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THE DENOTATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN HAPPIER SONG LYRICS BY OLIVIA RODRIGO

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui makna denotatif, makna konotatif dan mitologi yang terkandung pada objek penelitian yaitu lirik lagu ‘Happier’ karya Olivia Rodrigo. Teori utama yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori semiotika Roland Barthes. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan interpretatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data yaitu studi dokumen dengan pemerolehan data dari berbagai sumber yang relevan dengan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam lirik lagu yang diteliti terdapat makna denotatif, makna konotatif dan mitologi didalamnya. Makna denotatif yang disampaikan oleh pencipta lagu dalam lirik lagu ‘Happier’ yaitu keinginan tokoh utama terhadap mantan pacarnya agar dia bisa bahagia dengan pacar barunya, namun tidak sebahagia saat bersamanya. Kemudian makna konotatif yang terdapat pada lirik lagu ini adalah tokoh utama belum bisa melepaskan mantan pacarnya dengan wanita lain. Dia juga berharap mantan kekasihnya selalu mengingatkannya. Sedangkan mitologi yang terkandung dalam lirik lagu ini adalah seorang wanita tidak mudah melupakan masa lalu dan sulit move on dari hubungan cinta, karena wanita lebih suka menggunakan perasaan daripada pikiran.

Kata Kunci: lirik lagu, semiotika, denotatif, konotatif, mitologi

Abstract

This study aims to determine the denotative, connotative and mythological meanings contained in the object of research, namely the lyrics of the song ‘Happier’ by Olivia Rodrigo. The main theory used in this research is the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive interpretive approach. Data collection techniques are document studies by obtaining data from various sources relevant to the research. The results showed that the lyrics of the songs studied contained denotative, connotative and mythological meanings in them. The denotative meaning conveyed by the song creator in the lyrics of the song ‘Happier’, namely the main character’s wish for her ex-boyfriend that he can be happy with his new girlfriend, but not as happy as when he was with her. Then the connotative meaning contained in the lyrics of this song is the main character has not been able to let go of her ex-boyfriend with another woman. She also hopes that her ex-lover will always remember her. While the mythology contained in the lyrics of this song is that a woman doesn’t easily forget the past and hard to move on from a love relationship, because women prefer to use feelings rather than thinks.

Keywords: song lyrics, semiotic, denotative, connotative, mythology

INTRODUCTION

Science and technology in this era is growing rapidly in Indonesia, giving rise to many rapid progress in various aspects of life. One of them is with the progress of the music industry in Indonesia.

Additionally, (Hidayat, 2014) said that music is a communication activity

through sound in order to be able to convey messages in different ways. Therefore, music is one way of expression in expressing feelings and thoughts that contain the values and norms of a culture so that it can reflect the culture of the supporting community. Therefore, the

means used to express all that by using a word that is arranged into a song lyric.

From ancient era until modern era, songs are very popular in several people who likes music and literature (Sarumaha et al., 2022). Besides rhythm and melody that is heard, the lyrics are also an important things in the song that make everyone like the song, because through the lyrics usually a singer or musician make a good understanding of the song's message.

According to (Nugraha, 2016) argues that song lyrics are a verbal communication tool that has meaning in it. A song lyric has thousands of meanings about an event that is packaged by the author to attract people's attention. Therefore, song lyrics are a meaningful arrangement of words obtained from the results of one's thoughts. A song lyric is written based on an anxiety experienced by someone which is then embellished so that it can be enjoyed by the community. The arrangement of these words can be referred to as stanzas of poetry and others. Through song lyrics, songwriters can communicate indirectly with their listeners. This happens because the songwriter conveys a message written in a song lyric about an anxiety he feels or even listeners who experience similar problems, therefore through lyrics the song can create an interaction even though it is indirectly.

A singer who released Sour album in 2021, Olivia Rodrigo who is currently on the rise has launched extraordinary works in the music industry. The work that she made, was poured into her beautiful songs and released into a song of her own creation that she sang herself. Of course, when singing the song, Olivia Rodrigo wants the message and meaning of the song that she created and sings to convey well to her listeners.

Meanwhile, most music listeners do not know how the meaning and message conveyed by Olivia Rodrigo in her song entitled 'Happier'. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to reveal the denotative

and connotative meanings of Olivia Rodrigo's song entitled 'Happier'. The reasons to choose this song lyrics because the song with a duration of 2 minutes 56 seconds is included in popular searches on Google Trend. On Olivia Rodrigo's YouTube account, the MV was uploaded on May 21, 2021 and has been watched up to 91,757,469 times and liked by more than 1.5 million viewers.

