

The Exploration of Verbal and Visual Signs with Reference to BTS Music Video “Dynamite” and Its Song Lyrics

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Abstract This study entitled The Exploration of Verbal and Visual Signs with Reference to BTS Music Video “Dynamite” and Its Song Lyrics. There were three aims of this study; explaining the meaning of verbal signs, describing the meanings of visual signs and analyzing the relation between verbal and visual signs on the Dynamite song and its music video. The data were taken from an English song by BTS (Bangtan Seonyondan) that was released on 21st August 2020. The data was limited on the second chorus of the song and the 8th scene of the music video. The data was gathered from the music video by watching the music video through YouTube and reading the song lyrics that was found in search engine. The collected data from this study was analyzed using the qualitative method. Then, the data was analyzed with semiotic theory by Charles Sanders Peirce and seven types of meaning theory by Geoffrey Leech and also supported by other theories and opinions from numerous experts in this field. There were two out of seven types of meaning found in Dynamite song lyrics—second chorus part. The types of meaning were conceptual meaning and connotative meaning. there were also their visual signs that categorized as icon, index, symbol was found in the 8th scene of the music video. In this study was also found the relation between the verbal and visual signs of Dynamite’s lyrics and its music video.

Key Terms: *Semiotics, Verbal signs, Visual Signs, Music Video.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a sign that allows individuals to recognize themselves or others, allowing them to comprehend all elements of life with ease. Words, pictures, sounds, scents, tastes, actions, and objects can all be used as signs, but their meaning is not inherent. Only when we engage in meaning do they become symbols. It's also connected to what Wibowo (2001) said, which was translated into English as: Language is a meaningful sign system that communicates distinct sounds in any conventional language and is used to communicate sentiments and thoughts among a group of people.

The form used to communicate sentiments or thoughts might be in the form of vocal or nonverbal signals, meanings, or facts. Understanding the meaning inside the given or delivered information is important to ensuring a smooth flow and avoiding misunderstandings. Semantics is the study of word and sentence meaning; at its most fundamental level, it is concerned with the connection of linguistic kinds to non-linguistic concepts and mental representations in order to comprehend how language speakers perceive sentences. Semantics and semiotics are inextricably linked because semantics explains signs in terms of linguistics. The study of signs is known as semiotics. Words, images, sounds, smells,

flavors, actions, and objects may all be employed as signals, but they do not have any intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we give them significance.

Semantic and semiotic use was commonplace in everyday life. For example, if an image of fragile is depicted as a shattered flute glass, individuals who do not grasp the actual meaning of the artwork may interpret it incorrectly. It was a reason for the necessity of evaluating verbal and visual signs, because knowing the meaning of the signs is critical for avoiding misunderstandings. As a result, this study is being done in order to clarify indications and sorts of signs. When it comes to interpreting signals, we may find them not only in pictures, but also in a variety of media, one of which is a music video.

Audio-visual communication includes music videos. Audio-visual communication is a type of promotion that is often used to raise brand recognition in a community. There are several methods and mediums for promotion, and the technique of promotion evolves throughout time. Music videos are one of the most well-known forms of media marketing. By creating a story, a music video invites viewers to listen and grabs their attention, convincing them to buy the song. Creating a compelling visual experience increases the likelihood of an album being purchased. According to Moller (2011), a music

video is a short film created to accompany music, most frequently a recording, in order to promote a song album.

The way a music video advertises something is significantly different from other forms of advertising. The majority of song writers and producers incorporate the marketed items into their song or music video. Because the goal of advertising is to raise brand recognition or pique people's interest in something that has to be delivered, it is also relevant to the purpose of the music video itself—raising awareness of the song's message and presenting the performer.

The goal of a music video as part of an advertising was to promote the song and the artist. Because music videos have a certain message they wish to convey, a study of signals is required to understand what the music video's message was. This study evaluated the verbal and visual indicators discovered in the music video to provide a clear analysis and explanation of the selected BTS's music video, based on the explanation.

As many people know, BTS is a famous boy group singer from South Korea. It is consisting of seven members. They are Kim Namjoon as leader, Kim Seokjin, Min Yoongi, Jung Hoseok, Park Jimin, Kim Taehyung, and Jung Jongkook (Suryani, 2019).

II. METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The data source, method and technique of data collection, method and technique of data analysis, and method and technique of data presentation were all employed in this study as research methods.

