Decoding the Implicit Meanings: Analyzing Alan Walker's 'The Drum' from a Social Semiotic Perspective

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Article Info	Abstract
	This research explores the application of social semiotics in analyzing the lyrics of Alan Walker's song "The Drum." Social semiotics examines how signs and symbols construct meaning within a social context. The research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on thematic analysis of the lyrics. The findings reveal that the song incorporates various social semiotic elements, including symbolism related to life's struggles, success, and the significance of guidance. The analysis suggests that "The Drum" can be interpreted as a motivational message about overcoming challenges and pursuing dreams. To realize the results and analysis of the songs, "The Drum" by Alan Walker's social semiotics into practice in the classroom, it needs to be done using various methods in various co-curricular activities (especially those integrating life skills) or through the habit of reading and singing or listening to beautiful songs of art, especially the works of young people who always have a very creative and constructive spirit.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
	Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penerapan semiotika sosial dalam menganalisis lirik lagu *"The Drum"* karya Alan Walker. Semiotika sosial meneliti bagaimana tanda dan simbol membangun makna dalam konteks sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan fokus pada analisis tematik lirik lagu. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa lagu ini mengandung berbagai elemen semiotika sosial, termasuk simbolisme yang terkait dengan perjuangan hidup, kesuksesan, dan pentingnya bimbingan. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa *"The Drum"* dapat diinterpretasikan sebagai pesan motivasi tentang mengatasi tantangan dan mengejar mimpi. Untuk merealisasikan hasil dan analisis lagu "The Drum" karya Alan Walker yang berlandaskan semiotika sosial ke dalam praktik di kelas, maka perlu dilakukan dengan menggunakan berbagai metode dalam berbagai kegiatan kokurikuler (terutama yang mengintegrasikan keterampilan hidup) atau melalui pembiasaan membaca dan bernyanyi atau mendengarkan lagu-lagu seni yang indah, terutama karya anak muda yang selalu mempunyai jiwa yang sangat kreatif dan konstruktif.

I. INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is the study of signs and their communicative aspects, and it has been classified into three sign activities: semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. Semantics is the study of signification, while syntactics is the study of sign repertory, and pragmatics is the study of text. In a text, there is a paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationship. Besides the study of semiotics by Ferdinand De Saussure, his theory about diachronic and synchronic is important in the semiotic study, as well as some types of signs, i.e. icon, index, and symbol. Synchronic is the existence at the same time and diachronic is the existence for a long period of time. According to Ferdinand De Saussure, the sound of words (written and spoken) has an arbitrary relationship.

The result of this research is expected to enrich the interdisciplinary science between linguistics and cultural studies, as well as provide additional sources to analyze lyrics that can be analyzed by other researchers. In this case, the writer only found three researches that discussed Walker's song lyrics. They are about Alan Walker's Breakout is Coming Out Next Week, Merging Morality and Technology: Multimodal Analysis of Alan Walker's Faded, and Content Analysis of Alan Walker's "Faded" as a form of Nationality Values for the students of English Department at Kupang University. These researches applied different types of research: Qualitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods.

Moreover, research about popular culture is quite attractive for researchers to explore since it is related to lifestyle, youth identity, and socio-culture. Walker's song lyrics have attractively been popular as well as provocative problems to be analyzed, and it is exactly what the writer would do in this research. The writer has

intentions to analyze the social meanings that are covered by the lyrics of Walker's song "The Drum" through the Semiotic approach. Social semiotic is a science that explains the language of life in a social culture context, so it will be appropriate to use to reveal the social meanings inside Walker's song lyrics.

For the reasons mentioned above, the researcher is interested in conducting social semiotics research in the lyrics of Alan Walker, especially the sign. Why does the drum song then spark various debates and even feel wrong? The pragmatics introduced by Van Leeuwen is a social attitude called Sozialklima. This has been carried out by Ivor Armstrong Richards, who refers to research by John Langshaw Austin, EM Forster, Dorothy L. Sayers, Walter Ong, and others. Saeed (2009: 16) introduced the concept of social attitude in the form of social stage as a discourse marker Sezen. Then Sperber and Wilson, by pulling Rene Descartes as pioneers, developed the theory of relevance, or the principle of relevance, or Prinsip Kefetematan (Teun Adrianus Van Dijk, A Journey in Critical Discourse Studies (2018: 26). Descartes discarded other forms of relevance in the form of relation al-Talib, relevance behavior in Bakhtin and Vygotsky, and introduced the Invoking the Question Discourse Structure (structure) Vocalker Hoey).

