

ANALYSIS OF CONNOTATION IN TV GIRL'S BLUE HAIR SONG LYRICS

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Abstrack: This study focuses on the song "Blue Hair" by the band TV Girl, which uses lyrics to talk about identity, change, and emotions. The aim of this research is to understand the literal and hidden meanings in the song using Geoffrey Leech theory of connotation. The method used is descriptive qualitative, where the lyrics are carefully read, and certain phrases are analyzed for their deeper messages. The results show that the blue hair in the song is not just about appearance, but stands for things like youth, uniqueness, and personal freedom. When the girl cuts her blue hair, it shows a major change in her life and identity. In conclusion, the study found that even simple lyrics can hold powerful messages about personal growth, emotional struggles, and how people change over time.

Keywords: Connotation, Semantics, Song Lyrics.

INTRODUCTION

According to Lyons (1995), semantics is the study of meaning in language, how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning to speakers and listeners. This brings us to the field of semantics, which is a core part of linguistics concerned with understanding how meaning is created, interpreted, and understood through language. As Crystal (2003) explained, semantics looks at the meanings of words and how those meanings combine in sentences. In everyday life, we constantly interpret meaning from the words people use. For example, the word "storm" might literally refer to bad weather, but in some contexts, it can mean emotional turmoil or chaos. Similarly, the phrase "a heavy heart" is not about weight but sadness. Semantics examines these meanings and how they shift based on context, culture, and usage. Because language is our main tool for communication, understanding how it creates meaning is essential and that is the role of semantics in linguistics.

One of the most creative and emotional ways people use signs is through music, especially in song lyrics. Songs are more than just melodies and rhythms, they are a form of storytelling filled with signs. Machin (2007) examined how different modes of communication, such as text, image, and sound, work together to create meaning in media texts through words, imagery, and emotion, songwriters often use symbolic language to express ideas that go beyond literal meanings. Tagg (2013, p. 5) emphasized that in music, "meaning arises not only from lyrics but from the interaction between sound, context, and culture". In semantic terms, every word or image in a song can act as a sign. For example, a "storm" in a song might not just be about weather, but could represent emotional chaos or conflict. A "mirror" might symbolize self-reflection.

Geoffrey Leech, a well-known linguist in the field of semantics, introduced the idea of connotative meaning as one of the five types of meaning in language. In his theory, connotative elements refer to the associative or emotional meaning that a word carries, beyond its literal definition. It reflects what the word suggests in the minds of speakers, often shaped by cultural, personal, or emotional experiences. For example, while the word "rose" denotes a type of flower, it connotes ideas like romance, beauty, and love. Leech (1981) explained that connotation is subjective and may vary between individuals or cultures. He also emphasized that connotation is a key aspect in understanding how language works in poetry, advertising, and everyday speech, where feelings and attitudes often matter more than facts. Leech's theory highlights the importance of considering both denotative (literal) and connotative (implied) meanings to fully grasp the power and richness of language.

In addition to Geoffrey Leech's theory of connotative meaning, several other semanticists have contributed to the understanding of how words carry emotional and associative meaning. Stephen Ullmann (1962), a prominent figure in semantics, emphasized that words have both denotative and connotative meanings, where connotation includes the emotional, cultural, and subjective associations attached to a word. He argued that connotation plays a crucial role in poetic and persuasive language, as it adds richness and depth to communication. John Lyons (1977) also explored the concept of connotation, describing it as the set of supplementary meanings a word evokes, influenced by social, psychological, and cultural contexts. He highlighted that these meanings, although not strictly part of the core definition, are essential in understanding how language works in real-life interaction. These perspectives reinforce Leech's view that connotative meaning is key to interpreting not only the literal content of language but also its emotional and cultural significance, especially in contexts such as literature, media, and interpersonal expression.

In the song *Blue Hair* by TV Girl, the connotative elements in the lyrics help reflect the theme of emotional conflict, as described by Horney (1945). He stated that emotional conflict happens when a person's real desires clash with the pressure to meet outside expectations. The phrase "blue hair" itself carries connotative meaning it symbolizes a desire for individuality, rebellion, or change, rather than just being a literal hair color. Throughout the song, the character seems torn between wanting to express herself freely and the pressure to conform to what others expect in a relationship or in society. This emotional tension is shown in lines that suggest trying to please someone else while slowly losing a sense of self. The soft, almost passive tone of the lyrics contrasts with the deep need for autonomy, highlighting the inner conflict between real desires and external approval exactly the kind of emotional struggle Horney describes.

