

The Stages of Love, Songs, and a Band: A Corpus Discourse Analysis of One Direction's Pop Albums

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the linguistic dimensions of the songs made popular by One Direction—the British-Irish boy band that captivated young fans around the world in the 2010s. The tailored corpus output was based on One Direction's five albums (65 songs, 21,566 words). Using Voyant Tools (Sinclair & Rockwell 2016) and discourse analysis framework (Fairclough 1995, 2001), we examined the word frequency, collocation patterns and semantic references found in the lyrics. Further analysis was grounded on the 5-stage model of love and relationships by Levinger (1983). The results suggest that the lexicogrammatical associations found in One Direction's songs show that words may have similar meaning but carry a different illocutionary message in terms of use patterns within a contextual structure. The semantic and pragmatic references in the lyrics also tell an emotional narrative of a roller-coaster-kind-of-young love and the challenges they face i.e., exhilaratingly titillating and painfully short-lived. From *Oh yeah, baby* to *Oh, love, goodbye*, love is indeed like a song; its own rhythm has a beginning and an end—a story that ironically reflects the band's own fate. This study has major implications for corpus discourse research, particularly in analyzing the semantic references and implicatures of the lyrics and the story behind them.

INTRODUCTION

Given that the center of popular music lies in the lives of youngsters, it is important to understand the inherent messages that make them connect with and liked by so many. Undeniably, popular music both reflects and embodies the lifestyles and issues that young people have. Such is the case of One Direction, a British-Irish boy band in the early 2010s; their externally evaluated image is full of life and hope—beaming with determination to pursue their dreams. With their good looks and ability to perform, they became influential icons in the U.K. In a short time, their popularity spread all over the world. From their debut album to their last music collaboration, their songs topped the billboard charts (Billboard 2021). However, like many famous boy bands that came before them (e.g., The Beatles, The Backstreet Boys, etc.), they went their separate ways and disbanded. One Direction also fell into a similar pattern where a member withdrew from the group, which inevitably led to the fallout. Nonetheless, One Direction became an iconic symbol of popular music and culture in the 2010s. The group may now be long gone, but their songs still captivate the emotions of young people and those young at heart.

This study investigated semantic references (Stubbs 2009), i.e., the characteristics of the lyrics embedded in modern popular songs, in this case, the songs made popular by One Direction. This research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis was carried out by compiling a self-created corpus of five albums containing 65 songs (henceforth, referred to as the One Direction Corpus or ODC). The study was grounded on the theoretical framework of corpus linguistics (Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravini, Krzyzanowski, McEnery, and Wodak 2008; Biber, Douglas, Conrad, and Reppen, 1998) using Voyant Tools (Sinclair & Rockwell 2016) for a network-based reading and analysis of digital text. Further discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, 2001) was also made using Levinger's (1983) 5-stage model of love and relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One Direction

The English-Irish boy band, One Direction, made their official debut after winning the third place in the British televised singing competition *The X-Factor* finals in 2010 (Kelly 2011). The original members were Niall Horan, Liam

Payne, Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, and Zayn Malik. Since their debut in 2011 with the album *Up All Night*, One Direction has won many awards, including Brit Awards, MTV Video Music Awards, and Billboard Music Awards to name a few. The extensive promotion helped grow their social media fan base which catapulted their commercial success as a boy band. They have released five albums: *Up All Night* (2011), *Take Me Home* (2012), *Midnight Memories* (2013), *Four* (2014), and *Made in the A.M.* (2015) (Table 1, Billboard, 2021). All of which have sold more than a million copies globally and ranked first on the album charts (Lane 2012; Billboard 2021).

They also produced popular singles such as “What makes You Beautiful”, “Live While We’re Young”, “Best Song Ever”, “Little Things”, “Story of My Life”, “Drag Me Down” and “Perfect” (Table 2, Billboard 2021).

By 2015, the group’s fifth and last studio album *Made in the A.M.* was released. And their single *Drag Me Down* set a global record for most-streamed songs on Spotify without any huge publicity and promotion; this was also the first song that was released after Zayn left the band in 2015 (Brandle 2015). Although it was a hit, the band was never the same afterwards. The remaining four members did not renew their contracts after their *On the Road Again Tour*, and finally disbanded (Newsround 2020). All of them signed with other recording labels and started their own solo careers (Melas 2017).

As presented above, the life of a boy band is short lived. Like other forms of relationships, a boy band is a partnership that needs constant work to ensure cohesive collaboration. Individual member’s personalities and individual desires may clash with others which could trigger the end of a band’s life. It is interesting to note a striking parallel to the narrative of the songs One Direction has written with how their own story has played out.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the theoretical underpinnings based on Levinger’s ABCDE Model and Discourse Analysis will be discussed.

Phases of love and relationships

The psychologist George Levinger (1983) proposed a 5-stage model of love and relationships, otherwise known as the ABCDE Model (see Figure 1): (A) acquaintance (a feeling of mutual attraction arises), (B) buildup (revealing more of one’s private selves), (C) continuation (long term commitments such as marriage), (D) deterioration (decline or relationships falling apart) and (E) termination (ending or going on separate ways). He propounds that these are the phases people go through once they have taken the *love* journey— from the beginning to the end. Levinger emphasized the importance of observing the transition phase, moving from one stage to another. However, according to Perlman and Fehr (1986), Levinger concentrated on the breakdown of relationships, more specifically on their deterioration. It is at this stage when couples can see the negative changes

