

A Semantic Analysis on Song Lyrics of Hillsong Worships

Analisis Semantic Lirik Lagu Hillsong Worships

Clara Bethesda Sigit¹, I Nengah Laba^{2*}, Putu Chrisma Dewi³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Universitas Dhyana Pura, Bali, Indonesia

(*) Corresponding Author: laba@denpasarinstitute.com

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Abstract

This thesis examines the semantic richness of Hillsong Worship lyrics using a unified framework. This study employed John Lyons' theory of contextual meaning in conjunction with Geoffrey Leech's theory of type of meanings to produce a nuanced interpretation that considers the praise music genre and the distinctive qualities of Hillsong Worship. This study looked at how Hillsong Worship uses language to identify its position in the larger Christian music scene, build a feeling of community, and connect emotionally with listeners in addition to providing knowledge about faith. It did this by using the library research approach. This analysis will show how seemingly simple lyrics can have several meaning levels that impact listeners cognitively, emotionally, and socially. The four Hillsong Worship songs that were used as the data have every type of meaning identified by Leech's theory: conceptual, connotative, collocative, social, affective, reflective, and thematic meaning. The songwriter also employs multiple terms with implied meanings in the lyrics. Furthermore, there are thirteen contexts of subject matter, three contexts of person, three contexts of place, five contexts of time, one context of formality, and five contexts of mood.

Kata kunci:

Hillsong Worship,
Jenis Makna, Lirik
Lagu, Makna
Kontekstual,
Semantik

Abstrak

Skripsi ini meneliti mengenai kekayaan semantic dari lirik-lirik lagu Hillsong Worship dengan menggunakan sebuah kerangka kerja terpadu. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori John Lyons tentang makna kontekstual yang dikombinasikan dengan teori Geoffrey Leech tentang jenis makna untuk menghasilkan interpretasi bernuansa yang mempertimbangkan genre musik pujian dan kualitas khas Hillsong Worship. Penelitian ini melihat bagaimana Hillsong Worship menggunakan bahasa untuk mengidentifikasi posisinya dalam kancah musik Kristen yang lebih besar, membangun rasa kebersamaan, dan terhubung secara emosional dengan pendengarnya, serta memberikan pengetahuan tentang iman. Hal ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan. Analisis ini menunjukkan bagaimana lirik yang tampaknya sederhana dapat memiliki beberapa tingkat makna yang berdampak pada pendengar secara kognitif, emosional, dan sosial. Empat lagu Hillsong Worship yang digunakan sebagai data memiliki setiap jenis makna yang diidentifikasi oleh teori Leech: makna konseptual, konotatif, kolokatif, sosial, afektif, reflektif, dan tematik. Penulis lagu juga menggunakan beberapa istilah dengan makna tersirat dalam liriknya. Selain itu, terdapat tiga belas konteks subjeck, tiga konteks orang, tiga konteks tempat, lima konteks waktu, dan lima konteks suasana hati.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is defined as the study of language systems (Brinton 2000: 10). In its development, linguistics has branches of science that focus on the types of objects and approaches studied. O'Grady & Dobrovolsky (1992:10) divide linguistics into several components namely phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Phonology is the study that seeks to discover the general principles underlying sound patterns in human language (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky 1992:57), morphology is the system of categories and rules involved in word formation and interpretation (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky 1992:115), syntax is the study of how words are combined to produce sentences (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky 1992:155) and semantics is the study of meaning in human language (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky 1992:229).

The study of meaning is the common definition of semantics (Lyons 1977:1). Semantics, according to Hurford, Heasley & Smith (2007: 1), is the study of meaning in language; by Yule (2010: 112), it is the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. Semantics is a field of linguistics that examines the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences, according to the definitions given above. The interesting realm of how meaning is constructed within a language system and how humans comprehend language is explored in depth. Semantics studies how thoughts and concepts are formed in our minds by the combination of sounds and symbols (phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences). It investigates how language interpretation is influenced by our mental images of the environment, which are affected by our experiences and prior knowledge. Semantics also examines how grammar, syntax, and pragmatics—the rules and customs of a given language—affect the way meaning is constructed.