THEORY AND METHOD

The past research about analyzing song lyrics by Fadly Fauzan in 2020 with the research object is 'Film Favorit' song by Sheila On 7. In his research, the main theory that used is the theory of Roland Barthes semiotics. The method that used in this research is qualitative method with descriptive interpretive approach. The results of the research indicate that in the lyrics of the song under study there are connotation and denotation in it, so are myths. This song carries the common myth of love. Myths that contain love value illustrates that love must be fought for and make a commitment to keep love alive. Contains about the main character's outpouring of his heart toward to his partner and how to express his feelings to his loved. The creator of song chose the word "Film Favorit" because at this time, millennials are now very close to films. The song creator hopes that this song is easy to remember and be used as a lesson in our lives.

The second research by Yogi Permana in 2020. This research aims to describe the denotation meaning and connotation meaning in the lyrics of Iwan Fals songs. The method that used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach to reveal the meaning of denomination and connotation. Data collection techniques are carried out using the analysis of sentence expressions. This research resulted in the conclusion that the use of denotative meaning by 68.75%, the use of positive connotative meaning by

21.09%, the use of negative connotative meaning by 11.32%. (Purnama & Fahmi, 2021).

The third research about analyzing song lyrics by Neng Tika Harnia in 2021. This research examines the meaning of love in the lyrics of the song 'Tak Sekedar Cinta' by Dnanda using Roland Barthes semiotic theory. In Roland Barthes semiotic analysis examines the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myths about the meaning of "love" contained in the lyrics of the 'Tak Sekedar Cinta' song.

The method that used is interpretive qualitative. The collection technique is document study with the acquisition of data from various sources which relevant to the research. The denotation meaning of the lyrics of the song 'Tak Sekedar Cinta' is the power of love that the song creator expect him to get from his partner. Then the meaning of the connotations contained in the lyrics of this song is the song creator desire for his partner to keep love with fidelity. While the myth that contained in the lyrics of this song is the song creator wants to say that in every relationship that built with love will last forever, even if it hurts sometimes.

The research theory from all three journals are almost the same but not the same also. The similarities from these three journals is using the Roland Barthes Semiotics theory. The finding methods by these three journals is not same, the first and the second journal by qualitative and descriptive, while the third journal by interpretive qualitative. Finding discussion by the first journal is the meaning behind the 'Film Favorit' song popularized by Sheila On 7. The finding discussion from the second journal is the data with percentage of denotative meaning and connotative meaning in the lyrics of Iwan Fals songs. The finding discussion from the third journal is the meanings of denotative, connotative and myth in 'Tak Sekedar Cinta' song by Dnanda.

This journal finding discussion of denotative, connotative and mythological

meaning of the song lyrics 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo with Roland Barthes Semiotics theory. This research using qualitative method with descriptive interpretive approach. Moleong (2017) said that qualitative research is research which intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject research such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. Holistically, and with way of description in the form of words and language, in a special context that naturally and by utilizing various scientific methods. In this research, the author do by identifying, analyzing and interpreting song lyrics entitled 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo.

According to (West & Turner, 2008) revealed that the interpretive model is a way of seeing a reality that is used as a subjective created by participant. Therefore, in this study the researcher acts as a participant. By using semiotic theory. So, the signs which has meaning contained in the lyrics of the song 'Happier' can be described in detail so as to produce an in-depth explanation of the meaning behind a sign. The objects and subjects used in this research are semiotic analysis of the lyrics of the song 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo. Where the object of semiotic analysis is the object of research. Then the lyrics of the song 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo is the subject of this research.

Data collection techniques in this research used study techniques document. Which is a way of obtaining data through a search in various relevant sources regarding the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes. In this case the author does not conduct interviews in order to obtain related information research field. Because in Roland Barthes Semiotic theory, document studies can be done by analyzing the song lyrics in detail based on the interpretation of the song lyrics from author.

Then there is secondary data used in this research in order to obtain more

detailed information related to the problems analyzed, namely Roland Barthes Semiotic analysis, namely documentation, books, journals, and the web according to the theory in question.

