
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of “Lathi” Song

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| ABSTRACT

Music has a personal interest in its individual. It can deliver happiness for those who listen to it. On the other hand, the music should correlate with its pictures through the video clip, such as color, sound, gesture, etc. This article attempts to investigate and explore the interpersonal meaning of the LATHI Song. This study was conducted qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical study to check how different semiotic and modes such as music, sound, speech, color, action, and facial expression work together to build the interpersonal meaning. LATHI song is successful in attracting audiences' attention around the world. The song's lyrics are mainly in English, except for the bridge sung in Javanese. Not only that, but the bridge also employs pelog, a Javanese seven-note scale used in gamelan arrangements. In addition, its instruments played has a unique characteristic and easy listening.

| KEYWORDS

Discourse Analysis, Multimodality, Lathi song, Visual Mode, Aural Mode, Gestural Mode

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1. Introduction

According to Fairclough (1992), "Discourse constitutes the social...Discourse is shaped by power relations, and invested with ideologies". In addition, All discourses are multimodal, that is, language in use, whether this is the form of spoken language or text, is always and inevitably constructed across multiple modes of communication, including speech and gesture not just in spoken language but through such "contextual" phenomena as the use of the physical spaces in which we carry out our discursive actions or the design, paper, and typography of the documents within which our texts presented. (Levine and Scollon, 2004).

Games, movies, political speeches, news elements, fashions, music, and all ways that interact with human beings are part of the discourse. Multimodal discourse analysis examines how a text uses images, film, video, image, and sound in conjunction with words to convey meaning and how semiotic tools such as color, framing, focus and positioning elements contribute to the making of meaning in the text.

Everyday communication involves not only words but also gestures, images, videos, sounds, and music. Music, It such a message that can easily understandable by a human. One of the tools to communicate is a song. A song is a musical composition intended to be performed by the human voice. Moreover, it can be consumed for all ages as well. Not only the teenagers but also the babies like music. Why? When we listen to music that we like, a chemical called dopamine is sometimes released in the brain, making us feel good, cozy and calming us down. Many singers that come up not only in Indonesia but also worldwide have their own characteristics. Pop, Jazz, Pop rock, Hip-hop are an example of music genres.

Indonesian music is known for its cultural richness, indigenous musical inventiveness, and subsequent foreign musical influences that have affected contemporary music scenes. There are about a thousand Indonesian islands, each with its own cultural and artistic history and personality. The music of Java (including Sundanese), Sumatra, Bali, Flores, and other Indonesian islands have been chronicled and recorded, with a continuous investigation by Indonesian and international experts. Various Native Indonesian

tribes commonly use chants and songs accompanied by musical instruments in their rituals, predating historical records. Indonesia's modern music is now well-known throughout the region, including Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

Weird Genius is one of the bands from Indonesia that comes up with its unique musical characteristic. This group was formed in 2016 and released its first song in 2017 with the title DPS. On 28 February 2020, Weird Genius released the song "Lathi" featuring Sara Fajira on YouTube and viral on social media, especially on TikTok and yet it has a controversion said that Lathi song is summoned. However, much of music's power lies in its use as multimodal communication. It is not just lyrics that lend songs their meaning, but images and musical sounds as well. Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Multimodal Discourse* (2001) presents "a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes". This view reflects the contemporary semiotic landscape and especially the fact that increasingly sophisticated digital technologies allow non-specialists, often through the same interface, to select from and combine semiotic resources (e.g. typography, sound, layout) that were previously associated with discrete and highly specialized domains. A spoken text is not only just verbal but also visual, combined with modes such as facial expression, gesture, posture and other forms of self-presentation.

As Levine and Scollon (2004) stated that:

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According to Chuang (2010), four theoretical points about mode and multimodality: (1) Different modes have different meaning potentials and materiality, which are not always available to or overly comprehended by the audience. (2) All modes have specific social evaluations and demands, so meaning potentials of modes depends on the practical requirements of different communities and different social contexts. (3) All modes produce meanings through their intersection with each other and their interweaving in the communicative context. (4) All modes are shaped, created, and transformed in response to the need for social semiotic processes, so they are not static but fluid.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Multimodal Communication

According to van Leeuwen (2005) semiotic resources are:

The actions, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically – for example, with our vocal apparatus, the muscles we use to make facial expressions and gestures – or technologically – for example, pen and ink, or computer hardware and software – together with how these resources can be organized. (p. 285)

The multimodal approach is grounded in a social semiotic view of language and communication. Semiotics studies the processes and structures whereby meaning is made in social spaces (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Each mode used in a multimodal ensemble brings different possibilities or functional specializations to the ensemble and represents ideas and meanings differently.

