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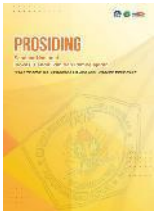

A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Affective Lexicon Processing and Emotional Resonance in Khloe Rose's 'Fictional' Among English Education Students

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abstrak—Penelitian ini mengkaji jenis leksikon afektif, pemrosesannya secara psikolinguistik, dan resonansi emosional yang ditimbulkan dalam lagu "Fictional" (2023) karya Khloe Rose di kalangan mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Menggunakan desain metode campuran, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan anotasi lirik kualitatif dengan kerangka leksikon afektif SentiSense dan kerangka kategorisasi gramatikal. Analisis kuantitatif data kuesioner terstruktur dari 10 peserta mahasiswa sarjana. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa lagu ini mengandung dua belas unit leksikal afektif dominan yang mencakup tujuh kategori SentiSense—Kesedihan, Keputusasaan, Ketakutan, Harapan, Cinta, Kegembiraan, dan Ketenangan—yang disusun melalui kontras antonimik antara domain realitas dan fiksi. Mahasiswa menunjukkan empat kecenderungan pemrosesan: bias leksikal konkret-pertama (90% untuk "broken heart"), rekonfigurasi kognitif optimistis terhadap metafora negatif (70% menginterpretasikan "down the rabbit hole" sebagai Harapan), pemrosesan komparatif skalar, dan akurasi tinggi untuk adjektiva afektif eksplisit (80%). Resonansi emosional secara keseluruhan sangat tinggi, dengan dua indikator mencapai konsensus 100%—resonansi perlindungan diri dan identifikasi isolasi. Empat faktor moderasi teridentifikasi: kecenderungan escapisme, tekanan akademik, keakraban dengan lagu, dan latar belakang pengalaman emosional individu.

Kata kunci—Psikolinguistik, Leksikon afektif, Resonansi emosional, EFL respons, Lirik lagu, Escapisme

Abstract—*This study examines the types of affective lexicons, their psycholinguistic processing, and the emotional resonance they evoke in Khloe Rose's song "Fictional" (2023) among English Language Education students. Employing a mixed-methods design, this research integrates qualitative lyric annotation using the SentiSense affective lexicon framework and the grammatical categorization framework. Quantitative analysis of structured questionnaire data from 10 undergraduate participants. Findings reveal that the song contains twelve dominant affective lexical units spanning seven SentiSense categories – Sadness, Despair, Fear, Hope, Love, Joy, and Calm – structured through an antonymic contrast between the reality and fictional domains. Students demonstrated four processing tendencies: concrete-first lexical bias (90% for "broken heart"), optimistic cognitive reframing of negative metaphors (70% interpreted "down the rabbit hole" as Hope), scalar comparative processing, and high accuracy for explicit affective adjectives (80%). Emotional resonance was uniformly high, with two indicators reaching 100% consensus – self-protection resonance and isolation identification. Four moderating factors were identified:*

escapism tendency, academic pressure, song familiarity, and individual emotional experience. These findings validate the SentiSense framework's cross-linguistic applicability and underscore the pedagogical value of affectively rich authentic texts in EFL vocabulary instruction.

Keywords— *Psycholinguistics, Affective lexicon, Emotional resonance, EFL Responses, Song lyrics, Escapism*

PENDAHULUAN

The phenomenon of emotional escapism through fictional media is increasingly prevalent among young adults, particularly within the context of digital fandom culture and contemporary pop music consumption. Khloe Rose's song "Fictional" (2023) which went viral on TikTok and YouTube for its highly relatable themes of heartbreak, parasocial attachment, and emotional self-protection provides a compelling linguistic text for examining how affective vocabulary in popular song lyrics is processed and experienced by English Language Education (ELE) students.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, song lyrics rich in affective lexicons present a unique research opportunity: they simultaneously function as cognitive stimuli and emotional narratives. The song "Fictional" exhibits a sharp antonymic contrast between negatively-charged reality lexicons ("broken heart," "hurts," "let down," "tired," "alone") and positively-valenced fictional lexicons ("perfect," "dreaming," "kissing in the rain"), making it particularly suitable for studying how emotional vocabulary is identified, categorized, and emotionally internalized by linguistically trained listeners.

English Education students represent an especially relevant research population due to their heightened sensitivity to language and word choice compared to students of other disciplines (Carter, 2010). Despite the breadth of research on emotional responses to music, studies integrating psycholinguistics, affective lexicon processing, and emotional resonance in contemporary pop songs among Indonesian EFL students remain limited. This study addresses this gap by investigating: (1) the types of affective lexicons in the song; (2) how ELE students process these lexicons; and (3) how they trigger emotional resonance.