Therefore, the researcher aims to analyze the lyrics in TV Girl's song "Blue Hair." This song, which gained significant attention these days, continues to resonate with listeners and remains memorable in popular culture. However, it also brings about various reflections on real-life themes and perceptions. "Blue Hair" tells the story of a girl who used to have blue hair, but later changed it. One strong reason for choosing this song is that it uses everyday language and simple images, like hair color, to express deeper ideas. These themes are closely connected to how people deal with personal struggles, beauty standards, and the pressure to change themselves to be accepted. "Blue Hair" tells the story of a girl who cuts off her blue hair, which may seem like a small act, but can actually represent a much bigger transformation in how she sees herself and how others see her. This small physical change becomes a symbol of emotional loss, maturity, or giving up on a part of her identity. By using Geoffrey Leech theory of denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (hidden or emotional meaning), this study aims to explore how the song "Blue Hair" uses connotation, or hidden meaning, within its lyrics and how do these hidden meanings show the themes of identity and emotional struggle.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a semantics approach to examine the lyrics in the song "Blue Hair" by TV Girl. As Creswell (1994) explained, a qualitative study is designed to match the ideas of the qualitative approach, which is usually used to explore meanings and experiences in detail. The analysis is based on Geoffrey Leech theory of denotation and connotation, which helps explain how words or phrases can have both literal and deeper meanings. This theory is applied to explore how the song's lyrics work as signs that carry cultural and emotional messages.

The data in this research comes from the official lyrics of "Blue Hair". This song was chosen because of its rich use of symbolic and emotional language, which makes it a strong example for semantics analysis. The data was collected through close reading and observation

of the lyrics. In doing the analysis, the researcher first reads the song lyrics carefully several times to fully understand the theme and tone. Next, the researcher identifies the lyrics, such as certain words or lines that may have special meaning. Then, each line is analyzed using Leech' theory, where the denotative meaning is explained first, followed by the connotative meaning. After that, the researcher interprets how these signs relate to the song's overall message.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting this research, the researcher found that this song shows how something as simple as cutting blue hair can represent a much bigger change in someone's life, such as letting go of who they used to be.

"What seemed so blue in the sunlight / By the night was a pale green"

The deeper or connotative meaning shows how things can change depending on time or perspective. Blue often represents sadness, calmness, or truth, while green can suggest jealousy, sickness, or change. The shift in color might represent how something once beautiful or real has faded, or how emotions change over time. It could reflect the shift in how the speaker sees the girl or how her identity becomes unclear in darker, lonelier moments.

"And I tried to hold her / But it didn't really last long"

On a deeper level, the connotation suggests emotional distance and instability in the relationship. The phrase "didn't really last long" could refer not just to a hug but to the whole relationship, or to their closeness. It reflects a failed attempt to connect or help, and possibly the girl pulling away as she deals with internal struggles.

"She's getting older / I guess she's gotta cut her blue hair off"

Connotatively, the act of cutting off her "blue hair" symbolizes a loss of youth, freedom, or uniqueness. Blue hair often represents rebellion, individuality, or creativity. By removing it, she could be trying to fit into adult norms or expectations. The phrase also suggests a resignation: growing up means giving up parts of yourself. It marks a turning point in her identity, showing how societal pressure may push people to change themselves.

"She asked me if she was pretty / Well, it's clear that the girl's a fraud"

In connotative meaning, the girl might be trying to live up to beauty standards she doesn't believe in or feel confident about. Calling her a "fraud" may reflect that she is pretending to be someone she's not, or that she's only performing beauty. This shows the theme of insecurity and societal pressure, especially for women, to always appear perfect or attractive.

"There's really no way of winning / If in their eyes you'll always be a dumb blonde"

The connotative meaning is it brings up stereotypes and how people, especially women, are often judged unfairly based on appearance. The phrase "dumb blonde" is a cultural label that reduces someone's identity to a shallow, negative image. This line shows that no matter how hard she tries, she feels stuck in the role people have assigned her, making her feel like she can't change how she's viewed.

"And she cried over nothing / So there was nothing I could do to stop her from cutting / Her beautiful blue hair off"

On the surface, it's a simple moment of emotional expression and a drastic decision of her appearance. The connotative meaning however, show that this moment carries a much deeper emotional weight. The phrase "cried over nothing" doesn't literally mean there was no reason, it likely reflects emotions that are too complex or overwhelming to name. It suggests the girl may be dealing with internal struggles, identity issues, or even depression, which are feelings that aren't always visible or understood by others. The speaker's helplessness ("nothing I could do to stop her") shows a disconnect or emotional distance, where he can't understand her pain or how to comfort her. The act of cutting her

beautiful blue hair off is highly symbolic. The hair, which described as “beautiful” and “blue”, stands for more than just style. Blue hair often symbolizes individuality, freedom, rebellion, or emotional intensity. By removing it, she could be trying to change herself, suppress her true feelings, or conform to society’s expectations. It could also be seen as an act of letting go or mourning, cutting away a part of her identity or past.