Without a data source, the study would be useless. As a result, data source is critical in research. Because this study is based on BTS's most recent music video, the data was audio-visual, consisting of the BTS music video "Dynamite" and the song's lyrics. Since they were previously renowned for their Korean or Japanese pop tunes, Dynamite is their first complete English song.

The song was released on August 21, 2020, by Big Hit Entertainment, which has since changed its name to HYBE Label and Sony Music. Stewart produced the film, which was written by David Stewart and Jessica Agombar.

The band described the aims and ambience of the song in their press conference "Dynamite ONLINE GLOBAL MEDIA DAY," which was uploaded to the official HYBE Labels channel. The song's purpose was to provide positive energy to everyone at the time when the world was in the grip of a pandemic.

The data was chosen because, despite the lack of explicit pandemic lyrics, the song provided a profound insight into how individuals coped throughout the epidemic. Because the music video's subject was set in the 1990s, it provided a fresh perspective, and it was intriguing to discover the connection between the lyrics and the music video, given that the theme was set in a different era.

This study was a library research. The data collection type in this study used documentation method. Likewise, the note-taking technique was also used in this study. In order to collect the data, several steps need to be used in this study. The steps of collecting data are as follows: first, watching and listening music video several times to deeply know the songs. Second, finding out the song lyrics from search engine. Third,

comparing the song from the music video and the lyric. Fourth, highlighting the lyric that contain unique sentence. Last, note taking the signs found in the music video.

The collected data from this study was analyzed using the qualitative method. The theories that have been used on this study were purposed by Pierce (1983) about semiotics, and Leech (1974) about seven types of meaning. The collected data was analyzed by several steps. First, classifying the verbal and visual signs found in the music video and its lyrics. Then, analyzing the verbal signs by using Leech's seven types of meaning theory. The next step was analyzing the visual signs by using Pierce's triadic model focusing on finding the type of object of the visual sign and put a coding on the finding. Last, combining and concluding the relation between the verbal and visual signs.

The study used narrative method and informal technique to present the analysis. This method aims to describe objects, phenomena, or situations in detailed and exciting ways. Without using any quantitative calculations, statistics, or charts, an informal method generally gives a more understandable interpretation of data.

III. VERBAL AND VISUAL SIGNS IN BTS MUSIC VIDEO DYNAMITE AND ITS SONG LYRICS

This data was derived from the lyrics and music video for the song Dynamite. The words were studied from the chorus, which consists of four lines and was performed by the members collectively. The visual indications were taken from the music video's eighth scene, in which all the members appear.

The verbal signs of this data was analyzed on its conceptual and connotative meaning only, by applying the theory of seven types of meaning by Leech (1974). The visual signs analysed by using triadic models purposed by Pierce (in Chanler, 2007).

Connotative and Conceptual Meaning

The lyrics was taken from the second chorus of *Dynamite* song which was repeated chorus. On the line 1 ('Cause I-I'm in the stars' tonight), the song was sung by Jung Kook and then followed Jimin. On this line, the word "stars" had conceptual and connotative meaning in it. Conceptually, star was a very big ball of burning natural gas in space which could be seen as a bright object in the sky at night from Earth. It word also had conceptual features (+space object, +shining, -found in middle of the day). The sentence "I'm in the stars tonight" explained that "I" was the singer, Jung Kook, and he was staying between the stars that night.

However, the sentence did not just have a conceptual meaning; it even had a connotative meaning. The term connotatively reflects the connotative context, with the explanation focusing on the word's knowledge, cognitive, and artistic connections. In connotative view, the word "star" could be people which is very famous and world widely known. Stars, like all celestial bodies, emit their own light.

Taking a look from the purpose of the song which was to bring back the spirit and power of people in facing the pandemic condition, where everything became sad and full of negative vibes, the line "cause I, I, I'm in the stars tonight" aimed to

invite people to not giving up during this condition. People had to be stronger, happier, and spread the positive energy toward people. It also meant to show to people that “I”, BTS, was already in the stars and it is the turn of everyone to be in their own stars. Therefore, the line connotatively referred to the invitation to people to not giving up in every situation and keep spreading the happiness.