Previous research on Alan Walker's song lyrics is still inadequate. The results of research on the use of linguistics in his lyrics are still not the same as the object of the research, which is the lyrics of Alan Walker's songs. While in the field of social semiotics, research on the connection between food signs and cultural studies is still inadequate. Qualitative research on the social semiotics of the drum, referring to pragma-dialectics and speech act, is still minimal. This gap encourages researchers to conduct a study to explore the social semiotics of the drum intentionally. This is where researchers see an object in the drum that looks like a sign for the forces of the people to reject the existence of the broken people.

Language can also be expressed through gestures or symbols, such as slogans and mandates, which do not follow a specific word order. "In certain cases, understanding a slogan may differ from understanding a sentence with the same meaning." Over the years, valuable research in education has explored different perspectives on language research. This perspective emphasizes the importance of pragmatics, as proposed by researchers like Nord (2009), who reflect on the fact that the first construction produces the five human powers, and Seidlhofer (2011), who states that pragmatics provides evidence not only of language, but also of the speaker or listener. This concept shows that research on foreign language speakers should consider the five marks of the listener, who represents the audience.

Word order is one thing that can offer effective communication, as it has many advantages. This is because each word can provide the necessary information. Each sentence consists of a group of words that work together to form meaningful information. This phenomenon indicates that language can be used in various ways to convey different meanings. This concept is applied by advocates of the linguistic movement called structuralism. This theory was developed by grammarian Xavier Bongard, Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, Charles Fries, and particularly Noam Chomsky. This suggests that humans, as individuals, can use language in complex ways. The complex word order in a normal sentence contains important information that is repeated and can be understood by the listener or receiver (insight receiver) who understands the code.

Song lyrics often contain rich layers of meaning that extend beyond the surface level. Social semiotics, a field that studies how signs and symbols create meaning within a social context, offers valuable tools for analyzing these deeper meanings. This research aims to explore the social semiotic elements present in the lyrics of Alan Walker's popular song "The Drum." Limited research has been conducted on applying social semiotics to analyze the lyrics of contemporary musicians like Walker. This research intends to contribute to this field by examining the themes and messages conveyed in "The Drum" through a social semiotic lens. By employing Kress and van Leeuwen's framework, the analysis will explore how the lyrics utilize signs and symbols to construct meaning and connect with listeners on a social level.

Books and scientific journals: "Reading Images" by Kress and Van Leeuwen; "Visual Communication" by Kress; "Grammar of Visual Design" by Kress and Machin; were a few from so many literatures to conduct the analysis. The analysis was based on SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR by Michael Halliday from (Kress and Van Leeuwen) perspectives, where Machin and Hess also have modified Halliday's SYSTEMIC

FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR to be applicable for visual texts too. In his book with Van Leeuwen, "Reading Images," Kress applied Halliday's framework as their analysis method for visual text because the reality shared meaning among legitimate communicators within a culture is established and maintained via visual images. Therefore, the social system and the use of the linguistic resources can be accessed from the analyzing modification and improvement. Influential linguistic perspective that has been borrowed into the social semiotics by some researchers of social semiotics were proposed in this research to observe the represented world evolving fast and deeply in the human social system. The use of social semiotics by researchers in visual text has its own advantages. Dominic (2017) emphasizes that social and semiotic perspectives which abide the social semiotics is the analysis of the individual instances of visual communication in social practices. Therefore, the function of social semiotics by the users and their communities on the visual texts should be concerned by researchers.

