

## The Lexical and Contextual Meaning Olivia Rodrigo's Top Ten Billboard Songs 2021

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**Abstract** – This study aims to uncover the lexical and contextual meaning of the song titles repeated several times when sung in the chorus. Besides, these titles also have catchy vibes and easily gaining attention from the listeners due to using daily spoken words. The two songs popularized by Olivia Rodrigo titled 'Déjà vu' and 'Good for you' are used as the source of the data. The data is mostly the titles of the songs and the whole lyrics to uncover the main theme to understanding the song message deeper. The theme acts as the soul of the song crucially required to understand both the meaning lexical and contextual. The data of this research is collected through qualitative method by web browsing on Billboard official pages, browsing the songs, listen to it both online and offline and analyzing the already downloaded lyrics of these two songs. Once the data had been compiled, using the theory of Semantics from Charles W. Kreidler in his book *Introducing English Semantics* combined with other theories focusing on Lexical and Contextual meaning e.g. *Linguistic Semantic* by John Lyons, Geoffrey Leech and other related theories, it is discovered that the contextual meaning of the title in relation to the whole body theme of the song effectively delivers the idea of mostly love sarcasm that has become catchy and easily digested by the listeners. This contextual meaning is totally separated from its lexical one. Discovering this will lead the listeners to understand as well as comprehend how the song writers play with the words and make it top ten billboard charts.

**Keywords:** meaning, lexical, contextual, theme, sarcasm

### 1. Introduction

Songs have been part of our lives. We consume it in every second of our breath as human beings. It is almost everywhere and we are exposed to it on daily basis. As the compilation of lyrics, music, rhymes, etc. songs have its own soul which we call them as the heart or the centre of the song itself. As the centre, every other aspect that also builds up the songs would linger around and relate to it e.g. if theme is love sacrifices, the single word 'drought' will mean differently after being related to the theme itself detached from its lexical meaning according to the dictionary but more expressing the contextual meaning related to the theme itself. This study on songs is required to further understand how the song writers create their masterpieces utilizing the means of linguistics and literature. It is no longer the era of merely receiving, furthermore, we need to deeply know and understand what we take in our everyday life and the songs included. In addition, this study is also expected to be further reviewed for other studies in the future to give more insights on literature and linguistics analysis.

To deeply understand both lexical and contextual meanings of the songs, this study is conducted upon some research questions namely uncovering the context emerged from the usage of the theme itself through the question of "what context does emerge from the use of the song theme itself?" and what do the words in the lyrics mean contextually rather than literally?

Once the data had been compiled, some theories would be used for further analysis e.g. the theory of Semantics from Charles W. Kreidler in his book *Introducing English Semantics*, also combined with other theories focusing on Lexical and Contextual meaning e.g. *Linguistic Semantic* by John Lyons, Geoffrey Leech and other related theories. Apart from the use of theories, some other researches have also been reviewed for better flow of the analysis. First review is from Fitriani Ponso et.al. Pakuan University 'Lexical and Contextual Meanings Contained in Religious Song Lyrics at Quiver Center Academy (QCA)' focusing on nouns in the song lyrics that has more lexical and contextual meaning in the songs meanwhile the study focuses not only on one lexical category but any lexical categories affected by the theme of the song itself. The second study to review is from Rahma Yulia Syahfitri Universitas Negeri Medan 'Lexical and Contextual Meanings in The Indonesian Song Terserah by Willy Winarko' focusing on merely lexical and contextual

meanings without the understanding of theme as the center of the meanings as well. Meanwhile, the study also focuses on the theme as the heart of the song to which every contextual meaning lingers or attached to.

## 2. Method

The study aims at deeply studying the use of theme to affect the contextual meaning of the songs popularized by Olivia Rodrigo that has been on Billboard charts and known by people globally. The data was obtained by listening and reading the lyrics of these two songs, then 'note taking' applied to record words used in the lyrics to further defining theme and context built within the songs.

Once the theme and context have been discovered then the process of listening and reading again to be conducted to conclude the contextual meaning of the words used in the song, detached from its lexical meaning when refer to the dictionary definition.