Table 1. Summary of studio album by one direction

S/N	Released date	Studio album	Summary
1	18 November 2011	<i>Up All Night</i>	Being young, relationships, heartbreak, and youth empowerment.
2	9 November 2012	<i>Take Me Home</i>	Falling in love, unrequited love, commitment, jealousy, self-empowerment, and yearning
3	25 November 2013	<i>Midnight Memories</i>	memories and transformation, heartbreak, and sexual desires
4	17 November 2014	<i>Four</i>	nostalgia and looking forward to the future
5	13 November 2015	<i>Made in the A.M.</i>	confession and saying goodbye

Table 2. Most popular singles by one direction

Studio Album	Song title	Released date	YouTube views (By 8 April 2021)
<i>Up All Night</i> (2011)	What makes You Beautiful	11 September 2011	1.2 billion
	One Thing	6 January 2012	690 million
<i>Take Me Home</i> (2012)	Live While We’re Young	28 September 2012	680 million
	Little Things	12 November 2012	360 million
<i>Midnight Memories</i> (2013)	Best Song Ever	22 July 2013	710 million
	Story of My Life	28 October 2013	890 million
<i>Four</i> (2014)	Steal My Girl	29 September 2014	370 million
	Night Changes	14 November 2014	400 million
<i>Made in the A.M.</i> (2015)	Drag Me Down	31 July 2015	930 million
	Perfect	16 October 2015	460 million

in behavior, i.e., lack of affection, keeping secrets and lack of openness and/or honesty, etc. Conflicts occur as couples find themselves being unhappy and yet unable to leave the relationship due to their interdependence, responsibilities to the family, or any reason that may prevent them from doing so (Levinger 1983). It is also in the Deterioration stage where couples may find a third party to be attractive and contemplate on starting an illicit affair. Although Levinger developed his theory which only addresses heterosexual relationships between adults, it has no obvious limitations when applied to any other type of romantic relationship.

Discourse analysis (DA)

The focus of this study is on the values, meanings, and forms of knowledge that song lyrics intended to convey. Discourse

Analysis (DA) is an interdisciplinary research method where texts of ideology or discourse are used as tools (Fairclough 1992). Its theoretical basis is mainly derived from the subject knowledge of post-structuralism discourse theory and critical linguistics, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, literary theory, and language philosophy (Fowler et al. 1979). Van Dijk (1993) pointed out that the research purpose of discourse analysis is to find out the structure, strategy, and textual features that play a role in reproduction. Fairclough (1995) proposed the so-called three-dimensional analysis framework: text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). The analysis between texts focuses on linking the language used in the text with the social context (Fairclough 1992), such as books, magazines, newspapers, and songs. In the process of analysis, it explores the ideology implicit in discourse and seeks the dialectical relationship between discourse and social conditions (Figure 2).

The main aim of corpus-based methodologies (Biber et al. 2007) and discourse analysis is to point out areas of interest and allow for more in-depth analysis, as “the context plays a part in determining what we say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context” (Halliday 1978 p.3). In other words, it is an examination that involves searching for specific pattern of occurrences within contextual structures. These measures include the compilation of corpora, frequency list of words and word clusters, comparison of keyword lists and, most importantly, analysis of concordances (Egbert & Baker 2019). The corpus output can give clues to semantic references and lexicogrammatical patterns that are found in the text. A semantic reference is the linguistic expression (word/lexicon) used to point out or allude to an object or subject in a context (Martinich 2012; Frawley 2013). Lexicogrammar, introduced by Halliday (2013), is a combination of lexical and grammar patterns, i.e., lexical patterns in a grammatical structure. Understanding these patterns in everyday expressions and communications strengthens one’s sense of perception (Sinclair 2004). Hence, semantic references and lexicogrammatical patterns are critical parts of comprehending language (Pearce 2007) and how people express their thoughts and feelings in various social and cultural contexts (Gledhill 2011). In a nutshell, corpus discourse analysis can shed light to linguistic applications and the pragmatic intentions of the users, thus going beyond the semantic meaning of the words.

Research on songs

There are two basic questions that applied linguists often raise when doing research on pop songs: what the linguistic features of pop songs are and how popular songs promote language learning and education. For instance, Nishina’s (2017) study investigated the various characteristics identified in the lyrics of modern popular songs ranked in the Billboard Hot 100 chart for ten years (2002-2011) to grasp the description of this genre and provide basic data useful for the design of future English materials and their detailed development. Based on the outcomes of the beginner learning survey, the use of popular songs was an effective educational

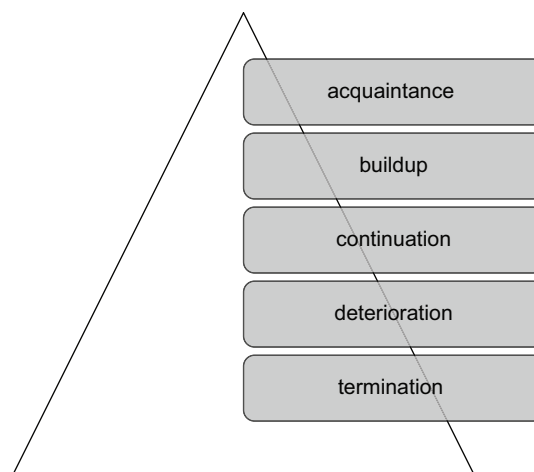


Figure 1. The 5 stages of a relationship proposed by Levinger (1983 p.67)

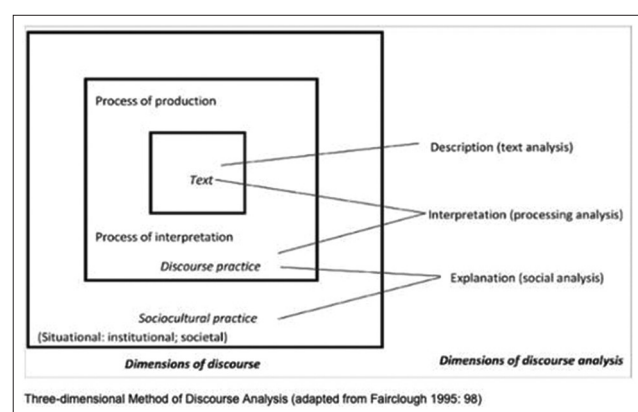


Figure 2. Fairclough’s three-dimensional model (1995 p.98)

method to have, and such learning materials can serve as catalyst for students who lack the motivation in learning English.