This research is aimed to conduct a qualitative research on Alan Walker's song lyrics using social semiotics. The focus is analyzing the Drum, a song produced by Alan Walker. According to Wikipedia, Alan Walker is a Norwegian-British record producer and DJ. He may be only 21 years old, but he rocks the international music industry so much in young age. He gained fandom after releasing The Walker. Spectre and Faded became the turning points. The Wiki even says that his videos are viewed in multiple million times since they were viewed totally on YouTube. Merleau-Ponty realizes the significance of culture for the existence of human life that irrespectively covers nature and develops into the object meaning to reveal the human in his life. According to this thinker, culture constitutes the sum of human beings' attempts to trace the real position of human beings in this world. Don Ihde in his book entitled Technologies of the Worlds (1979:13) states that: "We see the world through our technological forms and we live our lives also mediated through them". This statement contains deep philosophy that the context structure in the human world is ready to be painted in the form of art or certain media, and everyone lives their lives through it, then the essence of that media finally lives together with its existence. Therefore, art essentially is the way how humans represent the existence of the real world in the form which can be understood and enjoyed by the public.

Songs lyrics contain numerous valuable themes, ideas, and messages which are well-known by most people. Therefore, basically, the ideas and messages of songs' lyrics can be expressed as a popular culture that is interesting to be studied in more various and depth aspects of view. Not only because a song is a valuable idea as an aesthetic work, but also the message and ideas which are conveyed from songs' lyrics can carry meaning and function as a social voice. Maurice Merleau-Ponty in Suyitno (1996:2) states that "the perception and human expression will observe in reference to human surrounding that is the human world with all its culture and tradition, with its experiences and practices that live in it".

II. METHOD

For the analysis of this research, it is conducted by following some phases from qualitative research methodology, which includes data collection, coding, description, verification, and interpretation. However, to adjust with the theories employed, a validity test is also done by using peer debriefing technique, which in this manner is done by verifying the result of the interpretation through discussing it with amateur musicians, people who are familiar with Alan Walker's song, the youth and popular culture theories, also the researchers' society in his period of research. A verbatim is also included as another form of validity test in the form of transcription of the analyzed data.

To achieve the described research aims, this research is a qualitative study using descriptive and interpretive approaches. Qualitative research's aim is not to find general facts but to reveal the specific context from the part under investigation. The descriptive approach is used because the data of this research is the drafts of the lines in the song lyrics and the lyrics aloft by Alan Walker. The data then should be understood by searching and theoretically interpreting the data of research. A further understanding is also possibly done by searching literature sources that contain semiotic theories specifically those of social semiotics, popular culture, and related to teenage matters. Subsequent analysis to reveal the meanings of these data which then resulted in interpretations.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First, the signs and codes of motion, the audiences' intuition of them, and the motivations of the song composer have made some codes in the lyrics become symbols. The seemingly clearly stated ideas in view C of people whose lives depend on others and in view G on the instrumental processed noises in the refrain, which represent musical sounds so that the instrumental-processed noises, to them, are not motivated by anything. B doesn't represent anything, so the instrumental-processed noises in the refrain of the song are intolerable.

Second, finding from the codes in the texts will also reveal facts about people's attitude such as whether they focus on a constant, gapless relation between varying contents or just regard motion as a discontinuous thing which varies repeatedly with more irregular of its contents. For instance, in the texts of Almost Village, the theme of which is a village and people's life there, we can see that the motion there is represented only as something which without any gaps varies repeatedly.

Third, the findings of this research can also be used to depict the relationship between 2 systems of signs. In the texts of the song Adio Kerida by Yasmin Levi, for instance, we can see that while some individuals use letters invented by Johannes Gutenberg to write something which is initially sensed with the aid of sense organs, some other individuals in Africa use alphabets to record their interpretation of what it that is triggered by those senses. Signs made on the basis of their interpretations are known as s1 and marks made on the ground (or on other proper medium) and then recognized and interpreted as representations of their interpretations are called s3.

Based on the analysis and interpretations of data given in the previous section, in this section, I offer some findings and discuss them before making a conclusion. Based on the analysis and interpretations of the semiotic data in the "BuSe" texts, some findings could be generated as follows:

1. Analysis of Social Semiotics in Alan Walker's Song Lyrics

The social semiotic analysis process consists of two main stages, namely the constant-stages and the configuration stages. In the constant-stage stage, the data analysis process begins with the stages of data collection. In this study, the data collection is in the form of song lyrics which contain interesting elements for discussion. The data collection results obtained from the song lyrics are then collected into a digital archive. In the configuration stage, the data is analyzed, specifically the elements involved through the constant and dialectic dialogic stages. Through this stage, meaning is constructed based on the signs found during the configuration of the components of the sign system. Having established the meaning, the next step in the dialectic dialogic stage is to provide a new discourse about the understanding of the message in song lyrics that is being analyzed.