In this study, the researcher was discussing semantics related to the meaning of words. This research focuses on Hillsong Worship's songs as the object of research.

Founded in 1983 by the Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia, Hillsong Worship is a praise and worship group. With their upbeat melodies and sentimental lyrics centered around themes of faith, praise, and devotion, they have emerged as one of the most significant forces in Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), contributing to the style of contemporary worship music. Their songs are well-known for having catchy melodies and frequently have soaring vocals and a full band feel. The lyrics display adoration for God, reliance on his grace, and the transformational power of faith, with worship and praise serving as the central themes. The emphasis on human experiences and modern topics has struck a chord with a broad audience, catapulting Hillsong Worship songs onto mainstream charts. The music of Hillsong Worship is becoming a staple in Christian worship services all around the world, cutting over boundaries of nationality and culture.

St. Augustine once said that singing is equal to three prayers. So in modern times, many spiritual songs are also used as a means of prayer. In the lyrics of spiritual songs, many meanings can be used to express gratitude or longing to come to worship God. Sometimes the lyrics of spiritual songs are quite difficult to understand. Therefore, the researcher decided to research and analyze the meaning contained in the lyrics of Hillsong Worship's spiritual songs. Sometimes the lyrics of spiritual songs are quite difficult to understand. Therefore, the researcher decided to research and analyze the meaning contained in the lyrics of Hillsong Worship's spiritual songs namely *What a Beautiful Name*, *O Praise The Name*, *Through It All*, and *Even When It Hurts*.

METHOD

The data used in this study is the lines of lyrics in terms of words, phrases, and sentences that had contextual meaning from Hillsong Worship's songs. Furthermore, the data source is taken from the album *Let There Be Light* with "What a Beautiful Name" as selected song, the album *Open Heaven* with "O Praise The Name" as the selected song, the album *Blessed* with "Through It All" as selected song, and the album *Empires* with "Even When It Hurst" as selected song. All the lyrics were retrieved from Hillsong Worship's website.

Library research was the method and source of data employed in this investigation. According to George (2008), the library research method is a way of gathering information by looking at and comprehending information that is directly related to topics found in books, theories, and documents. Information is gathered as primary data. First, the researcher finds all the data sources by retrieving the lyrics of the selected songs from the website <https://www.azlyrics.com>. Second, identifying words, phrases, and sentences that meet the criteria of types of meaning and the contextual meaning of every lyric and which type of meaning it is.

Descriptive qualitative approaches were intended to be used for the qualitative analysis of the acquired data. The lingual equivalent method was one such technique. Mahsun (2012) claims that this method has the same meaning as the word appeal, and it was concluded that the word equivalent would mean comparing because "something compared" was interpreted to contain the meaning of connectedness. The researcher will listen while reading the lyrics of four selected songs to classify the type of meaning of each lyric of all the selected songs. Focusing on the lines of lyrics to find the data, words, and phrases, that can be identified to contain contextual meaning. The final step is to conclude from the results obtained after all data processing has been completed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

According to Leech's theory, seven types of meaning can be found in a text, including within song lyrics. An analysis of these types of meanings will provide a deeper understanding of how Hillsong Worship conveys messages and meanings through their musical works. By understanding the variety of meanings used, new insights will be opened into the spiritual experiences and values that Hillsong Worship seeks to convey to its listeners.

A. Type of Meaning Used in Hillsong Worship's Songs

This research discussed the types of meanings utilized in Hillsong Worship songs according to Leech's theory of meaning. Leech's theory states that texts, including song lyrics, can have seven different kinds of meanings. Analyzing these types of meanings provided a deeper understanding of how Hillsong Worship conveys messages and meanings through their musical works.