The data used in this research are the lyrics of the song 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo. 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo is a song published by Olivia Rodrigo in 2021, as part of her album *Sour*. The song became very popular immediately after the album's release, even though it was just one of the many tracks of the album not picked up as singles. The reason probably depends on the meaning of the song, which is relatable by many people and tells us a personal story. The results of the analysis or data that can be presented in the form of narrative. The contents of this research are the denotative and connotative meanings of the lyrics of the song 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo.

Olivia Rodrigo Biography

Olivia Isabel Rodrigo was born on February 20, 2003, at Rancho Springs Medical Center in Murrieta, California. She later lived and grew up in Temecula.

Rodrigo is biracial; her father is of Filipino descent and her mother is of Irish and German descent. Her own father worked as a family therapist while her mother worked as a schoolteacher. She has also stated that her paternal great-grandfather moved from the Philippines to the United States when she was a teenager and her family later adopted Filipino traditions and cuisine.

Olivia Isabel Rodrigo is known as a singer and actress from the United States. She is also known for her roles on Disney Channel as Paige, Bizaardvark and in Salazar-Roberts as Nini on the Disney+ series, *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*.

Rodrigo also signed with the record labels Interscope Records and Geffen Records in 2020. Rodrigo then released his debut single "Drivers License" in January 2021, debuting at number 1 on Billboard

with the Hot 100 song "Deja Vu" which peaked at number three on Billboard Hot 100, and "Good 4 U" which peaked at number one in several countries.

Later, Rodrigo also released her debut solo studio album *Sour* in 2021, which received good reception and was a success in terms of commercial. *Sour* has also won numerous awards including three Grammy Awards.

The following year, Disney+ also released Olivia Rodrigo's documentary, *Driving Home 2 U*, which later chronicled Rodrigo's creative process with *Sour* and has embarked on the *Sour Tour*.

Roland Barthes Semiotics Theory

Roland Barthes is one of the leading structuralist figures who including one of the developers of the concept of semiology Saussure. Based on Roland Barthes statement that semiotics is an analytical method to study a sign. The sign in question is a device used in looking for a way out in life in the world.

According to Alex Sobur (2003) the idea put forward by Roland Barthes is what became known as the "order of signification". Roland Barthes theory focuses on the idea of the significance of two stages, denotative and connotative. Denotative is the objective definition of the word, while connotative is the subjective or emotional meaning (Fauzan, 2020).

According to (Fiske, 2007) denotative is a description of the relationship between the signifier and the signified and sign with an object in an external reality. In this case it is a general response to a sign. Roland Barthes said that this order refers to the general notion of signs. Therefore the use of meaning denotative can be the same so that the difference lies in the connotation (Harnia, 2021).

Connotative is a description of an interaction when signs meet with a feeling or emotion from the user. In this case usually the connotation wrapped in a frame and focus. Fiske (2007) said that connotation is subjective in nature which is often not aware that we have realized things the. Roland

Barthes also explained that there are three ways the sign works at the connotation stage. Namely, sign signification, the interaction that occurs when a sign meets a feeling or feeling emotions, and values in their culture (Fiske, 2007).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The data for this analysis was taken from lyrics of the song Olivia Rodrigo released in 2021, the title of this song is 'Happier'.

The following are the song lyrics of 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo :

*We broke up a month ago
Your friends are mine, you know, I know
You've moved on, found someone new
One more girl who brings out the better in you
And I thought my heart was detached
From all the sunlight of our past
But she's so sweet, she's so pretty
Does she mean you forgot about me?
Oh, I hope you're happy
But not like how you were with me I'm selfish, I know, I can't let you go
So find someone great, but don't find no one better
I hope you're happy, but don't be happier
And do you tell her she's the most beautiful girl you've ever seen?
An eternal love bullshit you know you'll never mean
Remember when I believed you meant it when you said it first to me?
And now I'm pickin' her apart
Like cuttin' her down will make you miss my wretched heart
But she's beautiful, she looks kind
She probably gives you butterflies
I hope you're happy
I wish you all the best, really
Say you love her, baby, just not like you loved me
And think of me fondly when your hands are on her
I hope you're happy, but don't be happier*

Analysis Results

*We broke up a month ago
Your friends are mine, you know, I know
You've moved on, found someone new
One more girl who brings out the better in you*

The denotative meaning in this array is they broke up a month ago and the first character's friend is also the second character's friend, they both know each other. Then the second character leaves the first character, and he finds a new girlfriend, a girl who stands out in a better way. While the connotative meaning in this array is the first character feels disappointed with the second character because the second character has moved on and found a new lover, a woman who seems to be able to make the second character better. The first character is also disappointed and angry because the woman who the second character loves is her own friend, while the second character knows it. Even though they both just broke up a month ago.

