death- alive.

The following are some examples of the analysis:

Data #12

- "Everything has changed, but I am still the same somehow" (Tides)

- "I have the same dream every night" (Tides)

- "And bring out a poisoned tongue or plastic crown, but for me, they look the same" (Stop The Rain)

- "I've no regrets, but wish I did things in a different way" (Tides)

- "I thought it'd feel different playin' Wembley" (First Times)

- "Cause we're livin' life at a different pace, stuck in a constant race" (2step)

These six verses above have antonymy relation because the word “same” and the word “different” have the opposite meaning. The word “same” means something identical with or similar to another. However, the word “different” means partly or totally unlike in every aspect, or dissimilar. According to Meriam Webster, the word “same” means corresponding so closely as to be indistinguishable, while the word “different” means not the same.

Data #13

- “Baby, you burn so hot, you make me shiver” (Shivers)
- “It's so still, the fire's barely fighting the cold alone” (Overpass Graffiti)

These verses have antonymy relation because the word “hot” and cold” have the opposite meaning. The word “hot” in the verse is actually has a meaning as sexually attractive, but the word “hot” also means something that having high temperature. However, the word “cold” means something that having low temperature. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word “hot” in the first line means feeling sexually excited. While, the word “cold” means at a low temperature, especially when compared to the temperature of human body.

Data #14

- “We'll go all night” (2step)
- “And in the shake of a lamb's tail, we'll go” (Sandman)
- “Can I just stay a while and we'll put all the world to rights?” (Visiting Hours)
- “Just stay here and be right now” (Be Right Know)

These verses have antonymy relation because the word “go” and “stay” have different meaning. The word “go” in these verses means to move out from one place to another place. Meanwhile, the word “stay” in these means to stop going somewhere. Based on Meriam Webster, the word “go” means to move on a course or to travel to place. While, the word “stay” means to stop going forward or to stop doing something.

Table 1

Types of Sense Relation	Frequency	Percentage
Synonymy	21	32.3%
Polysemy	7	10.8%
Hyponymy	8	12.3%
Homonymy	6	9.2%
Antonymy	23	35.4%

Based on the table 1, these are the final results of the sense relations analysis on Ed Sheeran’s Equals Album. There are 65 data on this research, 21 synonymy cases, 7 polysemy cases, 8 hyponymy cases, 6 homonymy cases, and the most found 23 antonymy cases.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it is found that there are 65 cases of sense relations in the songs Ed Sheeran’s Equals Album. There are multiple meanings from each word of sense relations on this analysis. There are 5 types of sense relations, namely synonymy (32.3%), polysemy (10.8%), hyponymy (12.3%), homonymy (9.2%), and antonymy (35.4%). Additionally, it can also be concluded that Antonymy is the most found sense relation on this research. While, homonymy is the least found on this research study.

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