The New London Group, a collection of education and literacy scholars who first promoted the concept of multimodal literacies, outlined five modes of communication — linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, and spatial mode.

1. Linguistic mode refers to written or spoken words. The mode includes word choice, the delivery of written or spoken text, the organization of words into sentences and paragraphs and the development and coherence of words and ideas.
2. Visual mode refers to the images and characters that people see. This mode includes color, layout, style, size and perspective.
3. Aural mode is focused on sound, including, but not limited to, music, sound effects, ambient noises, silence, tone of voice in spoken language, the volume of sound, emphasis and accent.
4. Spatial mode is about the text's physical arrangement, organization, and proximity. One example of this is often a brochure and how it is folded and organized.
5. Gestural mode refers to the way movement is interpreted. Facial expressions, hand gestures, body language and interaction between people are all gestural modes.

Here, many modes can be analyzed in Lathi song. Each of these modes plays an important role in making and delivering the message of the song.

2.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

According to (Chan 2013), multimodal discourse refers to "the study of the various methods used by humans to communicate (the discourse) including using voice, writing and 'body language' (the multimodalities)". This model suggests a valid analysis of the new path of communication that is gradually gaining infamy through technology, art, and other means of expression. Meanwhile, O'Halloran (2011) consider that Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA "extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound". With this in mind, you can properly research resources aimed at communicating meaning.

Kress and van Leeuwen in Reading Images (1996) and Multimodal Discourse (2001) demonstrated how meanings in texts are created from written language and other semiotic resources such as visual features, material objects, and architecture.

2.3 Colour

Most people know what the color « means »—Black for sorrow, Red for anger, green for hope. In the safety code designed by US colour consultant Faber Birren (Lacy, 1996), green identifies first-aid equipment, while red identifies hoses and valves (which play a role, of course, in fire protection). In London, Underground green identifies the District Line and red the Central Line, and both on Underground maps and in Underground stations, many people look for those colours first and speak of the 'green line' and the 'red line'.

Colour is additionally utilized for communicating 'interpersonal' meaning. As language permits us to realize discourse acts, colour permits us to realize 'colour acts'. It can be and is utilized to do things to or for each other, e.g. to inspire or intimidate through 'power dressing', to caution against hindrances and other hazards by portraying them orange, or indeed to stifle individuals.

3. Methodology

The researcher employed qualitative research in order to know the multimodality of the « Lathi » song. This study is based on representative multimodal analysis research on interpersonal meaning, specifically products connected to movement, music, speech, and image. Its goal is to demonstrate how interpersonal meaning is created in the video clip of the "Lathi" song. It investigates the facial expression, colour, gesture and sound in rendering the message. On the other hand, the main focus of this study is to analyze the 3 modes. They are: color (visual mode), sound (aural mode), facial expression and gesture (gestural mode). There are some considerations because it is important to be investigated. To begin with, Weird Genius is a well-known band for teenagers. In addition, this song is popular that it is played everywhere. The data were collected from a video clip of a Lathi song for the analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Visual Mode

This section is a comparative or descriptive analysis of the study based on the study results, previous literature, etc. The results should be offered in a logical sequence, given the most important finding first and addressing the stated objectives. The author should deal only with new or important aspects of the results obtained. The relevance of the findings in the context of existing literature or contemporary practise should be addressed.



The first 8 sec shows that the woman wears a white dress which represents she is innocent and pure, doesn't know anything, sincere feeling to her couple.



Black, in the 34 sec, the man wears a black shirt influencing the woman to the toxic relationship, and at the 59 sec, the woman changes into an evil which represents she is the victim of a toxic relationship. The creepiness of the facial make-up in the video clip is the image of the dark side of the female character in the song who wants to take revenge on her lover.

