

Analysis of Verbal and Visual Aspects in Taylor Swift's Music Video *Out of the Woods*

Putu Ayu P.S. Yuli Mega Pertiwi^{1*}, I.G.A.G Sosiowati², Putu Ayu Asty Senja Pratiwi³

¹²³English Department, Faculty of Arts – Udayana University

¹[ayumegaa@yahoo.co.id] ²[sosiowati@yahoo.com]

³[senja.dananjaya@yahoo.com]

**Corresponding Author*

Abstrak

Studi ini terfokus pada aspek verbal dan visual dalam video musik Taylor Swift berjudul Out of the Woods. Tujuan dari studi ini dibagi dua. Tujuan umum yaitu untuk menerapkan dan mengembangkan teori linguistik dan teori lainnya yang berkaitan dengan studi ini. Tujuan khusus lebih terfokus pada hubungan antara video musik dan pengalaman pribadi Taylor Swift. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan yakni metode dokumentasi dan tekniknya dengan mencari, mengamati, dan mengambil screenshot video.

Metode analisis data yang digunakan yaitu metode deskriptif. Teknik analisis data yaitu dengan menerapkan teori Semantik dari Geoffrey Leech (1974) untuk menganalisis aspek verbal dalam bentuk lirik lagu dan tulisan dalam video. Teori Semiotik dari Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) dan teori makna warna dari Herman Cerrato (2012) digunakan untuk menganalisis aspek visual dalam bentuk screenshot.

Hasil dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa aspek verbal dalam video musik tersebut mencakup enam jenis makna (konseptual, afektif, refleksi, kolokatif, konotatif, dan tematik). Aspek visual meliputi signifier dan signified serta didominasi oleh enam warna: putih, hitam, biru, hijau, kuning, dan jingga. Dari hasil korelasi antara video musik dan kehidupan pribadi Taylor Swift, ditemukan bahwa video tersebut berkaitan dengan mantan kekasihnya bernama Harry Style. Lirik lagu video ini sebagian besar merujuk pada Harry Style dan kenangan mereka berdua. Video tersebut memvisualisasikan lirik lagu dengan baik, dimana Taylor Swift merasa kehidupan cintanya dulu penuh dengan kegelisahan dan hubungannya dengan Harry Style dikatakan sebagai hubungan yang rapuh. Taylor Swift menemukan jati dirinya setelah kehilangan mantan kekasihnya tersebut.

Keywords: verbal, visual, komunikasi, video musik, makna, biografi

1. Background of the Study

Communication takes the biggest part in our social life. Nowadays, people can communicate with one another through a piece of art, such as music. From the

twentieth-century, music started to be associated with videos. Music videos have been another form of communication between the musical artists and the viewers.

Sometimes the artists express the story of their personal life experience into the song and music video, for instance Taylor Swift. One of her famous and recent songs “Out of the Woods” along with its music video had been predicted that there was a correlation between her work and her own personal life, particularly her past romance story. It was interesting to analyse the message she was trying to convey through the song and its music video.

2. Problems of the Study

Based on the description of background above, there are two problems arising in this study as follows:

- 1) What verbal and visual aspects could be identified in Taylor Swift’s music video?
- 2) What is the correlation between the music video and Taylor Swift’s personal life?

3. Aims of the Study

This study was conducted for the following purposes based on the problems above.

a) General Objective

The general objective of this study is to apply and develop the linguistic theories and another relevant theory.

b) Specific Objective

This study more focuses on the finding of verbal and visual aspects in Taylor Swift’s music video. It is also concerned with the correlation between the music video and Taylor Swift’s personal life experience.

4. Research Method

There are three components of research method in this study: data source, method and technique of collecting data, and method and technique of analyzing data.

4.1 Data Source

Data source used in this study was the primary data taken from Taylor Swift's music video entitle *Out of the Woods*. It was released at the end of 2015 through Taylor Swift-Vevo channel in YouTube site. It was chosen as a data source because it communicated meaningful messages to the viewers in every different scene. It also told them a story about Taylor Swift's past romance experience, supported by the lyrics.