Another recent study by Cheung and Feng (2021) focused on a specific genre of construction— heavy metal. Their research looked at the asymmetric power relationship between cultural/religious institutions and disobedient people, as well as identity construction related to cultural politics and religion. They found that metal lyrics usually convey a sense of insecurity, alienation, sadness, and desire for death and redemption in emotional terms. Metal lyrics highlight the core values of conquest, condemnation of war and anti-hypocrisy.

Eiter’s research (2017) was based on corpus linguistic perspective in investigating non-standard features of English in the lyrics of pop songs released in 2012 to 2015. The findings suggest that the lyrics of pop songs, as written-to-be-sung language, apply non-standard functions. However, he mentioned the need to further study the registration methods of pop songs, i.e., variant syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistic variables.

Due to the limited corpus discourse analysis studies on pop songs, this study fills the gap in research by focusing on One Direction’s album collections on the theme of love and relationships.

Research Questions

This study will therefore address the following research questions:

- What are the semantic and lexicogrammatical references used in One Direction's songs?
- What is/are the linguistic evidence on the stages of relationships found in One Direction's albums?

METHODOLOGY

This study combined both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and as Baker et al. (2008) state, mixed method is a "useful methodological synergy" (p. 273) with the help of a corpus linguistic approach. A self-created corpus of songs from One Direction served as data (ODC). 65 song lyrics from their five studio albums were selected, and the lyrics were compiled from AZLyrics (<https://www.azlyrics.com/>), a website for popular song lyrics. A web-based digital texts reading and analysis program, Voyant Tools (Sinclair & Rockwell 2016), was used to perform corpus analysis (Baker et al., 2008; Biber et al. 1998). It was carried out to examine word patterns extracted from collocations and consistency data, as well as pattern strength based on collocation trends, word frequency and word selection (visualized in Cirrus/Word Cloud), and the overall relative influence of these semantics. This study also applied Fairclough's (1995 2001) three-dimensional model of discourse analysis (DA) as the framework for analysis. The results were further examined using Levinger's (1983) 5-stage model of love and relationships.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The ODC was categorized into five documents based on the five studio albums One Direction released from 2010 to 2016. Each document reflects the songs included in the album. In total there were 65 songs. One album contains 12-14 singles (the average number for a studio album). The ODC has 21,566 words, an average of 4313 words per album, and 1,369 unique word forms (Table 3).

The longest document (4829 words) was the *Midnight Memories* album (2013), and the shortest document was the *Made in the A.M.* album (4329) produced in 2015:

Document Length:

- Longest: *Midnight Memories* (2013) (4829); *Take Me Home* (2012) (4621)
- Shortest: *Four* (2014) (3275); *Made in the A.M.* (2015) (4329)

Voyant Tools automatically filter the most common words (or stop words) in a language such as *the, is, at, which, on,* etc. to limit and narrow the results for processing data (text). In Figure 3, the five most frequent words in the ODC are *oh* (360), *know* (241), *yeah* (195), *I'm* (182), and *baby* (167). The relative frequency of the count highlights the distinctive words in each album. By comparing the syntax to the rest of the corpus, the highlighted words give the synopsis of what the narrative for the album is about. For example, in *Midnight Memories*, the distinctive words were *story, white, ready,*

Table 3. Summary of corpus size

Studio Album	Singles	Words
<i>Up All Night</i> (2011)	13	4512
<i>Take Me Home</i> (2012)	13	4621
<i>Midnight Memories</i> (2013)	14	4829
<i>Four</i> (2014)	12	3275
<i>Made in the A.M.</i> (2015)	13	4329
Total	65	21,566

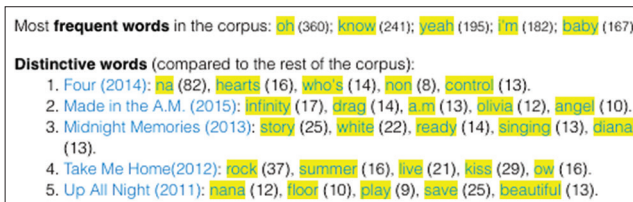


Figure 3. The corpus summary

singing, and Diana. One can easily surmise that memories are made of *stories*, and this is what is relevant in this album.

Below is a list of the 12 most frequent keywords in the corpus:

- (1) *oh*
- (2) *no*
- (3) *yeah*
- (4) *say*
- (5) *alright*
- (6) *rock*
- (7) *it's*
- (8) *ooh*
- (9) *whoa*
- (10) *na*
- (11) *baby*
- (12) *you're*

The top 12 words from the corpus are displayed in Cirrus (Word Cloud)– a visual graphic analyzer tool in Voyant that shows a collection of frequently used words in the corpus (Figure 4). A word cloud is a powerful visualization paradigm that illustrates the relative frequency of keywords in terms of font size– the bigger the font, the higher frequency of use for that word in the data (Heimerl, Lohmann, Lange, & Ertl, 2014). The results are presented in a cloud-like figure which is composed of a cluster of words depicting various font sizes (Viegas, Wattenberg, Van Ham, Kriss, and McKeon, 2007).