METODE PENELITIAN

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The qualitative strand consisted of lyric annotation using the SentiSense model (Albornoz et al., 2012) and grammatical categorization (Zhang et al., 2014). The quantitative strand used descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) derived from a structured questionnaire administered to 10 purposively sampled undergraduate ELE students at an Indonesian university.

Participants were drawn from semesters 4 through 8, with a majority (6 out of 10) in their final semester. Eighty percent of participants were first-time listeners at the point of data collection, ensuring that responses reflected direct psycholinguistic processing rather than prior emotional memory. The questionnaire—distributed via Google Form between 23 May and 1 June 2026—was organized into three sections addressing affective lexicon identification, SentiSense-based emotional categorization, and Likert-scale emotional resonance measurement. Five purposively selected lyric snippets (A–E) served as stimuli. Semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with willing participants for triangulation.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Code	Semester	Familiar with Song	Escapism from Stress (1–5)	Academic Escapism Need (1–5)	Willingness to Interview
P1	8	Yes	5	5	Yes
P2	8	First-time	3	3	No
P3	8	First-time	5	4	No
P4	8	No	5	1	Uncertain
P5	8	No	4	3	Uncertain
P6	8	First-time	4	2	Yes
P7	4	First-time	3	4	Yes
P8	5	Yes	5	5	Yes
P9	6	First-time	3	3	Uncertain
P10	4	First-time	2	2	Yes
Average	–	–	**3.90**	**3.20**	–

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN
3. Findings

3.1 Types of Affective Lexicons (RQ1)

Lyric matrix analysis using the SentiSense framework identified twelve dominant affective lexical units in "Fictional," spanning seven of the fourteen SentiSense categories. These distribute into seven functional types, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Affective Lexicon Types in "Fictional" (SentiSense Analysis)

Target Phrase	SentiSense Category	Lexicon Type	Affective Function
"Broken heart"	Sadness / Despair	Core Sadness/Despair	Deep emotional trauma
"Down the rabbit hole"	Despair / Fear	Metaphorical/Escapist	Loss of control; escapism impulse
"Another world"	Hope / Calm	Refuge	Positive emotional displacement
"Don't wanna face it"	Fear	Avoidant-Affective	Emotional avoidance strategy
"Fall in love" (TV screen)	Love	Parasocial/Love	Mediated emotional attachment
"Tired"	Despair / Sadness	Exhaustion	Emotional imbalance marker
"Can't afford to be naive"	Fear / Sadness	Defensive/Self-Protective	Ego-defense; emotional resource metaphor
"All alone"	Sadness / Despair	Isolation	Harsh reality; isolation marker
"Kissing in the rain"	Love / Joy	Idealized Romantic	Peak fictional trope; Joy/Love peak
"Dreaming / never meet"	Hope / Anticipation	Escapist	Perpetual hope through impossibility

The song's emotional architecture is antonymically structured: Sadness/Despair/Fear lexicons are concentrated in the reality domain, while Hope/Love/Joy lexicons dominate the fictional domain. This confirms the SentiSense framework's concept-based approach as effective for analyzing semantic ambiguity in poetic texts.

3.2 Affective Lexicon Processing from Quantitative Response Data (RQ2)

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distributions for all five lyric snippets.

Table 3. Frequency of Affective Lexicon Responses per Snippet (N=10)

Snippet	Focus / Item	Dominant Response	n	%
A	Strongest sadness phrase	Broken heart	9	90%
A	Strongest sadness phrase (minority)	Again (repetition)	1	10%
A	"Down the rabbit hole" interpretation	Hope / Searching for a better world	7	70%
A	"Down the rabbit hole" interpretation	Fear / Escape from pain	3	30%
B	"Hurts a lot less" interpretation	Fiction is also painful, but controllable	7	70%
B	Affective category of fictional love	Calmness	5	50%
B	Affective category of fictional love	Joy	5	50%
C	Adjective of emotional exhaustion	Tired	7	70%
C	Adjective of emotional exhaustion	Receive (imbalance)	3	30%
C	Categorization of "stick to"	Calmness (peace in withdrawal)	5	50%
C	Categorization of "stick to"	Anticipation / Disgust	5	50%
D	Word with highest emotional risk	Naive	7	70%
D	Categorization of "I can't afford"	Despair	9	90%
D	Categorization of "I can't afford"	Fear	1	10%
E	Resonance with isolation imagery	All alone / walking home (both)	10	100%

3.3 Emotional Resonance Levels (RQ3)

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Personal Resonance (N=10)

Resonance Aspect	Response Category	n	%	Level
Resonance with self-protection theme	Yes, resonates	10	100%	**High**
Isolation identification (Snippet E)	All alone / walking home	10	100%	**High**
"I can't afford" → Despair	Despair	9	90%	**High**
Reality disappointment resonance (Somewhat + Highly)	Somewhat / Highly Resonates	8	80%	Med–High
Validity of "living in your head"	Agree / Somewhat Agree	8	80%	Med–High
"Tired of giving more" → emotion	Despair	5	50%	Moderate
"Tired of giving more" → emotion	Sadness	3	30%	–
"Tired of giving more" → emotion	Anger	2	20%	–
Chorus as Comfort vs. Loneliness	Loneliness	7	70%	Med–High
Preference: Guaranteed Dream vs. Risky Reality	Guaranteed Dream	10	100%	**High**

