

An Analysis of Theme and Message in Niki Zefanya's Selected Songs' Lyric on 'Nicole' Album

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Abstract

Songs are one of the things that are timeless and known by almost everyone in the world. The song itself consists of various elements, including song lyrics, musical arrangements, themes, and messages. The purpose of this study was to analyze the theme and message in Niki Zefanya's selected songs' lyric on 'Nicole' album. This research used qualitative descriptive methods to gain a deep understanding of the themes and messages in Niki Zefanya's selected songs' lyric. The data were analyzed using studies of themes and messages in song lyrics. From the results of data analysis, it was found that the song High School in Jakarta raised the theme of high school life, Keeping Tabs had theme of regret, Oceans & Engines had theme of heartbreak. The message in the song High School in Jakarta is listeners should enjoy high school. Keeping Tabs advises caution in choosing a heart tether. Oceans & Engines teaches to let go the departure of a loved one.

Keywords: Message; Niki Zefanya; Song Lyric; Theme.

1. Introduction

Language is a sound system that has meanings, symbolic sounds, and is spoken from an arbitrary human system in situations used as a mean of communication (Fowler, 2022). For humans, language not only functions as a mean of communication, whether written or spoken, but language also serves to convey information, messages, ideas, opinions, and thoughts to others that can be channeled through various media. The media can be journals, articles, poems, even songs (Waruwu. et al, 2022). Songs are one of the things that are timeless and known by almost everyone in the world.

For some people, song can be an entertainer in times of sadness. Through songs, we can feel various experiences, both we have experienced and we have never felt before. The song is created as a bridge between the singer and the listener. The song is a blend of music and lyrics, which is the simplest way to describe it (Alfiyani, 2021). The song itself consists of various elements, including song lyrics, musical arrangements, themes, and messages (Swarniti, 2022).

As an important part of a song, the lyrics of the song are certainly written carefully

and thoughtfully. The lyrics in the song are presented in a beautiful, unique language, and not infrequently also use figurative language. Through song lyrics, singers also often insert themes or messages that they want to convey to listeners (Sari&Yusuf, 2020). However, the themes and messages in the song sometimes cannot be captured directly by the listener. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an analysis to find out the theme and message that the singer wants to convey to the listener.

Nowadays, there are so many songs circulating in the society. Some of these songs have unique and interesting lyrics to analyze, one of which is songs from Niki Zefanya. Nicole Zefanya or who is familiarly called Niki is a young singer from Indonesia who is currently having a career in the United States. Niki is a member of 88Rising and has released several albums, namely Zephyr, want to take this downtown?, Moonchild, Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, Nicole, Live at the wiltern, and Buzz.

Niki is known for always writing all songs she released. In her album, Nicole, there are some songs that are interesting because they are written based on personal experience. The songs are titled High School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, and Oceans & Engines. Therefore, the author is interested in doing an analysis of theme and message in Niki Zefanya's selected songs' lyric on 'Nicole' album.

In writing this article, the author uses a study of themes and messages in song lyrics. Themes and messages are elements that build a song (Sari&Yusuf, 2020). According to Brooke (2021), theme is one of the major textual systems that underlie a literary work. Theme is a part of the human experience. The theme in the song can be in the form of a story, a depiction of something, a form of emotion expression, a depiction of a person's character, or a combination of these things. Meanwhile, the message is a moral value that the creator wants to convey to the listener (Mao, 2023). In literary works, including songs, most of the message is conveyed implicitly (Suwartini, et al., 2022). However, it is also common to convey explicitly. In an effort to capture the theme and message in a song, the listener must interpret through the lyrics conveyed by the author. Based on the background of study, the problem of this study can be stated as follow: (1) What is the theme contained in Niki Zefanya's selected songs' lyric on 'Nicole' album?, and (2) What is the message contained in Niki Zefanya's selected songs' lyric on 'Nicole' album?

2. Research Method

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. This research method is also called the naturalistic research method (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research, in the opinion of Vanderstoep and Johnston (2008), aids in a deeper comprehension. It so becomes the appropriate methodology for this study. The purpose of the study was to analyze the themes and messages in some songs from Niki Zefanya in Nicole's album. The data is taken from the lyrics of a song entitled High

School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, and Oceans & Engines which was officially published by the singer, Niki, on the Spotify platform. The duration for each song is 3 minutes and 39 seconds, 2 minutes and 57 seconds, and 5 minutes and 36 seconds.

In order to get the data, the writer conducted certain actions, including listening to the song, reading the lyrics, and taking some notes. While for the data analysis, the steps are to identify the theme and the message that are used in the song, sort out the themes and messages in the lyrics of Niki Zefanya's song to address the research question, enter the data into a predetermined table, and summarize the findings of the analysis of themes and messages in the lyric of Niki Zefanya's song.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

In this study, the author analyzed the theme and message in the lyrics of Niki Zefanya's selected song in the 'Nicole' album. The theme and message analyzed are contained in Niki Zefanya's songs in the album 'Nicole' entitled High School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, and Oceans & Engines. The themes and messages of the three songs are presented in the following table 1 and 2:

Table 1. Theme in Niki Zefanya's Selected Songs' Lyric on 'Nicole' Album

No.	Title of Song	Theme
1.	High School in Jakarta	The theme in the lyrics of this song is the story of a flashback to the high school period experienced by the singer. Overall, the lyrics in this song tell the story of love, heartbreak, and various memories of high school.
2.	Keeping Tabs	The theme in the lyrics of this song is the regret of a woman who has liked a man secretly. This regret occurs because it turns out that the man has many bad qualities that were previously unknown by the woman.
3.	Oceans & Engines	The theme in the lyrics of this song is someone who has a broken heart. The dominant story in the lyrics of this song is about a person who has not been willing to let go of love and memories after the departure of a loved one.