Lexical Links and Frequency

The Links tool in Voyant shows the Collocates Graph with the keywords and terms (tokens) that are closely related and presented in the form of a graphical network. In corpus linguistics, collocation refers to the number of words or terms that appear in sequence at the same time more than accidentally (Kjellmer, 2014). Corpus Collocates in Voyant Tools is a tabular view in which terms appear more frequently in close relation to keywords in the entire corpus. The user can view its frequency and collocational strength in the corpus

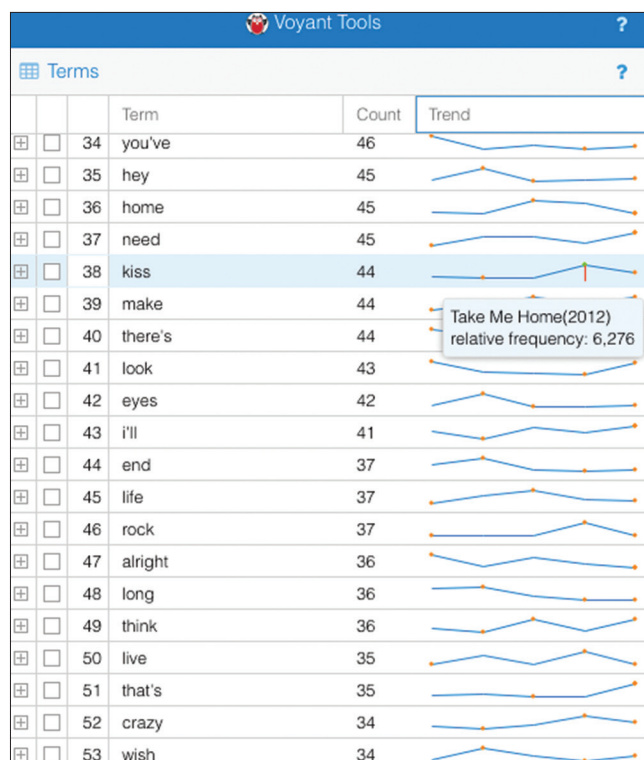


Figure 7. Word trends

However, the meaning changes when it is used to convey regret, e.g., *Hey angel oh I wish I could be* from *Midnight Memories*.

- (1) a. So pour me a drink, *oh*, love. Let's split the night ---*Four* (2014)
- b. Hey angel *oh* I wish I could be ---*Made in the A.M.* (2015)
- c. ever I think it went *oh, oh, oh* I think it---*Midnight Memories* (2013)
- d. And let me kiss you *oh*, baby, baby, don't you know ---*Take Me Home* (2012)
- e. gotta be you only you *oh* girl, can we try one ---*Up All Night* (2011)

In many of One Direction's songs, the colloquial word *yeah* is widely used. As an informal interjection, *yeah* (2a) and (2e) can be explained as *it is so* or *as you say or ask*, where it is being used to agree, affirm, or accept facts/truths. Sometimes, repeated use of the word will show the importance of the message. For example, *yeah, yeah, yeah* of (2c) could mean *I couldn't agree with you more*. However, depending on the utterance, it could also mean "not likely" when one is being ironic. And if *yeah, yeah, yeah*, is said while interrupting the person talking, it is equivalent to saying rudely, "I already know that- so get on with it!" The *yeah* in 2d is placed in between two identical sentences which indicates "yes" or a confirmation of the excitement or acceptance of the situation.

- (2) a. til I'm out of luck, *yeah*, I roll and roll ---*Four* (2014)
- b. I could be more *yeah* I see you at the ---*Made in the A.M.* (2015)
- c. oh I think I went *yeah*, yeah, yeah I think it ---*Midnight Memories* (2013)

- d. So I'm coming back *yeah*, I am coming back for---*Take Me Home* (2012)
- e. love you more than this, *yeah*. When he lays you down ---*Up All Night* (2011)

Another word that frequently appeared in the ODC is *I'm*, which is classified as a personal pronoun. There are three types of personal pronouns: first-person refers to the *person who speaks*; second-person refers to the *other person who speaks*; and third-person refers to *the person and thing being mentioned* (Huddleston 1984). Obviously, *I'm* is the abbreviation of *I am*, which is relatively colloquial. The use of the first-person is a self-declaration, addressed to oneself. The pattern *I'm* in singular present tense "be" means one exists—a state of being or feeling as in the examples (3) below.

- (3) a. I think *I'm* gonna lose my mind ---*Four* (2014)
- b. When you go and *I'm* alone ---*Made in the A.M.* (2015)
- c. This time *I'm* ready to run ---*Midnight Memories* (2013)
- d. So *I'm* coming back for you ---*Take Me Home* (2012)
- e. Whenever you kiss him, *I'm* breaking ---*Up All Night* (2011)

The other two words *know* and *baby* appear in the second and fifth most repeated words. *Know* is defined as to (a) understand, (b) be aware of or (c) be familiar with someone or something. By looking at the examples in (4), we can clearly see that the term *know* plays an important role in determining a certain and definite tone in a sentence. In addition, *know* is sometimes used together with *you* in interjections, especially as informal speech fillers. The phrase *You know* is very commonly used in speaking as a discourse marker which signifies to be or become cognizant, to check other's understanding, and to comprehend what the content of the conversation speakers are saying. When using *you know*, it is assumed that listeners do have the knowledge that speakers want them to have. Hence, *know* is frequently used in One Direction's love songs as shown in Excerpt 4.

- (4) a. And I *know* in my heart, you're just a moving part---*Four* (2014)
- b. Baby don't you *know* we can live forever ---*Made in the A.M.* (2015)
- c. You *know* I'll remember you ---*Midnight Memories* (2013)
- d. If I let you *know* I'm here for you ---*Take Me Home* (2012)
- e. If you walk away, I *know* I'll fade ---*Up All Night* (2011)

As mentioned earlier, the term *baby* is often used as a colloquial word to address a romantic partner, such as wife, husband, or partner (Bruess & Pearson, 2002). This is an affectionate way of addressing someone dear to you. As shown in Excerpt 5, the semantic references and patterns where *baby* is used signify an intimate close relationship. It is softer and more convincing than calling a sweetheart by name directly.