*And I thought my heart was detached
From all the sunlight of our past
But she's so sweet, she's so pretty
Does she mean you forgot about me?*

This array is the denotative meaning. While the connotative meaning in this array is that the first character feels that she has moved on from happy stories in the past with the second character. However, when she sees the second character's new lover, the first character realizes that the woman is very beautiful and sweet, she worries that the second character will forget herself and their beautiful past.

*Oh, I hope you're happy
But not like how you were with me I'm selfish, I know, I can't let you go
So find someone great, but don't find no one better
I hope you're happy, but don't be happier*

This array is the denotative meaning. While the connotative meaning in this array is that the first character feels a dilemma, on the one hand she wants the second character or his ex-lover to be happy, but on the one hand she also doesn't want her ex-lover to find more happiness. The first character also realizes that she is selfish, but she cannot lie to her heart, she is willing that her ex-boyfriend is happy but not as happy as when he was with her. Therefore, the first character hopes that the second character or her ex-lover finds someone who is good, but not better herself.

*And do you tell her she's the most beautiful girl you've ever seen?
An eternal love bullshit you know you'll never mean
Remember when I believed you meant it when you said it first to me?*

This array is the denotative meaning. The connotative meaning in this array is that the first character thinks that true love is bullshit, because she was once betrayed by her ex-lover. The first character also doubts the honesty of the second character or her ex-lover, because he used to say that she was the most beautiful woman, but in fact she was still abandoned and her ex-lover chose another woman.

*And now I'm pickin' her apart
Like cuttin' her down will make you miss my wretched heart
But she's beautiful, she looks kind
She probably gives you butterflies*

The denotative meaning in this array is the first character thinks that the second character's new woman is giving him butterflies. While the connotative meaning in this array is that the first character hopes that the second character or her ex-lover will miss her and regret leaving her when she exposes his new lover's vices. But she realized again, that the woman was very beautiful and looked so kind, maybe the woman gave happiness that could make the second character float.

*I hope you're happy
I wish you all the best, really
Say you love her, baby, just not like you loved me
And think of me fondly when your hands are on her
I hope you're happy, but don't be happier*

This array is the denotative meaning. While the connotative meaning in this array is that the first character still can't give up the second character or her ex-boyfriend with another woman. She hoped that her ex-boyfriend would always remember her even though he was with his new woman.

The first character gives an affirmation to herself, that her ex-boyfriend does love his new lover, but not as much as when he loved her and her ex-lover will be happy, but not happier than when he was with her.

Mythology on 'Happier' lyrics

The lyrics of the song 'Happier' by Olivia Rodrigo are closely related to the love story of teenagers in today's era. Where a woman who has been abandoned by her lover hasn't moved on, then she will continue to remember it, tell other people, reflect on it, regret it and hope her ex-boyfriend doesn't forget her and will always remember her. In contrast to a man who uses his mind more than his feelings, it will be easier for him to move on and find a new, better partner.

Furthermore, the mythology about the role of women will find it difficult to forget the past and difficult to move on from a love relationship, because women prefer to use feelings rather than thinks.

CONCLUSION

The song 'Happier' is the single from Olivia Rodrigo which she composed herself and released when she became a famous singer. In addition, this song is a song that has a hidden meaning in the lyrics. Because of this, the author chose this song as the object of research. Based on semiotics analysis which is carried out on the lyrics of the

song 'Happier', the results obtained are denotative meaning, connotative meaning and mythology contained in the song lyrics.

The denotative meaning in this song lyrics is the main character's wish for her ex-boyfriend is that he can be happy with his new girlfriend, but not as happy as when he was with her. While the connotative meaning of this song is the main character has not been able to let go of her ex-boyfriend with another woman. She also hopes that her ex-lover will always remember her. Besides that, the main character also gives an affirmation to herself, that her ex-boyfriend

does love his new lover, but not as much as when he loved her and her ex-lover will be happy, but not happier than when he was with her.

Furthermore, the mythology about the role of women will find it difficult to forget the past and difficult to move on from a love relationship, because women prefer to use feelings rather than thinks.

The hope from this research, there are things that we can learn from the song lyrics 'Happier' which have been discussed. Such as accept other people's decisions, learn to forget the bad past and don't expect or trust someone too much.

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