Data 1 is a song from Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name", that contains Conceptual meaning, the bold words are:

You were the **Word at the beginning**
One with God the Lord Most High
Your hidden glory in creation
Now, revealed in You our Christ
(Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

"Word at the beginning" falls into the category of Conceptual Meaning because the phrase refers to a concept or idea directly related to the literal or conceptual understanding of the words used. In this context, "Word" is not merely interpreted literally as words or speech but as a representation of a deeper concept, namely Jesus Christ in Christian theology. The concept of Jesus as the "Word" carries rich connotations, encompassing the idea of His existence since the beginning of the creation of the universe and His role as the divine manifestation of God. The use of the phrase "Word at the beginning" also raises questions about the conceptual meaning of the word "beginning." In the context of the song lyrics, "beginning" refers to the start of the creation of the universe, highlighting Jesus' role since that moment. This reflects the understanding that Jesus Christ is not merely a historical figure who emerged at a certain point in time but is also a principle that has existed since the beginning of everything. This portrayal aligns with the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is the Lord who existed before all things and holds control over everything (Colossians 1:17, "He is before all things, and in him, all things hold together").

Data 2 is a song from Hillsong Worship "O Praise the Name", that contains Connotative meaning, the bold words are:

O praise the Name of the Lord our God
O praise His Name forevermore

For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
(Hillsong Worship "O Praise the Name"/stanza 3)

Analysis:

In the phrase "O praise the Name of the Lord our God," connotative meaning is abundant as it triggers deep emotional and spiritual associations beyond its surface-level interpretation. The use of "O praise" invokes a sense of reverence, adoration, and exaltation. It conveys a feeling of awe and respect towards the subject being praised, which in this case is "the Name of the Lord our God." The term "Lord" carries connotations of authority, power, and divine sovereignty, evoking feelings of submission and reverence towards a higher being. Similarly, "God" is laden with profound spiritual and religious significance, representing the divine deity worshipped in Christianity. The combination of "Lord" and "God" intensifies the connotative depth, emphasizing the divine nature and majesty of the subject.

Data 3 is a song from Hillsong Worship "Through It All", that contains Collocative meaning, the bold words are:

You are forever in my life
You see me through the seasons
Cover me with Your hand
And lead me in Your righteousness
And I look to You
And I wait on You
(Hillsong Worship "Through It All"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

In the lyrics provided, phrases like "I look to You" exemplify collocative meaning by forming cohesive and meaningful expressions that convey a deeper sense of connection and reliance on a higher power. The phrase "I look to You" combines the verb "look" with the preposition "to" and the pronoun "You" to create a unified expression of seeking guidance, support, or strength from a divine entity, often associated with God. This collocation carries significant symbolic and emotional weight within religious worship and spiritual devotion.

Data 4 is a song from Hillsong Worship "Through It All", that contains Social meaning, the bold words are:

I'll sing to You, Lord
A hymn of love
For Your faithfulness to me
I'm carried in everlasting arms
You'll never let me go
(Hillsong Worship "Through It All"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

Social meanings are embedded in the communal aspect of religious worship portrayed in the lyrics. The collective expressions of praise and devotion, exemplified by phrases like

"A hymn of love," illuminate the shared experience of faith within a community and the social dynamics that shape religious practices. In the provided lyrics, the phrase "A hymn of love" signifies a musical composition or song dedicated to expressing affection, reverence, or devotion, particularly within religious worship. This collocation carries a rich social significance, reflecting the communal nature of religious gatherings where believers come together to collectively express their faith and devotion to a divine entity, often through the medium of music and song. the phrase "A hymn of love" embodies the social dimension of religious worship, highlighting the interconnectedness of believers and their shared spiritual journey. By participating in the singing of hymns, individuals contribute to a collective expression of faith and devotion, fostering a sense of unity, belonging, and shared identity within the religious community.

Data 5 is a song from Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name", that contains Affective meaning, the bold words are:

You didn't want heaven without us
So Jesus, You brought heaven down
My sin was great, Your love was greater
What could separate us now?
(Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name"/stanza 3)

Analysis:

In the lyrics "My sin was great, Your love was greater," there is an expression that reflects a sense of guilt and acknowledgment of great sin, yet accompanied by feelings of joy and gratitude for God's grace. This phrase depicts an understanding of human sins, but also demonstrates faith in God's love that surpasses all sins. Thus, through this expression, a mixed feeling of sorrow for sin and joy for the forgiveness offered by Jesus Christ is conveyed. Expressions of emotions in lyrics like this also create an emotional connection between the singer and the listener. When a singer sings emotionally charged phrases like these, listeners tend to experience the same feelings or at least absorb the emotions conveyed in the lyrics. This strengthens the emotional bond between them and enhances the listening experience of the song.