Table 5. Song Familiarity and Response Patterns (Cross-Tabulation)

Aspect	Familiar (n=2)	Not Familiar (n=8)	Total (n=10)
Escapism Frequency ≥ 4	2 (100%)	5 (62.5%)	7 (70%)
High Disappointment Resonance	1 (50%)	4 (50%)	5 (50%)
Chorus Perception: Loneliness	1 (50%)	6 (75%)	7 (70%)
Self-Protection	2 (100%)	Resonates 8 (100%)	10 (100%)

4. Discussion

4.1 Affective Lexicon Structure

The twelve affective lexical units identified span seven SentiSense emotional categories, validating Albornoz et al. (2012) concept-based methodology for resolving semantic ambiguity in poetic texts. The antonymic contrast—Sadness/Despair/Fear in the reality domain versus Hope/Love/Joy in the fictional domain—functions as the song's core emotional architecture. Metaphorical lexicons such as "down the rabbit hole" and "I can't afford to be that naïve" demonstrated the highest categorical ambivalence, confirming the necessity of contextual interpretation in affective analysis.

4.2 Psycholinguistic Processing Patterns

Four processing tendencies emerged from the data. First, a concrete-first lexical bias: 90% of respondents selected the explicit nominal phrase "broken heart" over the metaphorical "down the rabbit hole," consistent with dual-coding theory (Paivio, 1986) and the neurological finding that explicit affective words trigger faster amygdala activation (Senen, 2021). Second, optimistic cognitive reframing: 70% reinterpreted "down the rabbit hole" as Hope rather than Despair, consistent with the feelings-as-information mechanism (Fiveash, 2014), wherein respondents' high escapism tendency (M=3.90/5) modulated interpretation of an ambiguous metaphor. Third, scalar comparative processing: 70% recognized "hurts a lot less" as relative rather than absolute relief, confirming Gupta and Yang's (2018) argument that affective lexicons operate across emotion-intensity gradients. Fourth, high accuracy (80%) in explicit affective adjective identification supports Zhang et al. (2014) grammatical categorization framework.

4.3 Emotional Resonance Mechanisms

The overall level of emotional resonance falls in the high category, with no indicator below 70%. The unanimous resonance with the self-protection theme (100%) is the study's most significant finding, grounded in Rosa's (2019) definition of emotional resonance as affective synchronization and Decety and Jackson's (2004) framework of empathic engagement. The 100% preference for a "guaranteed dream" over a "risky reality" confirms the narrative escapism mechanism described by Badaro et al. (2018) and the embodied cognition framework of Mawaddah and Djauhari (2025). The near-equal split on fictional idealization vs. isolation imagery (50/50) reflects individual differences in emotional schema, consistent with appraisal theories of emotion (Scherer, 2001).

4.4 Factors Influencing Resonance

Four moderating factors were identified. (1) Escapism tendency positively correlated with depth of affective processing: high-escapism respondents produced more elaborate qualitative responses. (2) Academic pressure generated escapism need but with high individual variation (range: 1–5), indicating that context and emotion-regulation strategies mediate its effect. (3) Song familiarity moderated chorus perception via the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968): familiar respondents were more likely to perceive repetition as Comfort (50%) versus Loneliness (75% among unfamiliar respondents). (4) Individual emotional experience background produced the three-way distribution observed in responses to "tired of giving more" (Despair 50%, Sadness 30%, Anger 20%), confirming Ortony et al. (1987) finding that affective lexicons function as triggers for individualized internal states.

CONCUSION

This study demonstrates that the song "Fictional" constitutes a psycholinguistically rich authentic text whose antonymic affective architecture generates strong and consistent emotional resonance among EFL students (two indicators at 100%; no indicator below 70%). The SentiSense framework's concept-based approach proves valid and applicable beyond its original computational

context, effectively mapping the emotional processing patterns of non-native English listeners. English Education students' advanced linguistic competence enables sophisticated affective processing, including optimistic cognitive reframing, scalar comparative reasoning, and active metaphor elaboration.

These findings carry significant pedagogical implications: song lyrics with high affective lexicon density and universal emotional themes such as self-protection, romantic disappointment, and escapism function as effective authentic materials for promoting both metalinguistic awareness and deep lexical internalization in EFL instruction. Future research should replicate this study with larger and more diverse samples, incorporate neuroimaging methodologies, and extend the Lyrics Matrix approach to other contemporary popular music texts.

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