

AN ANALYSIS OF BTS'S SELECTED SONG LYRICS: A STUDY OF DENOTATIVE, CONNOTATIVE AND MYTH MEANING

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Abstract.

This Research is entitled "An Analysis of BTS's Selected Song Lyrics: A Study of Denotative, Connotative and Myth Meaning". The study is conducted to look at the meaning namely denotation and connotation as well as myth in these selected songs. The writer limits the research to only focus on 3 selected BTS songs. The writer used Roland Barthes's theory. By using the method, the meaning contained in the song lyrics can be described in detail by analyzing the meaning of denotation and connotation in the lyrics and also to find the myths about what is already formed. The writer uses a descriptive qualitative method in order to answer the research problem. The writer found that there are 9 sign systems for BTS Epiloque: Young Forever lyrics that regarding career pressures or a person's mental health condition particularly for K-pop idols, 9 sign systems for BTS Fire lyrics that relate to social class, especially in Korea that usually called spoon theory and 12 sign systems for BTS ON lyrics that show how the shadow self- began to appear.

Keywords: Lyrics, Denotative, Connotative, Myth, BTS, Barthes

INTRODUCTION

Analyzing song lyrics aims to understand the meaning by looking for signs that allow meaning to develop or to rise in the song. The meaning will be more complete if the reader or the listeners are able to understand the real context contained in the lyrics text or in the literary works. When it comes to verbal communication, one of the most efficient means of communication that is frequently employed is through music and songs. We can express various things with tone strains, whether we want to transmit stories, share ideas, send messages, or make criticisms. One of South Korea's top idol groups is BTS, or who also known as Beyond the Scene. BTS are a K-pop or Korean pop group made up of seven members there are Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook. Since their debut, BTS has used their songs to highlight social and political problems for example, the tough school system, the wealth gap, the pressure placed on our generation, mental illness, identity struggles, but ultimately, conveying the message of following your goals and self-acceptance or self-love.

Choosing BTS song is one of the researcher's decisions, because BTS is one of the most boyband the being a hot topic in the music industry. Many people love their music. BTS's songs contain a lot of meaning. It has its own magical lyrics that touch the listener's heart. They address the real-life condition to their songs. This reason brought the writer to choose one of their songs. To find out what is the real context of their songs that can touch a lot of people, even the one who used not listed to the music.

Based on the background which has been conveyed by the writer, the meaning of BTS selected song can be analyzed using various approaches, one of which is the use of semantic studies that are connected between denotative meaning and connotative meaning and also the meaning of myths as well, who plays certain messages that may be completely different from their original meaning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Semantics

Semantics according to Crystal (1991), is a field of study of linguistics that aims to explain the meaning and is regarded as the primary branch of linguistics focused on the study of meaning in language. Meaning, according to the generally recognized semantic theory, is an idea or definition that may be communicated from the speaker's mind to the listener's mind by expressing it in the form of one or more languages.

According to Lyon (1995), semantics is the study of meaning. In the theory of semantics, the word "meaning" may be described from the speaker's mind to the hearer's mind by encapsulating them, as it were, in the form of one language or another. If the term "meaning" is defined as "ideas or concepts," it will not assist us in answering this issue since the term "concept" is not clearly defined and is too ambiguous and generic. Furthermore, Lyons claims that the meaning of the term may not have the samerange of applicability as any single word in other languages.

The study of meaning, or semantics, lies at the heart of linguistic research into the nature of language and human language capacities. It is undeniable that semantics plays a critical role in comprehending and understanding a language, particularly English. According to Goddard (1998), semantics is concerned not only with the study of meaning but also with the link between language and culture.