Data 6 is a song from Hillsong Worship "Even When It Hurts", that contains Reflective meaning, the bold words are:

And my heart burns only for You
You are all, You are all I want
And my soul waits only for You
And I will sing 'til the morning has come
(Hillsong Worship "Even When It Hurts"/stanza 2)

Analysis:

The line "And my soul waits only for You" encapsulates a sense of patient anticipation and introspection, inviting the listener to contemplate the depth of their spiritual longing and devotion. It suggests a state of readiness and expectation, wherein the singer's soul is singularly focused on awaiting the divine presence of God. This sentiment encourages the

listener to pause and reflect on the significance of their spiritual yearnings and aspirations. Furthermore, the phrase “waits only you” signifies a state of longing and complete reliance. The singer’s soul is not seeking fulfillment or purpose from anything else but only from God.

Data 7 is a song from Hillsong Worship “Through It All”, that contains thematic meaning, the bold words are:

You are forever in my life
You see me through the seasons
Cover me with Your hand
And lead me in Your righteousness
And I look to You
And I wait on You
(Hillsong Worship “Through It All”/stanza 1)

Analysis:

The phrase “You are forever in my life” highlights the theme of God's eternal presence in the singer's life, reflecting a belief in His timeless existence. In these lyrics, “forever” implies the concept of eternity or perpetuity, referring to the fact that God is always present in every aspect of one's life, without limitation of time or condition. The phrase reflects the singer's deep conviction in the faithfulness and consistent presence of God, even in all circumstances and life events.

B. Contextual Meaning Used in Hillsong Worship’s Songs

According to Lyons' theory of contextual meaning, a word's meaning is greatly impacted by the particular situation in which it is used and goes beyond its dictionary definition. When examining song lyrics, especially ones with a strong thematic focus like Hillsong worship music, this is very crucial. Here, the song's words work inside a special synthesis of musical components, religious themes, and an audience-artist understanding. Every one of these components adds to the total meaning that the words convey to the audience.

Data 1 is a song from Hillsong Worship “What a Beautiful Name”, the bold words are considered as the context of person:

You were the **Word** at the beginning
One with God the Lord Most High
Your hidden glory in creation
Now, revealed in You our Christ
(Hillsong Worship “What a Beautiful Name”/stanza 1)

Analysis:

In literature, a “word” is defined as a linguistic unit made up of one or more spoken sounds that serve as the primary means of conveying meaning. “Word” in this statement refers to Jesus Christ. The first line of the New Testament Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” is referenced by the phrase

"at the beginning" and the use of a capital "W" on "Word." The capitalization of "W" and the phrase "at the beginning" suggest that this statement discusses religious ideas. Furthermore, "You" would address a divine person—most likely Jesus Christ—in the context. The interpretation highlights Jesus' status as the almighty Word of God, existing before the creation of the universe and existing as one with God.

Data 2 is a song from Hillsong Worship "O Praise the Name", the bold word is considered as the context of place:

I cast my mind to **Calvary**
Where Jesus bled and died for me
I see His wounds, His hands, His feet
My Saviour on that cursed tree
(Hillsong Worship "O Praise the Name"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

Here, "Calvary," also known as Golgotha, refers to the area outside the walls of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. It has been a pilgrimage site for centuries and is a place of pain and redemption.

Data 3 is a song from Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name," the bold word is considered as the context of time:

You have no rival, You have no equal
Now and forever, God, You reign
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the Glory
Yours is the Name above all names
(Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name"/stanza 9)

Analysis:

The literary expression "now and forever" captures a deep paradox: the fundamental inconsistency between the transient quality of the present moment ("now") and the immensity of eternity ("forever"). By putting "now" next to "forever," the expression highlights how important the present is. It implies that even if time passes, a single event can have great significance and a lasting influence. The term may also have religious meanings, alluding to a timeless world outside our temporal awareness or an afterlife. For example, in Christianity, "now and forever" may conjure images of heaven, where life never ends.