Table 2. Message in Niki Zefanya's Selected Songs' Lyric on 'Nicole' Album

No.	Title of Song	Message
1.	High School in Jakarta	The message conveyed in the lyrics of this song is that we must enjoy our high school days, because high school only happens once during our lifetime.
2.	Keeping Tabs	The message in the lyrics of this song is to be careful before falling in love with someone, recognize the background and

- habits in his/her daily life, so we won't regret when living a relationship.
3. Oceans & Engines The message in the lyrics of this song is an implicit advice to be strong and sincere when someone we loved leaves.
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3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Theme in Niki Zefanya's Selected Songs' Lyric on 'Nicole' Album

The theme in Niki's song entitled High School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, and Oceans & Engines is conveyed in distinctive language. In writing song lyrics, Niki often inserts figurative language in it (Alfiyani, 2021). In the song High School in Jakarta, the theme raised is the story during high school judging from the title of the song. This is in line with the opinion of Baptista&Gradim (2020) that the theme/subject matter of a reading can be inserted in a title that is interesting and evocative of the reader. As for the theme related to the love story of high school in this song, it can be seen from the lyrics of 'but I loved you harder'. The lyric of the song 'I hated you and I hoped to God that you knew' shows an expression of hatred for heartbreak. There are also memories like high school students in general in this song, such as group work as outlined in the lyrics of 'Got a group assignment, I'll be at Vall's place'.

Meanwhile, Niki's song entitled Keeping Tabs carries the theme of regret. This regret is expressed in straightforward language in the lyrics of the song. As expressed by Simanjuntak and Sutrisno (2022) that denotative words in lyrics can describe the theme of a song. The regret of loving someone who has bad habit is illustrated in the lyric 'I wish I never met you, you are the worst thing that I'm still keeping tabs for some stupid reason'. In this song, the singer also expresses feelings of sadness because her expectations about her loved ones so far have turned out to be wrong, as the lyric 'Sad, imagined fantasy of who you could be'.

The next song is Oceans & Engines. This song has a theme of heartbreak. This theme is expressed in lyric verses that show sadness, fear, loss of hope, and trying to give up. This is in line with the opinion of Rosdiana (2014) that the theme of heartbreak in a song can be expressed by exploring feelings, such as feelings of anger, disappointment, sadness, useless conviction, lost expectation, and so on. The feeling of sadness is depicted in the lyrics 'Crying I don't want you to go'. While for the feeling of fear, we can see in the lyric 'But no fears under the still and clear indigo'. The singer also described his lost hope through the lyrics 'You've lost all solid ground'. However, in this song, Niki also tries to let go the departure of her loved ones through the lyrics 'But I'm letting go, I'm giving up the ghost'.

3.2.2 Message in Niki Zefanya's Selected Songs' Lyric on 'Nicole' Album

The message in the selected song on the album 'Nicole' created and sung by Niki Zefanya is conveyed implicitly and explicitly. In an effort to understand the message in

a song, readers or interpreters of song lyrics must read the lyrics of the song carefully and passionately (Siregar, 2022). In the song entitled High School in Jakarta, the singer tries to convey a message to enjoy high school, as the lyrics of 'Could've ended different, then again we went to high school in Jakarta'. The singer explicitly revealed that high school is difficult, but there are many memories of high school that will be missed when we grow up.

While in the song entitled Keeping Tabs, the message expressed is an advice to be careful before doing a relationship with someone. In accordance with the opinion of Moran (2024), the message in the song can be in the form of advice, appeal, invitation, or life lessons that can be taken from the lyrics read. On the lyric 'So, I wish you well and I wish you far away, this was never real, I'll say it 'til I believe it', the singer implicitly begins to realize her guilt for falling in love with a bad guy and giving a message to listeners not to do the same.

As for the song called Oceans & Engines, the message conveyed is an advice to be strong when someone we love leaves. The message in this song is conveyed implicitly and explicitly. According to opinion of Fata&Apriliya (2021), the message can be expressed by the author through the lyrics of the song implicitly or explicitly. The implicit message on this song is set forth in the lyrics 'I know I'll be alright, someday I'll be fine'. The singer seeks to strengthen herself and also strengthen the hearts of listeners. As for the explicit message expressed in the lyrics 'This is the last falsetto I'll ever sing to you, my great, lost love'. In the lyric, Niki advised to let go the departure of the love that has been lost.

4. Conclusion

From the results of data analysis, a different theme was found in Niki Zefanya's song entitled High School in Jakarta, Keeping Tabs, and Oceans & Engines. The song High School in Jakarta carries the theme of high school life, Keeping Tabs had theme of regret, Oceans & Engines had theme of heartbreak. Similarly to the message, these three songs have their own message to the listener. The message in the song is conveyed implicitly and explicitly. High School in Jakarta contains a message for listeners to enjoy high school. Keeping Tabs advises caution in choosing a heart tether. While Oceans & Engines teaches to let go the departure of a loved one.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Drs. Budi Susatyo, M. Pd as the lecturer of the paper writing course. Thanks to the assignment he gave, the author was able to complete an article which the author then published in ICONEST. The author would also like to thank Dr. Christina IT Panggabean, M. Pd. as the author's supervisor in improving this

article so that it becomes more feasible. Not to forget, the author also thanked Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe for providing a research place.

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