The process of data analysis with the method of Lesley Milroy's social semiotics is qualitative or narrative analysis. Based on the methodology used by Lesley Milroy, the analysis is carried out by dividing the written music test data into four sections. Next, explain the purpose of each section that has a relationship with sign contexts. Furthermore, each of the sections that have been grouped into the category of the sign are described based on its contextual components, namely: speech acts, action, authors, agency, modal qualification. Next, formulate implications of the sign category that contribute to the new discourse in the study of sign content in song lyrics.

2. Interpretation of Symbols and Meanings

The drum symbolizes life. The drum refers to the heartbeat. The heart beats when people succeed. Success brings harmony and tranquility in life. On the contrary, failure causes disharmony and tumult in life. It does not mean failure should be avoided. However, one must face failure before achieving success. Success begins with trying. Success is not something to wait for. During the journey of life, guidance is needed. That guidance is given by the strings, in this case, parents. They have experienced and can provide guidance. At this moment, the drum is silent and the strings have been heard. At the time presented, the drum roared and the strings had rubbed. Community life is not always compatible. Maintaining relationships can be very difficult, so religion is used as guidance. During religious guidance, the drum beats can be heard. Unfortunately, only a few people can hear them. Most people get caught up in worldly relationships and forget about the

relationship in the hereafter. As a result, the angry gods start to roar.

The interested symbols related to the drum, as well as their meanings in Alan Walker's drum song, are phrased into research questions. Then, the symbols are analyzed into meanings. The results of this research will be presented through descriptive explanations supported by quotations in the form of cut, study object, references, and findings. The symbols, as well as the meanings found in Alan Walker's drum, are presented systematically.

Theoretically, this qualitative research can contribute to the social sciences, not only linguistics, by showing that social semiotic analysis of song lyrics are worth doing, since they are a valuable scientific source of social and individual deceits as well as a source of language function (Halliday [1973]) to be linguistically analyzed and described. By trying, both directly and indirectly, to change the world either within the drug taking-context or beyond it for the sake of better environment, existence and well-being (Chomsky [1996]) as well as to make their songs more popular (Howell [2005]), songwriters can be seen as change agents within their social setting. Querying: coding layer, identifying meaningful unit or experiential unit, and transforming meaning potential in the form of number, description and narrations from texts and performances into a set of words (how tools are used), then into a set of phrases, and finally into a set of dismisses from the phrase sets (to be the coding tools) are the methodical tools the writer used in this qualitative research.

The writer finds a number of song lyrics written by Alan Walker that are rich in social semiotic meanings, and some of them are translations of words and phrases from English to Indonesian. They mostly resulted from the translator trying to find exact words and phrases in Indonesian that are equal in terms of meaning to the ones found in English. They addressed either directly or indirectly to the discourse level according to Bernstein (1971) to the first code of his Theory of Education (1975). Such messages were also the writer's focusing source of English lexicogrammar and language function in Transitivity (Halliday and Mathiessen [2004] and mood (Halliday and Mathiessen [2004]) to be analyzed and described by means of the

framework of systemic functional grammar (Halliday [1994] Halliday and Mathiessen [2004]) and Functions of Language (Halliday [1973] Halliday and Mathiessen [2004]). The analysis of "The Drum" through a social semiotic lens reveals several key elements:

a) Symbolism: The drum emerges as a central symbol, representing life's heartbeat, success achieved through perseverance, and the challenges faced on the path to achieving dreams. Other symbols include strings (representing guidance) and angry gods (representing the consequences of neglecting self-improvement).

b) Ideational meaning: The lyrics convey themes of overcoming obstacles, the importance of facing failure as a stepping stone to success, and the value of seeking guidance in life's journey.

c) Interpersonal meaning: The song establishes a connection with listeners by portraying relatable experiences of struggle and the drive to succeed. The lyrics encourage listeners to take action and pursue their goals.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