The writer can conclude from the explanations above that in this study, the message is hidden in the vocabulary and framework of the language in order to create more specific meanings up to the highest level of sentence sense. Semantics is a technical term for the study of meaning, and semantics is a branch of linguistics because meaning is a part of the language.

b. Meaning

When we use semantics as the principal element of analysis or as the point to be observed, we are dealing with such kinds of meaning. Meaning is nothing other than something referent processed by words or lexemes. To determine a meaning can be done after it is in the form of a sentence. The association between words and their meanings is often subjective, as is the language itself. According to Leech (1974), we can differentiate between many sorts of meaning, explain how they all integrate into the overall influence of linguistic communication and demonstrate how various study approaches are appropriate for various types of meaning. As a result, Leech opted to divide meaning into seven components or meanings: conceptual, connotative, social, emotional, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings.

c. Roland Barthes theory of Denotative and Connotative

Barthes (1972) was a philosopher, critic, linguist, and semiotic theorist who was one of the key characters. Barthes has impacted the development of numerous schools of thought, including structuralism, semiotics, social theory, design, anthropology, mythology, and post-structuralism, among others. Barthes also has made a substantial contribution to structuralism and semiology, despite the fact that he did not avoid debate and criticism. He was regarded as a structuralist, following Saussaure's route with certain modifications and additions from a philosophical standpoint. According to Sobur (2009), Roland Barthes is one of the structuralist philosophers who is interested in model practice Saussuren linguistics and semiology.

In his study, Roland Barthes utilizes denotation, connotation, and myth to identify semiotics. The theory allows meaning or sign to be analyzed not just in terms of what is written, but also in terms of what may be learned from the myth. According to Fiske in Indiawan & Wibowo(2011), this theory has a two-stage significance. Roland Barthes' semiotics idea relies heavily on connotation. The significance of the first stage, according to Indiwan Seto (2011: 16-17), is the link between the signifier (language) and the signified (myth), which is a clear sign of the actual world. The basic stage of a connection, which Barthes refers to as the truest meaning of a sign or meaning, is called denotation. In general, denotation can be understood as literal or actual meaning, and it is sometimes misunderstood with reference or references.

The process of signification, also known as denotation, relates to the use of language that has a meaning that typically refers to what is stated or suggested. According to Sobur (2009), denotation is the first stage of the signification process in Roland Barthes' semiology, including the link between the signified and the signifier in a sign of the actual world. Signs can be checked in two different ways. The sign may be determined in the first order, which is signified and signifier order or usually divided into two categories those are meaning and significance.

The first order or categorized is a denotative order based on the literal interpretation of signs. Proceed to the second-order meaning, which is connotative meaning, after we have found the literal meaning, the cultural context is required for this second-order meaning. In Roland Barthes' semiotic interpretation process, the two categories individually reflect the language level and the myth level.

d. Myth

Myth, according to Barthes (1972) communication device, or a message; it is a way of meaning or signification rather than an object, concept, or idea. Mythologies conclude with a theoretical essay titled 'Myth Today,' which unifies and directs the collection of essays prospectively. The major purpose of this closing essay is to convey, in broader words, the connections between Barthes' different descriptive essays from the previous years. It doesn't add anything to our comprehension of the individual pieces, which are fine on their own. Its essential relevance comes from the fact that Barthes went to linguistics to explain how myth works and therefore established semiology.

Myth, according to Setiawan et al. (2008), is an engine through which an ideology can be manifested. Myths are mythologies that are serialized and play an essential part in cultural identity. However, according to Umar Yunus in Indiwan Seto (2011: 17), myths are developed not via research, but rather by assumptions based on generalized life, and therefore are more common in society. Roland Barthes' concept of myth is based on his belief that there is a message hidden behind these signs, which can eventually contribute to the formation of a myth.

In this idea, the myth is linked to connotative meanings. Or, to be more specific, sociologists of the society's message of culture or ideology. Reading the sign or symbol in our activities in readings or living our life gives people a different view on society. Overall, myth, according to Barthes, is the way of meaning rather than the term mythical in society.

e. The 4 Major Jungian Archetypes

In Theory of Personality, Carl Gustav Jung a Psychiatrists in (Schultz, 2009), thinks that human existence is directed by archetypes, which are primal pictures generated from a genetic origin. Archetypes are manifested or realized based on a variety of factors, including the individual's cultural and personal influences. Carl Gustav Jung divided people's archetypes into persona, shadow, anima, and anime, as well as the self.

