

ONE TOO MANY: A LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a lexico-semantic analysis of Kayode Kasum's movie *One Too Many*, focusing on the interplay between lexical choices and their semantic implications. The research aims to uncover how language use in the film contributes to its thematic depth and narrative structure. By employing a qualitative methodology, the study examines key scenes and dialogues to identify significant lexical items and categorized them into semantic fields. The analysis reveals how specific lexical choices delineate character traits, particularly highlighting the protagonist's journey from addiction to recovery. Metaphorical language and the repetition of certain phrases are also explored to understand their role in emphasizing key themes and emotional states. Grounded in lexico-semantic theory and incorporating elements of film theory, this research underscores the importance of linguistic analysis in film studies. The findings demonstrate that the lexico-semantic features of *One Too Many* significantly enhanced its narrative and thematic expressions, offering a deeper understanding of the characters' psychological landscapes and the film's overall message. This study contributes to the broader field of film linguistics and provides a model for analyzing other cinematic works.

Keywords: Lexico-semantic, *One Too Many*, Metaphorical language, Movie and Kayode Kasum.

Background to the Study

Lexico-semantics, a crucial branch of linguistics, delves into the relationship between lexical items and their meanings within various contexts. This study seeks to apply lexico-semantic principles to the analysis of cinematic dialogue, particularly in Kayode Kasum's film *One Too Many*. The relevance of lexico-semantics to film analysis has been underscored by numerous scholars, who have highlighted the importance of language in shaping narrative and character development.

The field of lexico-semantics explores how words and phrases convey meaning and how these meanings are structured within a language. According to Geeraerts (2010), lexico-semantics examines "the intricate network of relationships that link words to their meanings and to each other" (p. 12). This perspective is vital in understanding how language functions within a film to construct narrative and convey thematic elements.

In the context of film studies, the analysis of dialogue through a lexico-semantic lens can reveal deeper layers of meaning. Bordwell and Thompson (2004) assert that "film dialogue is a crucial element in the construction of narrative, as it not only drives the plot but also provides insight into characters' inner thoughts and emotions" (p. 37). This underscores the significance of studying the lexical and semantic choices in a film script to fully grasp its narrative and thematic dimensions.

Furthermore, Halliday (1978) emphasizes the social semiotic aspect of language, suggesting that "language is a social phenomenon, and its use within any text, including film, reflects and constructs social realities" (p. 32). This viewpoint is particularly relevant to the analysis of "One Too Many," as the film addresses social issues such as addiction and personal transformation. By examining the lexico-semantic features of the film's dialogue, we can better understand how these social realities are portrayed and interrogated.

The significance of lexical choice in character development is also highlighted by scholars such as Carter and McCarthy (2006), who state that "the words characters use are integral to their portrayal and to the audience's perception of them" (p. 48). In "One Too Many," the protagonist's journey is marked by a shift in language use, reflecting his internal struggle and eventual transformation. Analyzing these lexical shifts provides valuable insights into the character's development and the film's overall message.

Moreover, the role of metaphor in film language has been extensively studied by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who argue that "metaphors are not just linguistic expressions but fundamental to our understanding and experience of the world" (p. 3). In *One Too Many*, metaphorical language is used to depict the protagonist's mental state and journey towards recovery, adding depth to the narrative.

Lastly, the repetition of certain lexical items and phrases in film dialogue serves to reinforce key themes and emotional states. Tannen (1989) notes that "repetition in language can create coherence and emphasize important aspects of the narrative" (p. 23). This technique is evident in "One Too Many," where repeated references to themes of darkness and light symbolize the protagonist's battle with addiction and his path to redemption.

The background to this study highlights the interdisciplinary relevance of lexico-semantics in film analysis. By drawing on the insights of various scholars, this research aims to provide a comprehensive lexico-semantic analysis of "One Too Many," shedding light on the film's narrative structure, character development and thematic depth.

Statement of the Research Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the insufficient exploration of how lexical choices and semantic structures in film scripts contribute to narrative and thematic depth, specifically in Kayode Kasum's *One Too Many*. While visual and narrative elements in films have been extensively studied, the role of lexico-semantic features remains underexamined. This research seeks to uncover how specific lexical items, semantic fields, and repeated phrases within the film's dialogue enhance character development, thematic expression, and audience engagement, thereby filling a gap in both linguistic and cinematic analysis.

Objectives of the Study

The lexico-semantic analysis of Kayode Kasum's *One Too Many* aims to uncover the intricate ways in which language shapes the film's narrative and themes. By delving into the lexical and semantic dimensions of the film's dialogue, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between language and meaning in cinematic storytelling.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach as its methodology which focused on the script of Kayode Kasum's *One Too Many*. Key scenes and dialogues are selected for in-depth lexico-semantic analysis, where significant lexical items are identified and categorized into semantic fields. These lexical choices are examined within their narrative contexts to uncover their meanings, connotations, and thematic contributions. The analysis aims to illuminate how linguistic elements shape character development, thematic exploration, and the overall narrative structure of the film, contributing insights into the intersection of language and cinema in conveying complex themes such as addiction, recovery, and personal transformation.