### 2.1 Research design

The study uses descriptive qualitative method to describe all the data and the processes of analyzing it. No numbers are included only the description and explanation on how and what context emerged from the use of the theme and what contextual meaning can be found in the songs related to the context and the use of the theme itself.

### 2.2 Participants

Due to being the descriptive qualitative research, there are no participants involved in the process of the research. There are only the data or the songs both lyrics and video required to perform the analysis of this study.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Since this study is library research, the data was collected from reading and understanding the information carefully. The information of this study is obtained from the lyrics of the songs. Therefore, the data was collected from reading the lyrics, listening to the songs while reading the lyrics and watching the video clip as well to further being exposed to the emotion of the songs. After reading, singing and watching the video clip as well, then the notes were made to pick some words that have tremendously contributed to the emergence of the context and theme and what context and theme emerged within the songs before further understanding what do most of the words mean contextually in these two songs.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Being the descriptive qualitative research has brought this study to analyzing the qualitative data that is more subjective, rich, and consists of in-depth information presented in words. It required reading in huge amount of time as well as reading other transcripts and theories looking for similarities and differences.

Words that have been the main data of the study by means of semantics and other theories were analyzed to firstly uncover the context and theme of the songs and secondly how these theme and context further determine the contextual meaning of other words used in the lyrics.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Words and verses in Dejavu song

This song contains several verses in which some words show part of the whole theme of the song. Below is the first verse of the song.

*Car rides to Malibu*

***Strawberry ice cream, one spoon for two***

*And tradin' jackets*

***Laughin' 'bout how small it looks on you***

*(Ha-ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha)*

*Watching reruns of Glee*

***Bein' annoying, singin' in harmony***

*I bet she's braggin'*

*To all her friends, sayin' you're so unique, hmm*

Some words in that first verse show '**a date**' **happiness, passion and desire for love**, but the end of the verse the personal pronoun 'she' has given something different that the date is not between the singer and the man. However, it may be between someone else and the man. Then, it continues to the second verse of the song.

***So when you gonna tell her that we did that, too?***

***She thinks it's special, but it's all reused***

*That was our place, I found it first*

*I made the jokes you tell to her when she's with you*

The second verse really shows us that the man was with the singer previously before with this woman. The interrogative sentence in the first part of the second verse expresses the hatred of the singer to the man knowing that the man is

performing a sweet lie to this new woman reusing something that they have done previously taking the new woman into the same trap. In the second verse, the feeling is more about **disappointment to the man yet with a slight of pity** to the man knowing that he has done something the same with what they did when they (the singer and the man) together.

*Do you get déjà vu when she's with you?*

*Do you get déjà vu? Ah, hmm*

*Do you get déjà vu, huh?*

The third verse of the song is dominated with interrogative questions and the word 'déjà vu' that slightly gives us the idea of **expectation**. It sounds more like "Don't you remember me when you are with her?" However, this expectation is also **mixed with disappointment and hatred** saying even all he does is repeating what he did with the singer, he might or might not remember the singer.

*Do you call her, almost say my name?*

*'Cause let's be honest, we kinda do sound the same*

*Another actress*

*I hate to think that I was just your type*

*And I bet that she knows Billy Joel*

*'Cause you played her "Uptown Girl"*

*You're singin' it together*

*Now I bet you even tell her how you love her*

*In between the chorus and the verse (I love you)*

The whole part of the fourth verse expresses another emotion in her hatred to her ex that is the **jealousy** because she did it first with man before this new woman and the intensity of the jealousy is much stronger in this verse compared to previous several others.

*So when you gonna tell her that we did that, too?*

*She thinks it's special, but it's all reused*

*That was the show we talked about*

*Played you the song she's singing now when she's with you*

The fifth verse totally expresses how **unacceptable** it is for the singer and the singer knows that the man will not ever tell this to his new woman and this even drives the singer **madder**.