4.2 Method and Techniques of Collecting Data

The method of collecting data in this study was the documentation method. This study was a library research and online research. The data were collected in a form of video, particularly music video.

The technique of collecting data were by searching, observing, and taking the screenshots. The song lyric was obtained by searching it on Taylor Swift's official website (www.taylorswift.com) to get the verbal aspect. The video, on the other hand, was downloaded from Taylor Swift's YouTube channel.

4.3 Method and Techniques of Analyzing Data

The method of analyzing data was the qualitative method. The study was presented descriptively.

The technique of analyzing data in this study was conducted through some steps. First, the verbal communication in the form of lyric was paraphrased in order to understand the meaning of lyric. Then, it was analysed using Leech's theory of Semantics. The written text in the video was also investigated using this theory to examine the type of meaning that could be found in the lyric as well as in the text.

The screenshots of the video as the visual communication were analysed by applying the theory of Semiotics by Saussure and theory of meaning of colours by Cerrato. Then, the verbal communication in the video was interrelated with the visual ones to create an entire meaning. Finally, the meaning of the video was connected to the personal life experience of Taylor Swift through biographical approach. Her life story was searched on the internet to complete the interpretation.

5. Analysis of Verbal And Visual Aspects of Taylor Swift’s Music Video *Out of the Woods*

5.1 Analysis of Verbal and Visual Aspects of Taylor Swift’s Music Video

The video is opened by three separate words: “she”, “lost”, “him” and continues with a scene where woman in blue dress with bare feet standing alone at the shore and facing toward the sea. The vines grow up quickly from the ground and the surface of the sea.

The three words which becomes a statement “she lost him” has conceptual meaning. Conceptual meaning is also called denotative meaning or cognitive meaning. It is logical and widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication (Leech, 1974:09). Besides, it also contains thematic meaning in which the subject “she” is more important and focused than “him” (Leech, 1974:19).

The five screenshots in the video have signifier and signified as follows.

Signifier	Signified
The word “she” as the first word opening the video	“She” refers to a woman or girl that has been mentioned before. However, in this case, there is no clue who is being discussed. It is only known that this anonymous person is female.
The word “lost” as the second word opening the video	According to previous word, “lost” here means unable to find something or someone.
The word “him” as the last word	“Him” refers to a male person that has been previously mentioned. In this opening video, there is no explanation about this person because it appears directly without any additional information. However, it is still understood that the person is male.
The three words written in capital letter	All words are in capital letter, emphasising the meaning and the existence of

	<p>themselves. It means the three words are supposed to be very important and the viewers are supposed to recognise the existence of the words and understand the meaning.</p>
<p>A young woman is standing alone at the shore and facing toward the sea.</p>	<p>This woman is having her time to stare at the sea. It could be that she enjoys the wind and the scenery of the sea waves by herself, or she is thinking about something in her mind. Her expression cannot be seen clearly by the viewers since the camera only shoots her face from a distance and from one side.</p>
<p>The vines growing up quickly and instantly from the ground and the sea's surface surrounding the woman</p>	<p>In this video, the vines grow everywhere and block the way. They reflect the problems that have to be faced by the woman.</p>

The first three screenshots opening the video have the same colours that are black as the background and white as the colour of the words. According to Cerrato, white is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity, safety, and cleanliness. Black is the colour of authority and power, stability and strength (Cerrato, 2012:14-15). In this case, the words written in white colour with black background give the viewers deep and clean perspective. It also attracts the viewers' attention without making excessive effort.