- (5) a. Cause nobody knows you, *baby*, the way I do ---*Four* (2014)
- b. Oh, *baby*, I was there for you ---*Made in the A.M.* (2015)
- c. Don't look back, *baby*. Follow me ---*Midnight Memories* (2013)

- d. *Baby*, you don't have to worry ---Take Me Home (2012)
 e. Everyone else but you *baby*, you light up my world--
 -*Up All Night* (2011)

Semantics and Lexicogrammatical Issues on the Discourse about Relationships

The acquaintance phase: Up All Night (2011)

As with song lyrics, contemporary artists write about their experiences and feelings about things that matter to them: love, heartbreak, camaraderie, motivation, sexual desires, identity, etc. In other words, idealism of youth is wrapped within the (en)coded messages of these songs-- and this is what connects young audiences to pop artists and their songs (Haider 2021).

The content of One Direction's 2011 album *Up All Night* reflects the initial phase of *liking* someone. It falls under Levinger's *Acquaintance Phase*- the first stage of love and relationships. In this phase, attraction begins with knowing each other. When two individuals meet and immediately hit it off, they feel attracted by each other's appearance, body language, or similar interests and decide to establish a relationship. They form an impression of each other based on their moods, goals, and values. The songs on the album are titled *Everything about You*, *Stole my Heart*, and *What Makes You Beautiful*, which are all about showing and expressing love and wanting (fancying) someone.

Love can be very simple, as exemplified in Excerpt 1. In this song *Everything about You*, the lyrics tell a story about a boy who is trying to express how much he loves everything about her: her personality, appearance, voice, etc. Although for some, love can happen at first sight. Reading the lyrics from *Stole my Heart* in Excerpt 2, it can be fully understood that it is a song about a boy who falls in love with a girl at first sight. In a sense, she "stole his heart" with her look.

Excerpt 1.

It's everything about you, you, you (everything about you)

Everything about you, you, you (everything about you)

It's everything that you do, do, do (everything about you)

It's everything about you

Yes, I like the way you smile with your eyes

Other guys see it but don't realize that it's m-my loving

There's something about your laugh that it makes me wanna have to

There's nothing funny so we laugh at n-n-nothing

"Everything about You" from *Up All Night* (2011)

Excerpt 2.

Under the lights tonight, you turned around

And you stole my heart, with just one look

When I saw your face, I fell in love

Took a minute girl, to steal my heart tonight

With just one look, yeah

Been waiting for a girl like you

"Stole my Heart" from *Up All Night* (2011)

The lexical token *you* in One Direction's songs has 63 counts, and the highest frequency is in the hit song *What*

Makes You Beautiful. Almost every line contains the word *you*. This song is about a boy who strives to boost his partner's self-esteem by telling her everything that is good about her. The songwriter, Savan Kotecha, stated in an interview that he gave about how the song was conceived (Schillaci 2013). He recalled that day when his wife was having a bad morning and saying *Oh, I feel so ugly*. He responded by reassuring her, *No, you look beautiful. You don't know how beautiful you look*. That was an a-ha moment for him, which gave him the inspiration to build on the lyrics of what could be a potentially good song with the right melody and chorus. The song carries a positive message that sometimes to show affection means being nice and supporting the person we love when they feel low or insecure. Insecurity or the lack of confidence is a common dilemma for teenagers. Hence, they can easily relate to the lyrics and are simple enough for them to understand.

Lastly, the album titled *Up All Night* tells a narrative of invincible youth. Young people have the energy to stay up all night feeling either so happy or melancholic. There are a lot of party-anthem songs in this album, therefore, the lyrics tell a story about late parties with some *hot girls* and finding someone to fall in love with for a night and watch the sunrise, as in the line *I wanna stay up all night and jump around until we see the sun* (Excerpt 3).

Another interesting finding is the correlation of the words *want* and *loved*. These tokens have positive correlation (0.978) which also suggests that their term frequencies vary in sync, i.e. Their frequencies rise and fall together (Figure 8).

It is also fascinating to see how these words are used in context, thus giving us a storyline based on word usage. The illocutionary meaning takes on a different level according to the grammar used. As mentioned earlier, *wanting* is very much part of teenage love. Looking at the context below (Figure 9), the word *want* was repeated many times. The phrase, *that's crazy, I want, want, want* shows *I* (subject) taking an active stance directly acting upon its verb (*want*). Whereas the succeeding line, *I want to be loved by you* is in passive form which means the subject is at the receiving end. The contextual clues suggest that this person wants to feel appreciated and cared for.

Another song related to *night* is *Save You Tonight*, where a boy falls in love with a girl who was mistreated by her boyfriend. The boy who truly loves her, sees himself as her savior, and wants to save her from a heartbreak by telling her *He'll only break you, leave you torn apart* (Excerpt 4). In addition, sleeplessness for young adults can sometimes be caused by life events, such as emotional tension at first sight or a desire to see a certain person, as shown in *Save You Tonight*, which clearly describes sleepless behaviors, e.g. *It's quarter to three, can't sleep at all* (Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 3.

It feels like we've been livin' in fast forward

Another moment passing by

(Up up up all night)

The party's ending but it's now or never

Nobody's going home tonight

(Up up up all night)

People going all the way

Term 1	←	→	Term 2	Correlation...	Significanc...
loved			want	0.9785921	8.9551963...
na			want	0.95812476	0.0000127...
dancing			want	0.95812476	0.0000127...
tearing			want	0.95812476	0.0000127...