2. Aural mode

2.1 Sound

The song opens with a traditional instrument play that accompanies a powerful beat that feels dynamic throughout the track. A little melancholy flavour is pinned to give a different touch in some parts of the song. Meanwhile, this song uses gamelan as the characteristic of its song since it reflects our culture, especially Javanese.



In the 48 secs to 1:09, Sara (the singer) sang a Javanese lyric that was sung in Sinden style. This clip combines the EDM (Electronic Dance Music) with traditional instruments and Javanese language elements.

3. Gestural mode

3.1 Facial expression

A million words can be expressed only in one facial expression. The lyrics of the song tell us about a toxic relationship dominated by lies and ego. Even though it emphasizes the dark side of the relationship, there is an implied meaning of courage and determination to face unhealthy.



In 33 seconds, the woman's facial expression looks happy at the beginning, and it can be seen that the woman thought that their relationship would run smoothly. The man touched the woman gently as they were at the beginning of their romance. It shows by her smiling face when her man comes closer.



We've all heard the expression, "a picture is worth a thousand words." In this frame, she frowned her forehead. She felt disappointed and sad because the relation didn't happen as she thought. In this scene, the expression of a woman looks sad, disappointed.



In the next scene, Emotion signals emerge almost instantly when an emotion begins. Here, her expression shows the emotion of frustration and scared. It can be reflected from the words, "Turn myself so cold and heartless". It implies that she does not want to change her personality; on the other hand, the situation supports her not to be the real she is. She feels frustrated and has a fear.



In 1: 13 scene, the Javanese musical arrangement is dominant, according to Ekman. P (2003, p. 75) stated that "Anger, for example, can vary in strength, ranging from annoyance to rage, and in types, such as sullen anger, resentful anger, indignant anger, and cold anger".

Here, she apparently feels indignant anger based on unfair and unexpected man's behaviour. It is stated from the lyric "Ajining diri ana ing LATHI". Lathi means words, so it represents that the man doesn't keep his words and humiliate her.



Ekman, P (2003) described disgust as a feeling of aversion. The taste of something you want to spit out, even the thought of eating something distasteful, can make you disgusted. ...the thought of how something repulsive might smell brings out strong disgust."

In this frame, it can be seen that her face and her eyes show a repulsive feeling. Her eyes turn smaller, has a slightly narrowed brow and a curled upper lip. She feels disgusted with the man.

3.2 Hand gesture and body language

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary, the gesture means a movement you make with your hands, head, or face to show a particular meaning.

Jewitt, (2009, p. 14), Multimodality has been defined as "the approaches that understand communication and representation to be more than about language, and which attend to the full range of communicational forms people use—image, gesture, gaze, posture and so on—and the relationships between them."

The followings are the samples of the data found in LATHI's clip.



At 2:13 frame, the woman's hand holds the man's hand that indicates she has already fed up with their relation, a painful circle of love, and finally, she ends it up by taking revenge on her lover. She gives a spell or curse with her right hand to her lover, where the man finally can do nothing.



Lying down with their body tied with the chain shows that she is full of pain at the first frame. Waking up from the pain with the body tied implies that she tries to set herself free. And at the third frame, her hands break the chain. It means that the painful love should be stopped.

5. Conclusion

The song and video clip send the message that the relation between man and woman should be sincere and pure without any forcing and possessing. The clip shows the possessiveness and unhealthy relation that will be hurt by both of them.

Sinar (2012) stated that "*bahasa verbal saja tanpa semua gerak, suara, warna, dan objek material membatasi pemahaman seseorang terhadap kompleksnya sebuah interaksi dan makna interaksional serta dapat memberikan keterbatasan pada komunikasi.*"

The study results show that Multimodal describes how we combine multiple different ways of communicating in everyday life. So, when all modes apply in an audiovisual, there will be a meaningful text which can be delivered to the viewers or audiences. Every single mode supports the message or meaning, and they represent some signs.

Hopefully, this study will inspire other researchers to do further research on how modes contribute to the meaning-making of the audiovisual text. The author should clearly explain the research's important conclusions, highlighting their significance and relevance.

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