*Do you get déjà vu when she's with you?*

*Do you get déjà vu? (Oh-oh)*

*Do you get déjà vu?*

The sixth verse is merely the repetition of the third verse with the **expectation**, before continuing to the seventh verse below;

*Strawberry ice cream in Malibu*

*Don't act like we didn't do that shit, too*

*You're tradin' jackets like we used to do*

*(Yeah, everything is all reused)*

*Play her piano, but she doesn't know*

*That I was the one who taught you Billy Joel*

*A different girl now, but there's nothing new*

There is this **sadness** and **disappointment** in this seventh verse to the man who was the singer's man.

*I know you get déjà vu*

*I know you get déjà vu*

*I know you get déjà vu*

In the last verse, there is still slight **expectation** of the man when repeating all those activities with new woman, he still remembers the singer but we never know. He might or might not remember.

### 3.2 Emotions and Feelings in Déjà vu song

Table 3.1 Emotions and Feelings in the song

Verses	Feelings and Emotion
1	Happiness, passion and desire for love
2	Disappointment & Pity
3	Hatred but mixed with disappointment and slight expectation
4	Hatred and Jealousy
5	Hatred with the thought of unacceptability
6	Expectation
7	Sorrow and disappointment
8	Expectation

### 3.3 Theme of Déjà vu Song

After listening to the song, reading the lyric, and watching the video clip as well. This song theme lingers amongst the hatred caused by love disappointment with all mixed emotions that normally people experience after break up with some love remains inside.

### 3.4 The context of Déjà vu song

All the words and the emotions contained in the song lead us to conclude the context as the unfinished break up from the woman or the singer's end. It is giving her all the hatred mixed with other emotions meanwhile the man has moved on even dating new woman and probably does not remember the singer at all when he is dating the new girl, even he is repeating what he did together with the singer in the past.

### 3.5 Words and Verses in 'Good for You' song

The second song 'Good for You' first verse;

*Well good for you, I guess you moved on really easily  
 You found a new girl and it only took a couple weeks  
 Remember when you said that you wanted to give me the world*

The first verse of the song shows how easy the man has moved on and leaving the singer with **disappointment** to know this fact.

*And good for you, I guess that you've been working on yourself  
 I guess that therapist I found for you, she really helped  
 Now you can be a better man for your brand new girl*

The second verse also expresses more **regret and disappointment**. It seems that the singer has regretted to introduce someone to her ex-boyfriend who finally fell in love with that someone new.

*Well good for you  
 You look happy and healthy, not me  
 If you ever cared to ask  
 Good for you  
 You're doing great out there without me, baby  
 God, I wish that I could do that*

The third verse still expresses so much **disappointment** even to herself for being unable to forget her ex and move on. She wishes she could do that.

*I've lost my mind  
 I've spent the night  
 Crying on the floor of my bathroom  
 But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it  
 But I guess good for you*

The fourth verse still shows how **disappointed** the singer to know the man has easily forgotten her and walked away from her as if nothing has ever happened between them.

*Well good for you, I guess you're getting everything you want  
You bought a new car and your career's really taking off  
It's like we never even happened, baby  
What the fuck is up with that?*

In the fifth verse, the singer still **cannot accept** the fact and feeling totally **disappointed** with the man.

*And good for you, it's like you never even met me  
Remember when you swore to God I was the only  
Person who ever got you  
Well, screw that and screw you  
You will never have to hurt the way you know that I do*

The sixth verse is more about the **climax of her disappointment** exploding to be the huge **anger** she expresses in this verse.

*Well good for you  
You look happy and healthy, not me  
If you ever cared to ask  
Good for you  
You're doing great out there without me, baby  
God, I wish that I could do that*

*I've lost my mind  
I've spent the night  
Crying on the floor of my bathroom  
But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it  
But I guess good for you*

The seventh and the eighth verses are the repetition of the previous verses, **repeating her disappointment and hatred** towards the man.

*Maybe I'm too emotional  
But your apathy's like a wound in salt  
Maybe I'm too emotional  
Or maybe you never cared at all  
Maybe I'm too emotional  
Your apathy's like a wound in salt  
Maybe I'm too emotional, Or maybe you never cared at all*

The ninth verse displays her being weaker, kind of stating her mistakes for being emotional but also **still being disappointed and complained** the man for his action and attitude in the past.