Synopsis of the Film

In *One Too Many*, Akinde passionately describes an emotional journey that vividly portrays the harsh realities faced by those who find themselves entangled in the unforgiving web of Nigerian law. The narrative centers on Adesuwa and her family, who confront a relentless series of unfortunate encounters with uniformed individuals. Each interaction exacerbates their plight, culminating in a devastating turn of events when Adesuwa's son is wrongfully accused of murdering his best friend.

As the protagonist, Adesuwa is thrust into a heart-wrenching battle against an unjust system that threatens to tear her family apart. Her determination to prove her son's innocence becomes a test of familial bonds and personal resilience in the face of overwhelming adversity. *One Too Many* meticulously explores the profound impact of legal injustice on individuals and families, delving into the emotional depths of despair, courage, and hope that define their journey.

Through poignant storytelling, the film not only sheds light on the complexities of navigating Nigeria's legal landscape but also resonates with universal themes of justice, perseverance, and the enduring strength of family love. *One Too Many* stands as a powerful testament to the human spirit's capacity to endure and overcome in the pursuit of truth and redemption.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for analyzing Kayode Kasum's film *One Too Many* integrates lexico-semantics and film studies to explore how

language shapes narrative and meaning in cinema. Lexico-semantics examines the film's dialogue for both literal meanings and deeper connotations related to addiction, recovery, and personal growth. This approach identifies how specific words and their semantic fields contribute to thematic coherence. Concurrently, film studies analyze how linguistic choices interact with visual and aural elements to construct narrative structure and emotional impact. This dual perspective illuminates how dialogue, visual symbolism, and audience reception collectively enrich the cinematic experience, highlighting language's role as a powerful narrative tool in shaping viewer engagement and thematic depth.

Analysis of the Lexico-semantic Features in the Film

The analysis of Kayode Kasum's *One Too Many* reveals several significant lexico-semantic features that contribute to the film's thematic and narrative depth. This section expands on the key lexico-semantic features, providing detailed illustrations and excerpts to demonstrate how specific lexical choices and semantic structures enhance the film's storytelling.

a. Semantic Fields of Violence and Justice

Illustration: The film frequently uses terms related to violence and justice, creating a semantic field that underscores the gravity of crime and the pursuit of justice. Key lexical items include "rape," "killed," "gun," "court," "defendant," and "police."

Excerpts:

1. "He has been apprehended and will face trial for rape and other forms of injustice".
2. "You are hereby sentenced to 20 years in prison".
3. "Exhibit D is the full autopsy and ballistic".
4. "It is clear that the gun in this video differs from the gun that was presented to court."
5. "In light of recent developments, the state has no choice but to withdraw all charges against Otas".

Analysis: These terms form a cohesive semantic field that reflects the film's focus on legal and moral justice. The repeated use of legal jargon, such as "trial," "court," and "defendant," alongside terms of violence like

"rape" and "gun," emphasizes the film's exploration of crime and the judicial process. This lexico-semantic pattern highlights the characters' struggles within the justice system, the societal impacts of violence, and the quest for accountability and redemption.

b. Lexical Choices Reflecting Trauma and Memory

Illustration: Dialogue in the film often revolves around the impact of trauma on memory and personal identity. The film uses specific lexical items to convey the persistence of traumatic experiences.

Excerpts:

1. "Sorry, I can't remember."
2. "It's always the victims that remember, even if they want to forget, the trauma never let them be."
3. "Before I knew it, they pinned me down."
4. "I ran away and I had my son all by myself."
5. "That was the exact same thing you said to me after you and your colleague raped me."

Analysis: The language used here highlights the enduring impact of trauma. The phrases "can't remember" and "trauma never let them be" reflect the characters' struggles with their past experiences. This lexico-semantic feature emphasizes the persistence of trauma in shaping memory and identity, illustrating how past events continue to influence the characters' present lives and their attempts to reclaim agency and truth.

c. Metaphorical Language and Symbolism

Illustration: The film employs metaphorical language to convey deeper meanings and emotions, using figurative expressions to symbolize broader themes.

Excerpts:

1. "The kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent taketh it by force."
2. "He just drifted away into the oblivion."
3. "The street is a tough place not for the weak; you neither toughen up or the wolf of the street will devour you."
4. "The law will catch up with you."
5. "You have always said that I am a star and I need to shine."