1. Persona

Persona, according to Jung, defines who we want to be and how we want to be seen by others. The word "persona" comes from a Latin word that basically translates as "mask" but it can also be used figuratively to symbolize all of the many social masks we wear as we interact with different groups of people and situations. The term persona is now widely used in contemporary psychology and society. It is often employed in everyday speech, newspapers, and literary theory. This refers to individuals as they start to appear, not as they are in real life. A persona is a psychological and social construct that is used to achieve a certain goal.

2. Anima and Animus

Men and women, according to Stein (1998) have different types of sex in them. In males, the female archetype is known as the anima, whereas in women, the masculine archetype is known as the animus. In addition, according to Jung in Stein (1998:116), males are masculine hard, and aggressive on the surface and feminine soft and relational on the inside, whereas women are the polar opposite. Men's experiences with their mothers impact the anima, whereas women's experiences with their fathers influence the animus. If the person believes her father or mother has a bad impact on her, the anima or animus may manifest in a negative way.

3. Shadow

Shadows are problematic because they are formed up of a variety of motifs that support the underlying attitude rather than just one. Typically, these are motivations that others do not want to see, thus they are easily hidden and unnoticed. Envy, cold greed, and selfishness are among the motivations. Because the persona transmits its brilliant light inward the face of the other person viewing the person and receiving therapy, they are frequently effectively hidden from view.

f. The Shadow Self

Shadow is a dark and oppressive archetype that represents traits that individuals do not want to accept but attempt to hide from themselves and others. That Shadows are made up of morality, negative inclinations, and a variety of constructive and creative characteristics that individuals are afraid to confront (Jung in Feist and Feist, 2009: 107). This is to explain the shadow is a human dark side archetype that represents chaos and wildness.

Our shadow, on the other hand, is the complete opposite of our persona image. Every component of our character that we strive to show to the public is taken apart and kept in the shadows. If someone tries to make their persona look pleasant, helpful, and encouraging, the opposite of those traits are unfriendly, unhelpful, and discouraging individuals, become separated and stored in my shadow self.

g. Song Lyric

A song's intention is to stimulate someone's curiosity or enthusiasm. Song lyrics, namely a series of pitched words. Song lyrics can be obtained from events that inspire someone. Song lyrics can arise at any time when you say something about something. Lyrics are the most significant part of a song's life. An individual may express themselves through lyrics by voicing what they have seen, learned, and experienced.

The writer can conclude that the lyric mostly refers to a musically sung song. If we know how to find the meaning of an object, we will understand the meaning of song lyrics. As a result, semantics has been modified for use in deciding the meaning of song lyrics when it refers to the meaning of the language used by people to express the meaning of the intended phrases or meanings from the language.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative method is focused on phenomenology rather than logic, and experience content rather than quantity. As a consequence of this research, the writer prefers to observe what happens and occurs rather than what is fixed or organized. In this study, the research object are BTS's selected song lyrics. The lyrics used in this study are *Epilogue: Young Forever, Fire*, and *ON*.

The details are collected by write down the lyrics from their official YouTube, Big Hit Labels channel BTS song *ON* is about their fight to break free from clichés persona of the popular K-pop boyband and show their true character to the listener or to their fans. After that, the writer used the technique of taking notes while listening to the song and

writing the translated lyrics. Next, look for dominant words and underlines it that have

dominant connotative or hidden meanings in BTS'S ON lyrics, which are found in words, phrases, or sentences. After that, look for the mythical meaning of each song based on Barthes' theory. After analysing the lyrics, the data are descriptively examined using Rolland Barthes' theory of denotative and connotative meaning. Which may be divided into two categories those are meaning and significances. In Roland Barthes' semiotic interpretation process, the two categories individually reflect the language level and the myth level. Finally, the writer writes down the conclusion based on the results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research contains an analysis of data as well as a discussion of the findings. The data consists of songs by BTS that have been published on several albums. The data is classified in the analysis depending on the research problems stated in the previous chapter. The data are descriptively examined using Rolland Barthes' theory of denotative and connotative meaning. The data analysis below shows the interpretation of the sign system in the selected BTS's song lyrics. Signs can be checked in two different ways. The sign may be determined in the first order, which is signified and signifier order or usually divided into two categories those are meaning and significance.