Figure 8. Correlations of *Want* and *Love*

Left	Term	Right
I want, I want, I	want	, And that's crazy I want
want, And that's crazy I	want	, I want, I want, To
that's crazy I want, I	want	, I want, To be loved
I want, I want, I	want	, To be loved by you
to warn you What you	want	, what you need Has been
can't have me You suddenly	want	me Now that I'm with

Figure 9. Contextual patterns for the token *Want*

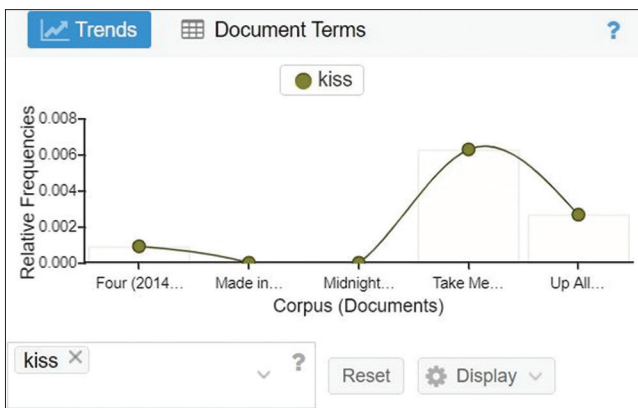


Figure 10. Word Trends pattern for *Kiss*

Yeah, all the way
 I'm still wide awake
 I wanna stay up all night
 And jump around until we see the sun
 I wanna stay up all night
 And find a girl and tell her she's the one
 "Up All Night" from *Up All Night* (2011)

Excerpt 4.
 It's a quarter to three can't sleep at all
 I, I wanna save you
 Wanna save your heart tonight
 He'll only break you
 Leave you torn apart, oh
 I can't be no superman,
 But for you I'll be super human
 "Save You Tonight" from *Up All Night* (2011)

The songs mentioned in this section were released in 2011, at a time One Direction was just starting a new journey together as a boy band (Lipshutz 2013). And akin to the first stage in a relationship— Everything is very attractive and exciting.

The buildup phase: *Take Me Home* (2012)

Following the previous concept of the debut album, the lyricism of the second album tells a narrative of falling in love, unrequited love, insisting that flaws are what make a person special, and a firm commitment. They were evident in their songs *Little Things*, *Last First Kiss*, *Back For You*, and *They Don't Know About Us* (Petridis 2018). This is the buildup stage stated by Levinger (1983): when the relationship really develops. To develop the relationship from the acquaintance (attraction) stage to the buildup one, it is important to keep (or become) compatible with each other in terms of tastes, hobbies, personal values, and life goals. The buildup stage in a relationship is usually characterized by two individuals being close to each other, full of passion and feelings for each other.

For example, in Excerpt 5, *But I'll love them endlessly* tells us that the insecurities we might see make us pretty and perfect. She/he may not be the most beautiful/handsome girl/boy in the world, but for him/her, she/he is the greatest girl/boy in the world. The lyrics of *I just wanna tell the world that you're mine, girl* (Excerpt 6) are about two people (gender not specified) who want to be together and show the world that they love each other despite what other people say. In this narrative, the use of 'we' instead of 'I and you' sends a different message about the stage in the relationship they are in. They now present themselves as 'one', 'them vs the world', and adamant in believing that others do not understand what the only two of them know.

Excerpt 5.
 I know you've never loved the crinkles by your eyes
 when you smile
 You've never loved your stomach or your thighs
 The dimples in your back at the bottom of your spine
 But I'll love them endlessly
 "Little Things" from *Take Me Home* (2012)

Excerpt 6.
 People say we shouldn't be together
 We're too young to know about forever
 But I say they don't know what they're talk-talk-talkin'
 about (talk-talk-talkin' about)
 'Cause this love is only getting stronger
 So I don't wanna wait any longer
 I just wanna tell the world that you're mine, girl
 "They Don't Know About Us" from *Take Me Home* (2012)

The distinctive words from the album mentioned earlier *Take Me Home* are rock (37), summer (16), live (21), kiss (29), ow (16). Surprisingly, *kiss* is on the list. As can be seen from Figure 9, in the five albums, the frequencies of *kiss* are used the most. In modern Western culture, kissing is a common way of expressing love and the most intimate interaction between two individuals. There are some reasons for this situation due to lack of resistance or defense (Wlodarski and Dunbar 2013). For instance, when boys are moved by the cuteness or shy smile of girls, their hearts melt, and they cannot help but want to kiss them. Explicit hints in the lines, such as *Baby, be mine tonight, mine tonight* and *And let me kiss you* (Excerpt 7), obviously speaks about the initial stages of sexual attraction running amok and wanting to get to the

next level. Teenagers tend to be easily moved by girls and the way they look or move; they cannot help but want to give them a pampering kiss (Hughes et al. 2007). Gonzaga et al. (2006) posit that sexual desire plays a role in starting contact, stimulating sexual interest, and seeking intimacy; this is the state that promotes passion and infatuation. Therefore, sexual desire is often so strong at the beginning of a relationship, and this explains why the presence or absence of concupiscence can reflect the intensity of commitment between partners. Thus, the illocutionary force in *Take Me Home* and *Be mine tonight* alludes to pruriency, which all starts with a *kiss*.

Excerpt 7.