Data 4 is a song from Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name", the bold words are considered as the context of formality:

You were the Word at the beginning
One with **God the Lord Most High**
Your hidden glory in creation
Now, revealed in You our Christ
(Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

The "God the Lord Most High" phrase structure belongs to the formal category. It employs whole phrases of varying lengths, such as "God" and the title phrase "the Lord Most High." In a religious setting, the phrases "God" and "Lord" are explicitly used to refer to a god. "Most High" emphasizes God's utmost might and authority. Saying "God, the Lord Most High" is a formal and courteous manner to address God, especially in Christian contexts.

Data 5 is a song from Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name," the bold words are considered as context of mood:

How sweet is Your Name, Lord, **how good** You are
We **love** to sing in Your Name, Lord, love to sing of who You are
(Hillsong Worship "What a Beautiful Name"/stanza 5)

Analysis:

The word "how" can be combined with adverbs in the literature view to produce a variety of moods. The phrase "how + sweet/good" conveys a sense of wonder and adoration in the name of Jesus. Furthermore, the word "sweet" starts to symbolize the beauty, love, and blessings connected to God rather than the meaning of a taste. Furthermore, as the theme of this song is all about showing gratitude for God's love, "love" in this stanza can be interpreted that the singer themselves is full of joy to do the praise and worship for God.

Data 6 is a song from Hillsong Worship "Even When It Hurts", the bold word is considered as context of subject-matter:

Take this fainted heart
Take these tainted hands
Wash me in Your love
Come like grace again
(Hillsong Worship "Even When It Hurts"/stanza 1)

Analysis:

In general, the word "wash" refers to the act of washing something or the process of cleaning something with water. However, the sentence above in this song is a metaphor that conveys a longing for God's whole restoration. In this instance, the word "wash" is used figuratively to allude to God's love relieving the singer of her worries, regrets, and transgressions. It alludes to the transformational power of God's love rather than actual water. The singer holds that they can be purified more deeply by God's love, which also provides healing, forgiveness, and a new beginning. The singer admits that they cannot purify themselves on their own, and the line "Wash me" conveys their sense of dependency on God. To be freed and purified, they require God's love.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, Based on Leech's (1981) meaning framework, Hillsong Worship songs, including "What a Beautiful Name", "O Praise the Name", "Through It All", and "Even When It Hurts", present a complex set of meanings with interesting similarities and differences. After analyzing the meaning of each lyric of the Hillsong

Worship songs, the researcher concluded that the Hillsong Worship songs used as data in this research have all the types of meanings according to Leech's theory those are conceptual, connotative, collocative, social, affective, reflective, and thematic meaning. Where in the lyrics the songwriter uses several words that have implied meanings, words that do not only mean one particular meaning but also can have other interpretations of meaning. The general subjects of the four Hillsong Worship songs that were used as research data are appreciation, gratitude, and joy. In addition, one of the songs that served as data also narrates the event of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Furthermore, in the second problem of this research, the researcher finds out that all the song lyrics used as data in this research have all the contextual types of meanings. By analyzing the song lyrics one by one, it can be concluded there are three contexts of person, three contexts of place, five contexts of time, one context of formality, five contexts of mood, and thirteen contexts of subject matter.

Based on the analysis of the meaning of the four Hillsong Worship songs, namely "What a Beautiful Name", "O Praise the Name", "Through It All", and "Even When It Hurts" there are several suggestions. First, research could focus on listeners' responses to these songs, using qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or group discussions. This aims to understand how listeners personally interpret and respond to Hillsong Worship songs and their impact on their daily lives. Second, quantitative research can be conducted to assess the direct influence of these songs on listeners' spirituality, involving surveys or experiments with a sample of listeners who may not have been exposed to the songs before. Third, mixed research combining qualitative and quantitative methods could be directed at the use of Hillsong Worship songs in the context of spiritual healing.

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