

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Plenty of scientific shreds of evidence show that music can help second language learners by obtaining grammar, increasing vocabulary, and improving spelling. Songs and music almost always contain a lot of useful vocabulary, phrases, meanings, and expressions. Music is transformed into a song and then visualized into a music video.

According to Moller as cited in Muiz Aryanto (2014:9), music video is a short film or video that accompanies the music, generally a song, modern music video serve as a marketing tool for change a recorded album. Music video can be an attraction for music lovers because besides listening to the strains of the instrument, it also see visual beauty according to the musician through image. With a music video, it gives a clearer picture of the meaning of a song. Usually, in the music video there are also certain pictures or symbols that are meaningful about something that we did not expect. Speaking about meaning, in language there is special science that called as semiotics.

Visual semiotics is one of the fields of study that specifically studies the investigation of all kinds of meanings conveyed through the means of the visual senses.

In this research, I choose music videos entitled “This Is America” as my research object. As we know, one of the media that provides the most visual services is YouTube. No wonder now YouTube is the powerful promotional media for conveying messages through a video, to raise someone's prestige, and so on. As well as delivering music video messages to music lovers, YouTube is also usually used by artists to express themselves, their hearts, criticism of the government, even if it is full of controversy. Whenever the artists create a work of art, they often

conveying what concern about a thing. Expressing oneself is a form of the working of true artists.

One of the artists who use song for conveying social message is Childish Gambino. According to Los Angeles (Bauer, 2021, para. 1-2), Donald McKinley Glover also known as Childish Gambino is a multi-faceted person who has carved a niche in every domain that he has set his foot in; be it acting, writing, production, comedy, singing and songwriting. He was born in Los Angeles, California on September 23, 1983. Glover, who was raised as a Jehovah's Witness, attended the "DeKalb School of the Arts". Later, he attended New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, from where he graduated in 2006 with a degree in dramatic writing.

One of his famous works is the music video he created entitled "This Is America" released on July 5, 2018. It was recording until March 6, 2021, this music videos had been watching by 761 million viewers with a response of approximately 792,871 comments. In this music video, there is a story or message that will convey to the audience. In general, Gambino wants to show the world the situation in America at the moment. Violence, weaponry, politics, social inequality, racism, to anything that contains ambiguity are nicely packaging in this music video that lasts more than 4 minutes.

This multitalented man is currently a hot topic of conversation regarding his music video entitled "This Is America" Gambino wants to convey the secret intentions in the music video regarding the issues currently spreading in Uncle Sam's country. The content implied in the music video for This Is America, poured by Hiro Murai as the video director, represents the social reality of discriminatory acts that have been fought for and developed by the white race in the United States of America. The media often represents a symbol or social reality that exists in society even the media is currently debating whether the representations made by the media shape culture, behavior, etc.

This video takes the place of a large warehouse filled with various properties. Not only had that, as the director Hiro Murai involved around 30 extras. The video starts with a scene where Gambino shooting the old guitarist whose face is covering by a burlap sack. Throughout the video, you are presented with a scene of Gambino dancing with a group of African-American students, while behind them all kinds of chaos occur. Then the video is closed with Gambino running to avoid being caught up by a group of people wearing different clothes.

Therefore, it becomes interesting for me to explore what signs are in this music video. The signs are collaborated to achieve the desired effect. Because music videos are very complex audio-visual products, I have made an effort to find these signs in image, and song lyrics.

Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of my research explained above, I identify the main problem which is in “This Is America” music video. I assume that the video made by Childish Gambino and the director Hiro Murai in “This Is America” based on scenes, song lyrics, pictures, or symbols, even from the characters that appear in the music video can convey meaning to the people. I identify that the singer and director are like pouring the reality of what happened in the United States of America in this music video. I will be trying to reveal the meaning behind the video using semiotics.

Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, I limit the research to signifier and signified of the music video and focused on sign and revealing meanings that appear in Childish Gambino’s music video entitled “This Is America”.

Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem that I mentioned above, I formulate the problems which as follows:

1. What are the signifiers and signified that found in a music video entitled “This Is America?”
2. What are the meanings does Childish Gambino want to convey in a music video entitled “This Is America?”

Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, I aim to show that the objective of the research, I make several steps which as follows:

1. To find out the signifiers and signified in a music video entitled “This Is America.”
2. To reveal the meanings based on a music video entitled “This Is America.

Method of the Research

The approach that used in this research is the qualitative approach. Berg (2009:2) defines the qualitative approach can often be far more involved, intense work, and produce data that require hours of analysis that cannot be done solely by a software program, which means that uses mostly non-numeric data such as narrative text.

I use descriptive method. According to Manuel and Medel (1998:25), the descriptive method involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition, or process of phenomena. The focus is on the prevailing conditions, on how a person, group, or thing behaves or functions at the time of the study. Because I use music video as the object of research, and the method used in addition to descriptive is the semiotic method of Danesi.

According to Danesi (2010:4), the basic elements of semiotics consist of: sign, symbol, and cue (signal). These three problems fall into the scope of semiotics because they allow communication between subjects and objects in the path of understanding as a basic element of semiotics. Danesi (2010:4) explains the semiotic elements are as follows:

a. Sign

Signs are part of the science of semiotics which marks a thing or situation to explain or notify objects to the subject. In this case the sign always

shows something real, for example, objects, events, writing, language, action, incidents, and other forms of signs.

b. Symbol

The symbol is something or condition that leads the subject's understanding of the object. The relationship between the subject and the object is tucked into a meaningful understanding. A symbol is always associated with signs that have been given cultural, situational, and conditional characteristics. The symbol is a sign that means dynamic, special, subjective, class, and majas. In literary works, whether in the form of poetry, fiction, or drama, there are various kinds of symbols, including: color symbols, object symbols, sound symbols, atmosphere symbols, tone symbols, and symbols of imaginative visualization arising from facial arrangements or typography.

c. Cue

Cues or signals are things or conditions given by the subject to the object. In this situation the subject always does something to notify the object being signaled at that time. So, cues are always temporal. If the usage is suspended, the gesture will change to a sign or symbol. All three (signs, symbols and cues) have nuances, that is, very small differences in language, color, and so on.

The object of my research is a music video “This Is America” by Childish Gambino. This music video was released on 5 July 2018 by RCA Records. The data source are taken from Donald Glover YouTube Channel. Data used for this research are signifier and signified found on “This Is America” official music video.

I will merge all the data that collected from many sources. I divide into five steps of data analysis to do. The first one, I will watch the “This Is America” music video. I have to watch it time after time to understand the whole purpose of the video. The second one, I try to find the signifier and signified on “This Is America” music video. The third one, I will start to analyze the signifier and signified that is found on the music video itself. The fourth, revealing the hidden meaning of the MV based on the

analysis of signifier and signified. And the last one is making conclusions based on the data.

Benefit of the Research

The research has several benefits, especially for those who are related to linguistics. This research could be useful for those who want to learn about how to find the hidden meaning of a music video and how to reveal the meaning of a music video through the signifier and signified, particularly, for the college students who want to conduct a research in semiotics field.

Systematic Organization of the Research

To give the clear organization of the research, I organize the term paper into four chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I explain about background, identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objective of the research, method of the research, benefit of the research, and systematic of the research.

CHAPTER 2 : FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES

In this chapter explains the theoretical framework of linguistics. I use the theory of semiotics and theory of racism. I analyze this research by using signifier and signified concept.

CHAPTER 3 : REVEALING MEANING OF CHILDISH GAMBINO'S MUSIC VIDEO "THIS IS AMERICA" (A SEMIOTIC STUDY)

In this chapter, I examine and analyze the data in order to answer the research questions using theory of Semiotics. I will discover the signs to find out the meaning in the music video entitled “This Is America.”

CHAPTER 4 : CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the conclusion from the analysis of the complete study.