*Well good for you  
You look happy and healthy, not me  
If you ever cared to ask  
Good for you  
You're doing great out there without me, baby  
Like a damn sociopath*

The tenth verse is actually repetition of the previous verse only the feeling of **disappointment** here is much more exposed by stating the man as sociopath or someone who has antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), can't understand others' feelings, often break rules or make impulsive decisions without feeling guilty for the harm he caused.

*I've lost my mind  
I've spent the night  
Crying on the floor of my bathroom*

*But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it*

*But I guess good for you*

The eleventh verse also is repeating the feeling of **sad, disappointment, unacceptability** towards the situation of the man or her ex-boyfriend moved on so easily and this finally concluded and mentioned by the end of the verse or in the last verse below.

*Well good for you, I guess you moved on really easily*

The last verse is acting as the **conclusion of all verses** previously telling how **disappointed** she is to know that her ex has moved on so easily meanwhile she still cannot move on that easily from this man who she used to love so dearly in the past.

### 3.6 Emotions and Feelings in the song 'Good for You'

Table 3.2 Emotions and Feelings in the song

Verses	Feelings and Emotion
1	Disappointment
2	Regret and disappointment
3	Disappointment
4	Disappointment
5	Disappointment and feeling of unacceptability
6	Climax of her disappointment, anger
7	Disappointment and hatred
8	Idem
9	Disappointment and Complaint
10	Disappointment
11	Sad, Disappointment and Unacceptability
12	Disappointment still

### 3.7 Theme of Good for You song

The theme that we can conclude after reading all the words and sentences in the lyric is the deep feeling of disappointment knowing how easy it is for the ex to move on and forget her entirely meanwhile it is hard for her to do the same thing and this disappointment leads also to hatred, anger and feeling of unacceptability towards this unfair situation.

### 3.8 The Context for Good for You song

All the disappointment, anger and hatred of hers have built the context of sarcasm within the title itself stating 'Good for you'. The sentence is not sincerely to congratulate the man but more to mock and convey the disappointment to the man who has according to her treated her unfairly.

In the Findings all have been written, the aspects from words, sentences that have caused the emotion bursts from the songs to also have built up the framework of theme and context in which the two titles rather have their contextual meanings instead of the lexical meanings.

### 3.9 Theory of Context in Pragmatics

Leech (1983: 6) stated that pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situation. Aspects of speech situation further provide a criterion to refer in determining whether we deal with pragmatic or semantic phenomenon (Leech, 1983:13-4). The occurrence one or more of the aspects then indicates pragmatic one since, as previously mentioned, pragmatics studies meaning in relation to speech situation and one of the aspects is the context.

Context, according to Leech, involves 'relevant' aspects of the physical and social setting of an utterance, still, he emphasizes on context as any background knowledge assumed to be shared by Speaker and Hearer and which contributes to Hearer's interpretation of what Speaker mean by a give utterance. In addition, context and text are interdependent as Halliday (1989) defines context as what is 'with the text', and it goes beyond what is said and written; it includes other non-verbal-goings on the total environment in which a text unfolds. Halliday (1985: 46) also divides context into context of situation (situational context) and Context of culture (Cultural context). The former is the immediate environment in which a text actually functions. Situational context explains why certain things have been said or written on particular occasion and what else not. Furthermore, situational context includes the total non-linguistics background to a text or utterance, including the immediate situation in which it is used, and the awareness by speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier and of any relevant external beliefs or presuppositions.