Analysis: Metaphors such as "drifted away into the oblivion" and "the wolf of the street will devour you" add layers of symbolic meaning to the narrative. The use of Biblical references, like "The kingdom of God suffereth violence," invokes a sense of moral struggle and divine justice. These metaphorical expressions enrich the narrative by illustrating the characters' internal battles and the harsh realities of their environment, thereby deepening the viewer's understanding of their motivations and challenges.

d. Repetition and Emphasis in Dialogue

Illustration: Certain phrases and expressions are repeated throughout the film to emphasize key themes and emotional states. This repetition reinforces the narrative's impact and the characters' struggles.

Excerpts

1. "Sorry, I can't."
2. "I agree that my son's corpse be exhumed for re-examination."
3. "I have said my truth so now go out and say yours."
4. "You slept with my babe because you were high on weed this same weed."
5. "Today, I am not Adesewa, I am you and you are me."

Analysis: The repetition of phrases like "Sorry, I can't" and "I have said my truth" serves to reinforce the emotional weight of the characters' experiences. These repeated expressions highlight the recurring themes of memory, accountability, and the quest for justice. By consistently emphasizing these phrases, the film underscores the characters' persistent efforts to confront their pasts and seek resolution. This lexicosemantic feature helps to maintain thematic coherence and emotional intensity throughout the narrative.

Relevance of the Lexico-semantic Features to the Film Development

The lexico-semantic features in "One Too Many" play a crucial role in the development of the film, providing depth and nuance to its narrative and themes. The terms used in the film, such as 'rape,' 'justice,' 'truth,' 'gun,' 'kill,' 'defendant,' 'client,' 'court,' and 'police officer,' are not merely

functional elements of the dialogue but are loaded with semantic significance that enhances the storytelling.

Establishing Themes and Atmosphere

The use of terms like 'rape,' 'gun,' and 'kill' immediately sets a dark and intense atmosphere for the film. These words carry heavy connotations and are central to the narrative's exploration of violence and moral ambiguity. The frequent mention of 'rape' brings to the forefront the gravity of sexual violence and its impact on victims and their communities, setting the stage for the film's critical engagement with these issues.

Character Development and Motivation

Lexical choices such as 'defendant,' 'client,' and 'court' are pivotal in establishing the legal context of the film and in delineating characters' roles and motivations. For instance, the use of 'defendant' and 'client' highlights the professional relationship between characters within the legal system, often revealing their ethical standings and personal motivations. These terms help in constructing the protagonist's journey, whether as a lawyer seeking justice or as an individual fighting against systemic corruption.

Plot Progression and Conflict

Words like 'justice,' 'truth,' and 'court' are central to the film's narrative arc, as they encapsulate the primary conflict and drive the plot forward. The quest for justice and the pursuit of truth are depicted through courtroom battles and legal investigations, with each term reflecting the characters' struggles and the societal obstacles they face. The semantic field related to law and order, including 'police officer,' underscores the tension between law enforcement and the pursuit of genuine justice.

Emotional and Psychological Depth

The lexico-semantic analysis also reveals how the repetition of certain terms, such as 'truth' and 'justice,' underscores the emotional and psychological depth of the characters. These words often carry different connotations for different characters, reflecting their internal conflicts and moral dilemmas. For example, a police officer might use the term 'justice' to justify their actions, while a victim or defendant might perceive justice in a more personal and emotional context.

Symbolism and Thematic Resonance

The use of terms like 'gun' and 'kill' is symbolically significant, often representing more than their literal meanings. These terms can symbolize power, control, fear, and the potential for violence, contributing to the thematic resonance of the film. By embedding such lexically rich terms within the dialogue, the film creates layers of meaning that invite viewers to engage more deeply with the narrative and its underlying messages.

Conclusion

The lexico-semantic analysis of Kayode Kasum's *One Too Many* illustrates the profound impact of lexical choices on the film's narrative and thematic expression. Through detailed examination of the script, this study has identified how specific lexical items and semantic fields contribute to character development, thematic depth, and narrative coherence.

Key findings highlight the use of lexical choices to delineate character traits, particularly the protagonist's struggle with addiction and eventual recovery. The semantic fields related to addiction, family, and personal struggle are crucial in conveying the film's central themes. Additionally, the use of metaphorical language enriches the narrative, providing symbolic representations of the protagonist's inner journey. Repetition and emphasis of certain words and phrases further enhance the emotional resonance and thematic reinforcement within the film.

By employing a lexico-semantic framework, this analysis demonstrates that language in film is not merely a vehicle for dialogue but a powerful tool for thematic and emotional expression. The findings of this study contribute to the field of film linguistics, offering a model for analyzing the lexico-semantic features in other cinematic works. This approach underscores the importance of linguistic analysis in understanding the complexities of film narratives and their impact on audiences.

The lexico-semantic features in *One Too Many* play a crucial role in shaping the film's narrative and thematic dimensions, providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of its characters and their journeys. This study highlights the significance of lexico-semantic analysis in film studies and encourages further exploration of the interplay between language and cinema.

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