In Roland Barthes' semiotic interpretation process, the two categories individually reflect the language level and the myth level. The first order or categorized is a denotative order based on the literal interpretation of signs. Proceed to the second-order meaning, which is connotative meaning, after we have found the literal meaning, the cultural context is required for this second-order meaning. In Roland Barthes' semiotic interpretation process, the two categories individually reflect the language level and the myth level.

Data analysis of BTS ON lyrics

Data 1

Data as a sign system: With each steps then again grows the shadow

Meanings (Language level): This lyric explains that every step taken must grow a <u>shadow</u>. Shadow comes when a lack of light behind an item or person facing a light source such as the sun.

Significances (Myth level): The more restricted and limited the society in which we live, the larger our shadow will become.

Analysis:

The writer's analysis is that as people grow, their shadows will get larger. This is connected to the previous lyric, which shows how the character being monitored, does not understand what other people are saying and unsure who to listen to.

Data 2

Data as a sign system: The shadows resembles me, Is it the shadow that's shaking, Or is it my feet that are trembling

Meanings (Language level): When one item or person looks like another, they are said to <u>resemble</u>. And these lyrics explains the question as if to guess whether the

character "me" here has his shadow that is similar to him or that his shadow is shaking or his legs are trembling.

Significances (Myth level): Humans' evil side is reflected in shadows. It is the first step or journey in the self-individuation process. Shaking here means you are recognizing and processing trauma and shadow.

Analysis:

This explains that the songwriter wants to shows the basic human or individual character that can be seen by ourselves which is related to our dark side.

Data 3

Data as a sign system: Awkwardly I flow, I fly together with the black wind

Meanings (Language level): There is the character "I" here who trying to fly together with the <u>black wind</u>. Black wind usually has a dark aura. But it seems that is difficult to handle, or not used to it that is why "I" here feeling awkward.

Significances (Myth level): 'black wind', is an imaginative metaphor that manages to capture like the shadow. The shadow-self or shadow is a buddy who should be welcomed rather than avoided. When you run from your shadow-self, you are

Analysis:

The writer analyzes how song writer wants like forcing us to try to make peace or deal with ourselves because this part of shadow is also part of us as human being.

running from yourself.

Data 4

Data as a sign system: Gotta stay insane to stay sane

Meanings (Language level): Sometimes what people consider normal is crazy if you think about it and vice versa. It is hard to live in this crazy world without going <u>insane</u>. **Significances (Myth level):** Accepting our own shadow is the next stage. In order to control it, we have to recognize what its importance is and what its purpose is. Dive into the shadows to get to know ourselves and live with them.

Analysis:

The narrator or songwriter in this lyrics trying to invite us to dive into our pain to know ourselves and grow, it is the logical thing to do, while those who decide not to do this and living life as it has been given to them are the true "nuts" or insane.

Data 5

Data as a sign system: Throw myself whole into both worlds

Meanings (Language level): In this lyrics myself refers to the character "I". The character "I" here asks to throw himself completely into <u>both worlds</u>. Both world is

a condition in which you can profit from the advantages of two totally different things at the same time.

Significances (Myth level): Two different worlds coming from two opposite poles. To achieve self-actualization, one must completely incorporate both their shadow and their persona, without over-identifying with or neglecting one or the other. Persona is the way you act, speak, and interact with others that leads others to see you as a certain type of person. And you need to incorporate with both without over identifying with or neglecting one or the other.

Analysis:

The writer analyzes this lyrics like when you immerse yourself in an activity, you begin to devote all of your energy and attention to it. And here the songwriter giving you two option but in the end you must choose both because it is lead you to become a better person. If our persona is our public face, our shadow is our hidden face, as it is mostly our inner face. Our shadow is formed by the portion or function of ourselves that is hidden, denied, or ignored. The persona and shadow have a symbiotic relationship. Someone who has always put on a cheerful face but has been traumatized, for example, may experience great and deep sadness or cry for no apparent cause.