### 3.10 Context of the Song 'Déjà vu'

Table 4.1 some words and emotions emerged in the song

Verse s	Emotions	Words in Lyric
1	Happiness, passion and desire for love	<i>Car rides to Malibu Strawberry ice cream, one spoon for two And tradin' jackets Laughin' 'bout how small it looks on you (Ha-ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha) Watching reruns of Glee Bein' annoying, singin' in harmony I bet she's braggin' To all her friends, sayin' you're so unique, hmm</i>
2	Disappointme nt & Pity	<i>So when you gonna tell her that we did that, too? She thinks it's special, but it's all reused That was our place, I found it first I made the jokes you tell to her when she's with you</i>
3	Hatred but mixed with disappointmen t and slight expectation	<i>Do you get déjà vu when she's with you? Do you get déjà vu? Ah, hmm Do you get déjà vu, huh?</i>
4	Hatred and Jealousy	<i>Do you call her, almost say my name? 'Cause let's be honest, we kinda do sound the same Another actress I hate to think that I was just your type And I bet that she knows Billy Joel 'Cause you played her "Uptown Girl" You're singin' it together Now I bet you even tell her how you love her In between the chorus and the verse (I love you)</i>
5	Hatred with the thought of unacceptabilit y	<i>So when you gonna tell her that we did that, too? She thinks it's special, but it's all reused That was the show we talked about Played you the song she's singing now when she's with you</i>
6	Expectation	<i>Do you get déjà vu when she's with you? Do you get déjà vu? (Oh-oh) Do you get déjà vu?</i>
7	Sorrow and disappointmen t	<i>Strawberry ice cream in Malibu Don't act like we didn't do that shit, too You're tradin' jackets like we used to do (Yeah, everything is all reused) Play her piano, but she doesn't know That I was the one who taught you Billy Joel A different girl now, but there's nothing new</i>
8	Expectation	<i>I know you get déjà vu I know you get déjà vu I know you get déjà vu</i>

All the words and the emotions contained in the song lead us to one phrase unfinished break up disappointment and within this disappointment she feels mixed of emotions e.g. hatred, feeling of unfair, anger, unacceptability etc.

### 3.11 Context of the song 'Good for you'

Table 4.2 first part some words and emotions emerged in the song

Verses	Emotions	Words in Lyric
1	Disappointme nt	<i>Well good for you, I guess you moved on really easily You found a new girl and it only took a couple weeks Remember when you said that you wanted to give me the world</i>

2	Regret and disappointment	<i>And good for you, I guess that you've been working on yourself I guess that therapist I found for you, she really helped Now you can be a better man for your brand new girl</i>
3	Disappointment	<i>Well good for you You look happy and healthy, not me If you ever cared to ask Good for you You're doing great out there without me, baby God, I wish that I could do that</i>
4	Disappointment	<i>I've lost my mind I've spent the night Crying on the floor of my bathroom But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it But I guess good for you</i>
5	Disappointment and feeling of unacceptability	<i>Well good for you, I guess you're getting everything you want You bought a new car and your career's really taking off It's like we never even happened, baby What the fuck is up with that?</i>
6	Climax of her disappointment, anger	<i>And good for you, it's like you never even met me Remember when you swore to God I was the only Person who ever got you Well, screw that and screw you You will never have to hurt the way you know that I do</i>
7	Disappointment and hatred	<i>Well good for you You look happy and healthy, not me If you ever cared to ask Good for you You're doing great out there without me, baby God, I wish that I could do that</i>

Table 4.3 second part some words and emotions emerged in the song

Verses	Emotions	Words in Lyric
1	Disappointment and hatred	<i>I've lost my mind I've spent the night Crying on the floor of my bathroom But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it But I guess good for you</i>
2	Disappointment and Complaint	<i>Maybe I'm too emotional But your apathy's like a wound in salt Maybe I'm too emotional Or maybe you never cared at all Maybe I'm too emotional Your apathy's like a wound in salt Maybe I'm too emotional Or maybe you never cared at all</i>
3	Disappointment	<i>Well good for you You look happy and healthy, not me If you ever cared to ask Good for you You're doing great out there without me, baby Like a damn sociopath</i>
4	Sad, Disappointment and Unacceptability	<i>I've lost my mind I've spent the night Crying on the floor of my bathroom But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it But I guess good for you</i>
5	Disappointment still	<i>Well good for you, I guess you moved on really easily</i>

All the words and emotions stated above have created a situational context where all the disappointment, anger and hatred of hers have built the context of sarcasm within the title itself stating 'Good for you'. The sentence is not sincerely to



congratulate the man but more to mock and convey the disappointment to the man who has according to her treated her unfairly. This is the soft way or sarcasm to express disappointment and mock the man at the same time.