Oh, I just wanna show you off to all of my friends
 Making them drool down their chinny-chin-chins
 Baby, be mine tonight, mine tonight
 Baby, be mine tonight, yeah
 Yeah, so tell me girl if every time we
 To-o-uch
 You get this kind of ru-u-ush
 Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
 If you don't wanna take it slow (c'mon)
 And you just wanna take me home
 Baby, say yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
 And let me kiss you
 And let me kiss you
 And let me kiss you
 And let me kiss you
 And let me kiss you

“Kiss You” from *Take Me Home* (2012)

Similarly, *Take Me Home* suggests moving up to the next level in a relationship. It is no longer *just* kissing; it is now about intimacy and sharing something personal. As shown in Excerpt 8, the title of the song *Let me be your last first kiss* (from the same album) compressed a lifelong romance into a seven-word line. The illocutionary message it sends to a girl is that he is open to the idea of having a *long-term relationship*. This song is full of promises being made to a girl just to have her love and affection. For example, *Oh, I just wanna take you anywhere that you'd like* and *You can get, get anything that you want* (Excerpt 10) these lines imply hope and willingness to give everything for love.

Excerpt 8.

I wanna be last, yeah
 Baby let me be your
 Let me be your last first kiss
 I wanna be first, yeah
 Wanna be the first to take it all the way like this
 And if you
 Only knew
 I wanna be last, yeah
 Baby let me be your last
 Your last first kiss

“Last First Kiss” from *Take Me Home* (2012)

Excerpt 9.

Oh, I just wanna take you anywhere that you'd like
 We could go out any day, any night
 Baby I'll take you there, take you there
 Baby I'll take you there, yeah
 Oh, tell me, tell me, tell me, how to turn your love on

You can get, get anything that you want
 Baby just shout it out, shout it out
 Baby just shout it out, yeah

“Kiss You” from *Take Me Home* (2012)

Other tracks, such as “Heart Attack,” “Rock Me,” “I Would,” and “Over Again,” have a more nostalgic tone, expressing pain and yearning for significant others in the past (Ryan 2012). Nonetheless, the overarching message is building up a relationship. Very similar to what was happening in their journey as a band around the time these songs were created- the boys were very much committed to sticking together and making it big in the music industry.

The continuation phase: Midnight Memories (2013)

The songs in *Midnight Memories* (2013) album express a turbulent relationship that leads to sadness and heartbreak. With the themes of *Live While We're Young* and *Story of My Life*, the songs explore the rapid passing of time, capturing moments in life, and gaining love in the process. The continuation phase described in Levinger's (1983) model is characterized when a relationship develops into long-term commitments; hence, love relationships are strengthened. At this stage people would be in a stable partnership or contemplating marriage if they are still not married. Thus, mutual trust is essential to the success of the continuation stage of a relationship (Fraley & Davis 1997). One of the songs in the album, “You and I”, is a lyrical declaration:

“*You and I, we don't want to be like them. We can make it to the end. Nothing can come between you and I. Not even the gods above can separate the two of us*”.

The discourse in these lines suggest a discussion is being made about the future of this relationship. The line, *we don't want to be like them* indicates a comparison with others. And *we can make it to the end* further insinuates that other relationships have ended, while theirs is still going and if they're willing, they could go a long way. However, when one tells someone, *I love you and I need you because you make me strong*, it may scare someone off. This adds pressure to escape a relationship (Horan & Booth-Butterfield 2013). Although this line shows determination to pursue the relationship, the degree of expression, particularly overlaying vulnerability, could be seen as signs of emotional toxicity, i.e., neediness and codependency.

The total number of the token *know* is 241 (the second highest), while the highest relative frequency of occurrence appeared in the *Midnight Memories* album. The excerpt below expresses direct perception and cognition between one who is speaking and the one to whom the message is addressed to:

You know, I know, you know I'll remember you

And I know, you know, I know you'll remember me,

The phrases *I know, you know,* suggest that both comprehend that what they have/had is something unforgettable. However, these lines also suggest an imminent separation, a sense of nostalgia, remembering something that happened in the past. This is more evident in Excerpt 11, where people feel lonely and miss someone in their life that left wonderful memories. This feeling of longing for someone who used to be there is very relatable for many.

Excerpt 10.

You know, I know, you know I'll remember you
And I know, you know, I know you'll remember me
You know, I know, you know I'll remember you
And I know, you know, I hope you remember how we danced
How we danced

"Best Song Ever" from *Midnight Memories* (2013)

Excerpt 11.

Been a lot of places
I've been all around the world
Seen a lot of faces
Never knowing where I was
I've been away for ages
But I've got everything I need
I'm flicking through the pages
I've written in my memory

"Don't Forget Where You Belong" from *Midnight Memories* (2013)

The albums *Midnight Memories*, *Up All Night* and *Take Me Home*, all have intertextual reference to the word 'night'. Although the rhythm of the songs in this album is also very brisk, the content of the lyrics is quite sad and dark. This suggests that feeling melancholic happens at night when things get *dark*. The chorus of *Strong* takes a different turn in the narrative. In these lines, one is apologizing for being *weak* and *needy* (Excerpt 12). These are difficult emotions that young adults go through. As Amanstein (2021) states, "the awkwardness, confusion and sometimes desperation of trying to forge romantic relationships is even more stressful" (para. 4).

Excerpt 12.

I'm sorry if I say, "I need you"
But I don't care
I'm not scared of love
'Cause when I'm not with you I'm weaker
Is that so wrong?
Is it so wrong
That you make me strong?

"Strong" from *Midnight Memories* (2013)

As mentioned in the introduction, by 2013 One Direction had been on world tours, producing and doing concerts at the same time. Akin to the theme of this album, One Direction was already feeling the pinch of success.

The deterioration phase: *Four* (2014)

Not all relationships go through the deterioration phase. However, for some it is difficult to adapt to a new level of relationship and decide to terminate it. Since compromise is an indispensable part of every relationship, so are the issues of lack of compatibility, trust, love, and care which often lead to misunderstandings and serious relationship troubles. The song, *Night Changes* elaborates the idea that everything can change. The song "18" describes how a relationship has ended and hopes to rekindle it with a more mature perspective. 18 is the age regarded by many as a transition age from boys to men, interpreting that these boys are not kids anymore but adults (Centre for Mental Health 2016). However, like what was mentioned earlier, maintaining a long-lasting relationship for teenagers is challenging.