“It looked like cotton candy / And just as quick to get licked away”

Deeper than that, cotton candy is soft, sweet, colorful, and temporary. This image paints the girl’s uniqueness and beauty as something fragile and easy to lose. The line suggests how quickly things can disappear, especially innocence, identity, or special moments.

“Last I heard she was living / With a boy who acts his age”

The connotative in this line might mean she has moved on to a more stable, “normal” life. The boy “acting his age” contrasts with the speaker, implying he may have been immature. It reflects the girl’s decision to seek emotional stability, even if that means giving up parts of her past or personality.

“And I guess I’ll just miss her / Even though she isn’t even really gone”

In connotative, this suggests missing someone who has changed so much they feel like a different person. It’s a quiet kind of grief, not for death, but for the loss of the person she used to be. It reflects how relationships and people evolve, sometimes painfully.

“But things are just different / Ever since she cut her blue hair off”

In denotative meaning, it’s a simple observation. But in connotative, it highlights how a small physical change can represent a deep emotional or identity shift. The blue hair was a symbol of who she was, and removing it means the speaker can no longer recognize or connect with her in the same way. It marks the end of an era of youth, of love, or of self-expression.

After the analysis, the song “Blue Hair” by TV Girl tells a story about a girl who goes through emotional and personal changes, seen through the eyes of someone who cares about her. On the surface (denotative), it’s about a girl who dyes her hair blue, then cuts it off, asks if she’s pretty, cries without reason, and ends up living with someone new. However, looking deeper (connotative), the blue hair becomes a symbol of her identity, freedom, and self-expression.

Cutting it off represents her letting go of her past and trying to grow up or change for the world around her. She struggles with self-worth, wanting to be funny and attractive, but feels judged and misunderstood, possibly by society or the people in her life. Her emotional breakdown, shown when she cries over “nothing”, hints at deeper sadness or pressure that she can’t explain. The speaker, possibly a close friend or lover, tries to help but feels helpless, and eventually watches her move on with someone else. Even though she’s still alive, he misses who she used to be, and things no longer feel the same.

The connotative elements in the lyrics clearly reflect the theme of identity by showing how the girl changes over time. Her blue hair stands for who she used to be, someone unique, expressive, and possibly rebellious. As she gets older, cuts her hair, and tries to be accepted, she slowly loses that version of herself. The lyrics show her emotional conflict through small details, like asking how to be funny or if she’s pretty. These moments reveal her struggle to be accepted while feeling insecure inside. When she cries and changes her appearance, it shows she is dealing with emotional pain and pressure. Even though she is still alive, the speaker feels like he lost her, which shows how identity changes can feel like emotional loss. Other lines also show emotional conflict. For example, when the girl asks, “How to be funny” or “Am I pretty?”, she isn’t just asking simple questions, these are signs that she feels insecure and unsure about who she is. She wants to be accepted, but she doesn’t feel good enough. These lyrics show an inner conflict between being herself and trying to be who others want her to be. Related to Horney (1945) that argues emotional conflict happens when a person’s real desires clash with the pressure to meet outside

expectations. In this song, the girl wants to be loved and seen as beautiful, but she feels judged and trapped by stereotypes, like when the lyrics mention the label “dumb blonde.” The emotional breakdown shown in the line “She cried over nothing” reflects a deeper pain that isn’t easily explained. Cutting her blue hair after that moment is a symbolic act of change, control, or even emotional release. All of these connotative details reveal the girl’s emotional journey, how she fights between holding onto her identity and giving in to what others expect. In the end, the speaker feels like he lost her, even though she’s still physically there, showing how identity shifts can also lead to emotional distance. These connotations help the song speak to real-life experiences of growing up, feeling misunderstood, and changing who you are to fit in. The song deeply reflects themes of insecurity, emotional distance, identity loss, and the quiet sadness of growing apart from someone you love. It uses poetic language and symbols to show how people change, and how that change can affect relationships.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the song “Blue Hair” by TV Girl is more than just a simple story about a girl and her hair. Through both denotative and connotative meanings, the lyrics reveal deep emotional struggles, identity changes. The blue hair carries strong meaning, it represents youth, uniqueness, freedom, and emotional expression. When the girl cuts her blue hair, it marks a turning point in her life, showing that she is letting go of her past self to become someone new, maybe to fit in or to deal with inner pain. Each line in the song uses everyday language, but behind the words, there are deeper feelings like insecurity, sadness, and the pressure to meet society’s standards. The speaker, who seems to care deeply about her, feels lost and helpless as he watches her change and move on. He misses the version of her that once was, even though she is still around. This shows that sometimes, change can feel like loss. Moreover, the song uses simple symbols and poetic words to talk about big topics like identity, acceptance, emotional pain, and the quiet heartbreak of watching someone you love become someone else.

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