To realize the results and analysis of the songs, "The Drum" by Alan Walker's social semiotics into practice in the classroom, it needs to be done using various methods in various co-curricular activities (especially those integrating life skills) or through the habit of reading and singing or listening to beautiful songs of art, especially the works of young people who always have a very creative and constructive spirit. This process can be carried out through the following stages: (1) listening to the entire song collectively, (2) dividing the parts of the song and analyzing the lyrics socio-semiotically, (3) under-standing the song (motifs, themes, messages, feelings, and advice), (4) distributing information about the results of the analysis to the entire class or group of participants in the collaboration method (cooperative learning and application), and (5) interpreting each geometric symbol in the lyrics for application and implementation in the classroom strategy of twelve types of life videos related to socio-semiotically or co-curricular activities. After mastering this song, in various inclusive and inferential expressions, the LED life videos to be realized

can also develop ideas with a two-way communicative interaction model (CIA interactivity) between the app and the content stars or stars.

The song lyrics of "The Drum" by Alan Walker include several signs, sounds, and visual images that reflect the social semiotics showcased in the song's context. Analysis of the song lyrics has revealed that the signs in the lyrics refer to concrete images that can be interpreted in various dimensions: the literal meaning, denotation, and metaphorical meaning. In denotation, "The Drum" by Alan Walker has several signs (i.e., denotation): music, dancing youth, making music, rhythm, band, street music, handsome guys, as shown in its lyrical content. Geometric symbols in the lyrics are great signs that emit permanent and long-lasting meanings in each interpretive phase experienced by the representatives. Interpreting these symbols, on the other hand, must be supported by good interpretive skills as well so that the idea of the interpretive process remains received by the common participants and must produce beneficial results in accordance with the main goals of the song. The social semiotic analysis of "The Drum" demonstrates the song's rich tapestry of meaning-making elements. The lyrics incorporate symbols, themes, and messages that resonate with listeners on a social level. The song can be interpreted as a motivational message that celebrates the human spirit's ability to overcome challenges and achieve success.

B. Suggestion

The study of social semiotics, which discusses the relationship of the social dimension of signs, including interests in textual elements and forms of language use, still does not seem to be popular in Indonesia. This study discusses social semiotics in Alan Walker's lyrics, and its findings seem interesting to be continued in broader and more comprehensive research on other works of Walker, specifically talking about the lyrics in his other songs. To advance research in the field of social semiotics in music, we recommend the following:

1. Broaden the scope: Future studies should expand beyond Alan Walker to include a diverse range of contemporary musicians and songs. This wider lens will help identify overarching trends in social semiotic usage across popular music, offering a more comprehensive view of current practices.

2. Conduct comparative analyses: Researchers should compare social semiotic elements across various music genres (e.g., pop, rock, hip-hop), cultures, and periods. This comparative approach can illuminate how social semiotics in music evolve and differ in various contexts, enriching our understanding of cultural and temporal influences.

3. Adopt a multi-modal approach: Extend the analysis beyond lyrics to encompass music videos, album artwork, and live performances. This holistic perspective will provide insights into how meaning is constructed across multiple modes of musical expression, offering a more complete picture of the artist's semiotic intentions.

4. Explore audience reception: Investigate how listeners interpret and relate to a song's social semiotic elements. This could involve conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups to understand how different audiences perceive and respond to these elements, bridging the gap between artistic intent and audience interpretation.

5. Develop robust methodologies: Work towards creating more standardised and comprehensive methodologies for analysing social semiotics in music. This will enable more consistent application across different studies and facilitate easier comparison of results, strengthening the field's analytical framework.

6. Examine digital influences: Study how social media and digital platforms impact the creation and interpretation of social semiotic meanings in music. This could include analysing online community discussions about songs or investigating how digital media affects artists' approaches to conveying meaning, acknowledging the growing influence of technology on music consumption and interpretation.

7. Pursue interdisciplinary approaches: Combine social semiotic analysis with insights from fields such as psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. This multidisciplinary approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of how social semiotics in music relate to broader social and cultural phenomena, situating musical analysis within a wider academic context.

Scholars can build upon this study by pursuing these research directions to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of social semiotics in contemporary music. This expanded knowledge has the potential to significantly contribute to fields such as musicology, cultural studies, and communication theory, offering new perspectives on how music creates and conveys meaning in our increasingly interconnected world.

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