The song *Spaces* from the album *Four*, the word *Who* has been repeated in every single line. This brings attention to the person committing the act. *Who's* is a contraction of the phrase *Who is*. *Who* is a pronoun, and the way it is used in the song makes it a part of an interrogative phrase (question word) asking about a person's character, position, importance, etc.

Who's gonna be the first one to start the fight?

Who's gonna be the first one to fall asleep at night?

Who's gonna be the last one to drive away?

Who's gonna be the last one to forget this place?

Who's gonna be the first to say goodbye?

Who's gonna be the first one to compromise?

Who's gonna be the first one to set it all on fire

The songs on this album take a big switch from the sweet narrative of early teens having a crush to reaching that stage of complexity in relationships. *Four* focuses on deteriorating partnerships where couples constantly argue and their love for each other starts to wane. Complicated emotional matters can lead people to breakdowns. Many find themselves at a crossroad. The constant repetition of *Who* in *Spaces* suggests that the perennial scenes of fighting only cause the space between them to grow further apart. These spaces turn into crevices of *secrets* that slowly turn deep until both become unable to reconcile.

We keep taking turns

Will we ever learn?

Oh spaces between us

Keep getting deeper

It's harder to reach you

Even though I try

Spaces between us

Hold all our secrets

Leaving us speechless

And I don't know why

Deterioration phase is a stage where everything seems to shatter (Levinger, 1983). As stated previously, by 2014, One Direction was going through some turbulent times. The band was experiencing some internal problems. The cracks within can no longer be ignored. And as their song goes, the *spaces* and *secrets* make it harder to reconcile. And it did not take long, Zayn Malik left the group. Perhaps *leaving* others *speechless*.

The termination phase: *Made in the A.M.* (2015)

Made in the A.M. (2015) has overtones of endings that fits Levinger's (1983) final stage of a relationship. This is not necessarily related to a break-up, divorce, or separation; it may also be due to the death of one of the partners in the relationship or other factors. An ideal relationship can bring lasting commitment and marriage; however, some relationships do start on a positive note but end suddenly. Sometimes, the termination stage is due to the disappearance of love and/or intimacy. Boredom is usually regarded as a sign of deterioration of the relationship. The stagnation phase is a highly predictable situation that occurs before the avoidance and termination phases (Knapp & Vangelisti 2005). In Levinger's model, termination is the culmination of the impact of change. *Made in the A.M.* (2015) is the album released by One Direction

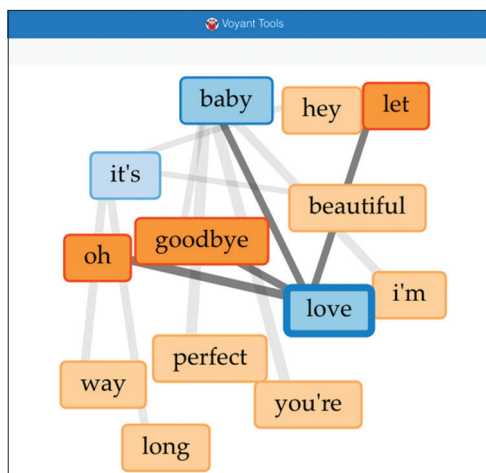


Figure 11. Word links for *Love*

after Zayn left the group. The leitmotif of the album is about endings and losing people in one's life.

Looking at the Word Links results (Figure 11) using the token 'love' (in blue), it is highly linked to *baby*, followed by *oh*, *let* and *goodbye* (in orange). One can easily surmise based on the frequency of usage; One Direction shows preference on using *baby* as a term of endearment addressed to the person who is the subject of attention. However, the relevance of correlation with the lexical term 'goodbye', i.e., *goodbye*, *love* also suggests parting of ways despite still feeling the love for that person.

There is never such a simple way to say goodbye. However, the ending is also the start of something new for each of them. It validates what Levinger (1983) propounds that the termination stage can allow the individuals to grow and mature in the relationship, even though this may be a painful and difficult process.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed the semantic references in the lyrics of One Direction's love songs. Applying Levinger's 5-stage relationships model and corpus-assisted discourse analysis, word choices mainly focus on the theme of love and relationships. The genre of One Direction's songs in all their five albums has not changed much; many of the songs have fast beats and rhythm. One of the characteristics of their lyrics is the conveyance of optimism, which makes people feel better. Most songs contain lyrics about love between young teenagers as shown and described in this study. It seems expected that this kind of music attracts youngsters the most as they can easily relate to the social situations and the feelings being evoked. Listening to pop music is a kind of leisure for them, thus the songs are mostly related to love, sex, and young pleasures. Another interesting finding is that the songs One Direction released correspond to the stages of love and relationships. There are songs that represent young men to speak out their feelings, describing love at first sight, expressing the situation of spending the day yearning for an unrequited love, etc.—all these make their fans feel elated and melancholic at the same time. In short, their songs speak

of the ironic truth about the convoluting phases of love and what it means to love and lose the people whom they thought will be there with them forever. The break-ups and endings are also a painful reminder that nothing lasts in this world, a stark similarity with One Direction's fate— not even money and fame could save the group. The small corpus based on the five albums is a limitation of this paper. For further research in this field, larger corpus data and multiple methods could help improve the robustness of the study. Nonetheless, this research provided an invaluable contribution to the field of corpus discourse analysis of pop songs and young love. Perhaps it is indeed true that love is like a song; it has stages, and quite similarly, so does the life of a boy band: it has a beginning and an end, and it beats in its own rhythm.

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