On the second line (*So watch me bring the fire and set the night alight*) of the repeated chorus was sung individually by Jong Kook. From that line, the meaning of words “fire” and “night” were analyzed by the theory of meaning purposed by Leech (1974). As conceptual meaning was meaning that could be found in dictionary, the word “fire” according to Cambridge Dictionary is “(material that is in) the state of burning that produces flames that send out heat and light, and might produce smoke”. On the other hand, “fire” had its connotative meaning. Fire referred to light as representation of happiness. It commonly came with red color with a hint of gradation yellow or orange. Since red is synonymous with fire, it is considered warm. Joy, passion, and love are both represented by light red (Wierzbicka, 1996:315).

Besides that, the word “night” was an opposite condition of the light caused by fire. Conceptually, night referred to the interval between late afternoon and bedtime; the evening. On the other hand, it also had its connotative meaning especially in this lyrics. Night referred to darkness and darkness is generally pictured with dark or black color. Since black is a color that gave the appearance of being grim, gloomy, and frightening while still being chic, it is often used in the fashion industry to convey a slim and lasting impression.

Conceptually, the lyric “so watch me bring the fire and set the night alight” in the Dynamite song meant to tell the listener or the audience of its music video to watch “me” or Jong Kook brought fire as a light during the night. But, it was not simply explaining about bringing a fire. Looking from the condition during the pandemic, while people cannot gather with their family, friends, and their society, it impacted the mental and the mood condition of a person. While people were feeling sad or unworthy during this time, BTS tried to make people looking at them and join them spreading happiness, hope and positive energy to together stronger faced this situation.

The third line (*Shining through the city with a little funk and soul*) of the repeated chorus was sung by Jong Kook and Taehyung. From the line it could be seen that words “funk” and “soul” giving a special intention, since those were a rare word heard in the society in common life. The word “funk” as a noun was referred to the state of being dissatisfied and hopeless as cited in Cambridge online dictionary. along with the time flies, The sense of the word changes. Today, people mostly related “funk” as one of music genres. Punk and funk were not the same thing.

Funk was an American music genre that originated in the late 1960s when African American musicians combined soul music, soul jazz, and R&B to create a rhythmic, rocking style of music The second word was “soul” (Gridney, 1983). Conceptually, soul referred to the spiritual part of a person that some people believe continues to exist in some form after their body has died, or the part of a person that is not physical and experiences deep feelings and emotions. As the rise of the music genres over the world, soul nowadays could be referred

to one of the well-known music genre. Soul genre was a mainstream music phenomenon that emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s in the United States, incorporating aspects of African-American gospel music and rhythm and blues.

According to the explanation of “funk” and “soul” above, it could be concluded that the lyric “Shining through the city with a little funk and soul” conceptually meant that BTS was walking brightly around the city with funk and soul music or songs. Nonetheless, that lyric also had its connotative meaning. the meaning was inviting people to shine or spread happiness to the society. As the funk and soul music genre were dominantly an up-beat music that refer to the cheerful life.

The last line of the repeated chorus (*So I'ma light it up like dynamite*) was sung by Jimin, Taehyung, and Jong Kook. On this line, the main word or centered word in this song Dynamite was sung. The word “dynamite” had its conceptual and connotative meaning. “Dynamite” conceptually was a type of explosion. Dynamite is an explosive that uses diatomaceous earth (Kieselguhr) as an absorber and is based on the explosive ability of nitroglycerin.

Connotatively the word “dynamite” as a noun could be referred to a thing that explode explosively. As dynamite dominantly covered with red color, in this song context dynamite was an explosive power that BTS wanted to be happened to every human being. Getting power means having the right to direct our lives and our future, which will help us attain peace, longevity, and fitness above all else. It's stressful to have little control in our lives and it makes us feel powerless. Therefore, in the lyric, BTS invited people to have power, especially in this pandemic situation.

Visual Signs

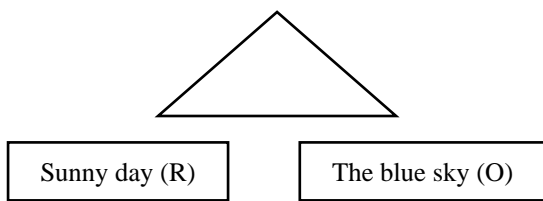


(Source: <https://youtube.com/>)

The eight scene of Dynamite music video was taken at a parking area in front of “Disco” building. The setting of situation in this part was in the middle of the day. All BTS members exist in this part. As can be seen on that scene, all members wearing jeans, blouses, and the pants type pirate. All those outfit represents 90s era; it was related to what have been mentioned by DeLong (2005:32) that jeans and blouse was dress that represented 90s.