Data 6

Data as a sign system: Can't hold me down cuz you know I'm a fighter, Carried myself into this beautiful prison

Meanings (Language level): The character "I" in these lyrics claimed to be a <u>fighter</u>, and nothing will stop him from reaching to the <u>beautiful prison</u>. But usually, prison is being used for criminals that imprisoned as a kind of punishment.

Significances (Myth level): Other things that we are scared to face can be found in the shadows. According to Jung, we must all continue to search for our shadow. The first test of our courage will be dealing with the dark side. This is due to the fact that people will be unable to avoid understanding shadows.

Analysis:

The writer analyzes how the songwriter trying to show the success and aspirations has developed, the weight of the pressure grew as well. Perhaps the songwriter described this scenario as a beautiful prison. Rather than escape from this prison they decided to go inside.

Data 7

Data as a sign system: Bring the pain, It'll become my blood and flesh

Meanings (Language level): In these lyrics, the "I" character requests or asks that he be given <u>the pain</u> that will turn into his own <u>flesh and blood</u>. Flesh and blood is a term used to describe someone in your family, particularly someone who is connected to you through blood rather than marriage.

Significances (Myth level): Pain here means shadow. Despite the fact that it is scary, we as humans must come to embrace and accept the shadow of ourselves since it is, after all, a part of us.

Analysis:

The writer analyzes how the songwriter here who indirectly suggests us that we can control our shadows or our pain. Controlled here is explained by flesh and blood which must have been united with us. If our control is good it is possible that we will live better.

Data 8

Data as a sign system: My air and my light in the dark, The power of the things that make me, "me"

Meanings (Language level): Here, the "I" character obtains the power that makes him indirectly, including <u>the air and light</u> he has. Power means a person's ability to perform, act, do, or accomplish anything.

Significances (Myth level): Self-acceptance comes when we as humans are able to accept ourselves totally, even our dark side (shadow).

Analysis:

The writer analyzes this lyrics that how accepting this shadows will help someone grow as people and turn out they will not scared of the pain or facing their shadow. It is a big fight for individual or for human beings who are trying to deal with this shadow and one thing for sure is you have the "me" who has the capacity to go insane in order to stay sane.

Data 9

Data as a sign system: Even if I fall, I come right up, scream, That's how we've always been, Even if my knees drop to the ground, As long as they don't get buried, It won't matter

Meanings (Language level): In these lyrics, the character "I" here tries not to give up because even he <u>falls or his knees drop on the ground</u> he will come right up. Come right up is simply a throwaway phrase and the same as 'as soon as possible'. "We've" here seems to refers to him and his group members. How we've always been means, is a common method of expressing that whatever you are referring to, whether it an action or a word, is or has been in a certain condition or location over an extended length of time.

Significances (Myth level): Based on Jung's theory, he believed that humans are on a spiritual journey to realize their true selves. He claimed that this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for humans. This is referred to as the individuation process. It is a long journey that contains all personal obstacles and challenges as well as many social unconscious patterns.

Analysis:

The writer analyzes this lyrics that the songwriter are willing to put up a fight in order to keep this situation or whatever people have been through. Even when things appear to be going badly, in here seems they are invites us to not to determined to fight back.

Data 10

Data as a sign system: Whatever you say, Whatever they say, I don't give a uhh Meanings (Language level): The "I" character in these lyrics tries not to worry about what you or they say about him especially when they urge him to agree with them or do something.

Significances (Myth level): Please keep in mind that shadow-self will arise when a trigger element is present. The first time this self-shadow appears, it is due to triggering factors such as criticism and other people's comments that bring you down.

Analysis:

This lyrics contains one of a number of slang phrases for an emotional state of indifference. A harsher, more arrogant way of stating "*I do not actually care*." That is to say, like for example, whatever someone are talking about or have someone's attention, but that person not interested enough to have an opinion one way or the other. But, it may be essential to emphasize this state with the approved person and tone of focus on occasion.