The screenshot showing a woman in blue dress standing alone at the shore is dominated by blue and white colour. Blue is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven. It is calming, reducing tension and fear (Cerrato, 2012:11). The sky, the sea, and the dress are all in blue. The blue sky shows that it is a sunny day. It is calm, comforting,

and at the same time, it gives an illusion of heaven. The blue sea seems to be fresh, clear, and deep. It also gives the viewers an impression of coldness. The blue dress worn by the woman shows that she is confident, faithful, and can be trusted. Her dress colour seems to become one with the sky and the sea. The cloud is in white colour, meaning that it is clean, pure, and innocent. It shows that it is bright and sunny day, so that it gives positive mood.

Those scenes opening the video give particular perception to the viewers. The three words “she”, “lost”, and “him”, as well as a woman in a blue dress standing at the shore and the vines growing from the surface have a certain meaning. They draw an understanding that it is still a mystery “who lost whom” because the viewers still do not know who is “she” and “him” in the sentence “she lost him” in the video. However, the viewers are forced to pay attention to these two persons. The scene is in a bright day that is supposed to be a wonderful day to do something. The vines that grow up quickly and nearly block the path means that there are many problems that have to be solved by the woman. It can be that the woman is having her time to relax, although she knows there are problems ahead her.

5.2 Correlation between the Music Video and Taylor Swift’s Personal Life

Taylor Swift’s music video entitle *Out of the Woods* has been said that it reflects her own personal experience in love affair. She revealed the meaning of song in Grammy Pro video, that it is just a kind of conjured up all these feelings of anxiety that she had in a relationship where everybody was watching (Lee, 2015). It is like the chorus of the song in stanza 2, 4, and 6:

- Are we out of the woods yet? Are we out of the woods yet?* (1)
- Are we out of the woods yet? Are we out of the woods?* (2)
- Are we in the clear yet? Are we in the clear yet?* (3)
- Are we in the clear yet? In the clear yet, good* (4)

It seems that the man mentioned in the video is her ex-boyfriend, Harry Style, member of One Direction, which is one of popular boy bands in UK. The lyrics on the third stanza refer to him:

- Looking at it now* (1)
Last December (last December) (2)
We were built to fall apart (3)
Then fall back together (back together) (4)

Taylor and Harry dated from November 2012 - January 2013. The rumours and the confirmation happened mostly during the fall and winter of 2012 (Griffiths, 2014).

As explained in *teen.com* on November 8th 2012, there were some reports floating around that Taylor Swift and Harry Styles had a brief romance, and while nothing was ever confirmed, there has been a somewhat interesting new development. The lyrics in stanza 3 also give a clue:

- Your necklace hanging through my neck* (5)
Two paper airplanes flying, flying, flying (10)

While out and about in Paris on Thursday, Taylor was seen wearing a cute black and white ensemble with one very noticeable accessory: a silver necklace with what looks like a triangle symbol, but it's actually in the shape of a paper plane (Hasaka, 2012).

The lines in stanza 5 show that their relationship did not go well:

- Remember when we couldn't take the heat* (5)
I walked out, I said, I'm setting you free (6)

Daily Mail UK was also reported in January 2013, that Taylor Swift had broken up with Harry Style in January 2013 (Nathan and Smith, 2013).

There is a statement that is split into three segments at the end of the music video:

*She lost him
but she found herself
and somehow that was everything.*

This statement reflects Taylor Swift's new understanding of her own self. It seems more like self-discovery instead of heartbreak. It is proved in an interview with *Access Hollywood's* Liz Hernandez on October 2014 (Anderson, 2014).

6. Conclusion

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that in Taylor Swift's music video entitle *Out of the Woods*, the verbal aspect in the form of lyrics includes six types of meaning: conceptual, affective, reflected, collocative, connotative, and thematic meaning. The visual aspect in the form of screenshots has signifier and signified. It also has six dominant colours: white, black, blue, green, yellow, and orange.

The music video visualises Taylor Swift's personal experience well. According to some online magazine reports, it mostly refers to her ex-boyfriend named Harry Style, a member of famous pop UK band, One Direction. Although she did not mention exactly who the man is, but the lyrics tell everything. Most of the lyrics have strong connection with Harry Style as in stanza 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

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