The sky on that scene was colored blue. It represented the time setting of this part was in the middle of the day. on the sky there were also many white clouds, that giving a proof that day was sunny day. The blue sky was categorized as an index. The semiotic process of that visual sign was presented in a triadic model.

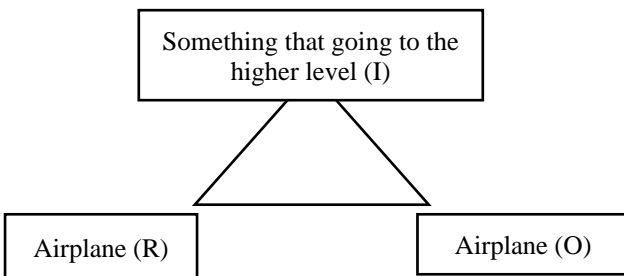
A day which full of
happiness (I)



According to the semiotic process above, it could be seen that the blue sky was an object that represent the sunny day. the blue sky in a part of object was an index. According to Pierce (in Candler, 2007) the manner in which the indicator conveys the referred concept is referred to as index/index. The sun is inclined to be perpendicular enough that its rays will reflect on the earth's surface without encountering any opposition; however, this minor resistance forces the sun's rays to be bent at a small angle, resulting in a blue color.

Blue was the color of the sky and the sea, and it reflected open space, creativity, ingenuity, depth, motivation, and awareness. Depth, trust, fidelity, integrity, knowledge, trust, stability, religion, heaven, and intellect were all represented by the color blue. According to the explanation above, the blue sky referred to the happiness that could make people strong, enjoy their life during pandemic situation that not finished yet. People have to put their awareness to avoid the spread of the virus. As blue reflected as a motivation, people also had to keep themselves well motivated to survive in this unstable condition. The knowledge of the pandemic virus was also needed in order to against the pandemic.

The airplane found around the parking area of the scene eight setting. It could be seen while the camera angle was from medium bottom that the shoot was focused on the airplane itself. The airplane was look big from the bottom, which indicated that it was just take off. The analysis of the airplane was explained as follows.

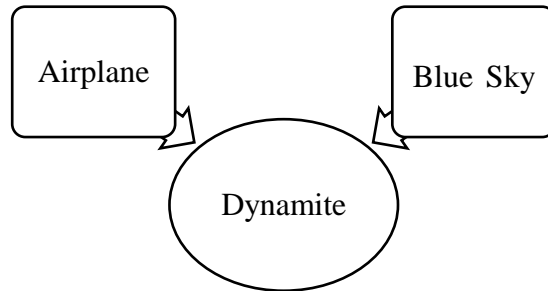


According to the semiotic process above, it could be found that the airplane was an object that represent its representamen. Airplane was categorized as an icon. It was a type in which the identifier was similar to or imitates the signified that had specific characteristics. As could be seen that airplane was a representamen of the airplane itself.

On that scene, the airplane was just take off, it was proofed by the size of its airplane. If it related to human life, at the take-off point, when the human spirit was fire to fulfill their goals, people try to understand them. Then they started climbing/pitching to realize all of his ambitions to earn the greatest star or distinction. It related to BTS itself when they stared to reach their dream as a worldwide boyband. They tried to reach something higher and tell everyone that they could make it all happen.

Taking pandemic as a background, the aimed of the airplane was to tell everyone even in the worst pandemic condition, people have to keep reaching their dreams. They had to try harder and keep the power full as an airplane that just take off.

The Relation Between Its Verbal and Visual Signs



According to the graphic above, the word “dynamite” was represented by the visual signs of blue sky and the airplane. Blue sky was the representation of “Dynamite” where its explosion could be so light as the blue sky on the sunny day. The airplane also represents a dynamite where airplane could fly high, and the dynamite explosion can be high too. This showed people that even in this pandemic, people have to keep their spirit and power as high as dynamite and reach their dream higher. While blue color represented pleasure, which might help people stay strong and enjoy their lives during a pandemic that had not yet ended. To prevent the virus from spreading, people must raise their awareness. People had to keep themselves motivated to live in this unstable situation, just as blue reflected as motivation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The finding showed that the lyric of the song has its conceptual and connotative meaning. Besides that, the visual signs of the music video in scene 8 showed the object was part of icon, index, and also symbol. From the analysis, it can be seen that there was a relation between the verbal and visual signs. The visual signs were an object, where the verbal was the representament of the object. Even though the verbal and visual signs was a different era of theme they still had its relation.

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