Data 11

Data as a sign system: Where my pain lies, Let me take a breath, My everythin', My blood and tears, Got no fears, I'm singin' ohhhhh, Oh I'm takin' over

Meanings (Language level): When you say anything involves <u>blood, sweat, and tears</u>, you are implying that it is a difficult task that takes a lot of effort. And the "I" character here has tried everything with all the abilities he has to not to be afraid anymore and ready to <u>taking over</u>.

Significances (Myth level): You may put a stop to your continual struggle with yourself and achieve amazing transforming healing via shadow work. Your inner and outward worlds change drastically as your potential to be genuinely alive develops.

Analysis:

It is more of a declaration or a statement that the character "I" here is going to exist where his pain is, embracing it rather than being scared of it.

Data 12

Data as a sign system: Choosing to descend into the dark abyss

Meanings (Language level): In these lyrics explain that decided to choose to descend into the <u>dark abyss</u>. Dark abyss here means a never-ending black hole capable of consuming all that comes its way, including people and all light.

Significances (Myth level): We recover the treasure of life by falling into the abyss. According to Campbell, when faced with the most difficult challenges, you will also find your greatest treasures. Accept the challenge because something wonderful will definitely result from it that. If we deal with our shadow the results are in a stronger sense of wholeness and balance. You grow in maturity, peacefulness, and have more self-confidence.

Analysis:

The writer analyzes this lyric as the end of the formed the self- shadow. Which in the end all suffering, fear, or things that are difficult to pass must always overcome in it. This is explained by the dark abyss.

According to Barthes, the denotative meaning or real meaning of a word may be determined by following the objectives stated in a dictionary. The obtained of denotative meaning found in "ON" lyrics is about how the narrator or the character in the lyrics at first starts to have a confused mind, scared of the shadows, until accepting it and asking for more pain to be able to grow. After analyzing the lyrics of the song "ON" as a whole, especially myth level which substantially refers to connotation or hidden meaning where the significances of the terminologies are built in relation to its myth. The writer discovered the emphases to be delivered by taking a common thread from the entire "ON" lyrics that indirectly relate to the real objective of the person, according to Carl Jung, is completeness, not perfection. Integrating those aspects of our soul that have been suppressed and rejected for too long elements that make up what Jung called the shadow side of our subconscious – is the way to the stronger character and a more effective attitude to life.

Shadow is a word used in psychology to describe aspects of ourselves that we may strive to hide or ignore. Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist, and psychologist, created and researched the term. Shadows will always follow you around, whether you choose to fly high in the sky or hide yourself up in the deepest depths of the earth. People, words, doubts, insecurities, rivals, friends, ages, failures, achievements, and so on are all examples of shadows (Stein, 1943:101). The following is an example of shadows: all uncivilized desires and emotions that suit our societal norms and personality ideals, all that we are embarrassed by, all that we do not want to know about ourselves are contained in shadows. But the most essential picture is of yourself, which has the ability to make life decisions, abilities, and ambitions, or it may cross these shadows, which will grow larger until they swallow and prison your soul. More persons are denying their

existence, then what will happen next is their personalities are being destroyed and taken over.

CONCLUSION

In the process of interpreting the sign system, it is necessary to consider the fact that the sign system's meaning is determined by language conventions (denotation) and literary conventions (connotation). Based on the findings and discussion the results of data analysis show that there are 12 sign systems for BTS ON lyrics. Because there are two levels of sign, there are language level (meaning) and myth level (significance), Roland Barthes' semiotics is the finest method for comprehending the sign system. The sign system displayed is basically clearly displayed at the second level significance (Myth level). BTS ON is a song of a declaration. In Jungian psychology, the shadow represents or symbolizes something hidden inside the subconscious self, an internal conflict, dark and damaging. When a person ignores the existence of the shadow and fails to deal with it, it continues to represent the negativities following.

This study showed that in BTS songs contain some the career pressures or a person's mental health condition, which everybody needs to know. Their songs would help someone when they are in tough condition. This song is not only song that would entertain the listener. BTS's song has magic beyond the lyrics.

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