### 3.12 The Theory of Lexical and Contextual Meaning

#### Lexical meanings

Chaer (1990: 62), describing lexical meanings is an adjunctive form derived from the form of a *noun lexicon* (vocabulary). The unit of the lexicon is *leksem* which is a meaningful unit of language.

If we compare the lexicon with vocabulary, then we can equate *lexeme* with word. Thus lexical meaning can be interpreted a lexicon, *lexeme*, or word. A lexical word or meaning is the meaning that corresponds to its referent, meaning that is in accordance with the results of observation of the senses, or meaning that is truly real in our lives, in other words, a lexical meaning of a word is a real picture of a concept as the word symbolizes it (Chaer, 1990: 63). Lexical meanings can also be considered as the meaning contained in a dictionary (Chaer, 1990: 63).

Djajasudarma (1993: 34), expressing the lexical meaning is the meaning of the word that corresponds to what we encounter in the lexicon (dictionary). Lexical meanings can be searched in the dictionary. Chaer (2012: 289), describes lexical meaning as a meaning that is owned or existed in *lexeme* even without any context.

#### Contextual meaning

Contextual meaning is a linguistic meaning in context. (Longman, 1992). For example the meaning of a word is in a sentence or a sentence is in a paragraph. The sentence "*do you know the meaning of war?*" Has two different contextual meanings. The first contextual meaning in the question sentence, "*do you know the meaning of the word war is?*" The question sentence changes if expressed by a teacher to the students in the class. While the second contextual meaning is "*war produces death, injury, and suffering*", if expressed by a war-wounded soldier to politicians who support the war.

In addition, Contextual meaning (situational meaning) appears as the result between statements and context (Pateda, 2001: 116). Thus, the context has its role to give the meaning. Theory of contextual meaning is stated by J.R Firth and Malinowski. J.R Firth stated that the meaning of words cannot be separated with cultural environment and ecology of the speaker (Parera, 2004: 47). This statement was supported by Malinowski who stated that the word will not have meaning when it is separated from its context (Parera, 2004).

In understanding the actual meaning of words, the context has tremendous importance. This contextual meaning, will necessity to know the actual meaning of the word while a word has many variations of meaning. Through many multiple meanings of a word, a context has a responsibility to know the actual meaning of words (Dash, 2008: 21). Pateda classified many contexts in order to know the intended meaning of the keyword, such as people context, situational context, purposeful context, formal context, moody context, time context, place context, object context, and language context. Those contexts are used in order to know the meaning of the keyword based on what context relates to the keyword (Pateda, 2001: 116–118).

### 3.13 Contextual Meaning of the word *déjà vu*

Based on Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries the word *déjà vu* that is originally from French means the [strange feeling](#) that in some way you have already [experienced](#) what is [happening](#) now, or a feeling of having already experienced the present situation. This is a feeling that is accidentally occurs when you see or do things, you would feel like you have ever done this before. Lexically it has no meaning of sarcasm. However, the use of this word in the song slightly gives the meaning of sarcasm that is the result of the disappointment.

### 3.14 Contextual Meaning of the word *Good for you*

Based on Oxford Dictionary the phrase 'Good for you' means to express praise or approval of something said or done, or enjoyment in a person's success or good fortune, however referring to all the context heavily related to disappointment, anger and hatred contextually the phrase would mean differently as mocking sarcasm as the expression of the disappointment.

## 4. Conclusion

These two songs have been famous worldwide by being on Billboard charts and the songs really give us the notorious problem in love that is so called pain and the pain here is the disappointment as the result of breakup. The context and the theme from the songs as developed by the use of emotionally powerful words lead us to feel deeper the disappointment and anger from the singer and to respond to these powerful emotions, these songs have also used the two titles' meanings 'déjà vu' and 'good for you' contextually. They do bring the idea and content of the songs more alive.

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