

## Critical Discourse Analysis of Ambonese Pop Songs

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### Abstract

*This qualitative study analyzes the content of five Ambonese pop songs to explore themes of criticism, freedom of life, love betrayal, and self-determination, and to understand the use of translingualism in music. The research employs directed content analysis, drawing on existing theories and hypotheses to guide the analysis. The samples in the study are five Ambonese pop songs: "Hela Napas," "YOLO," "Iris," "Se Dimana," and "Better Know." The songs were chosen for their use of mixed languages (Ambon-Malay, Bahasa Indonesia, and English) and their thematic relevance. Data was collected through the examination of song lyrics and interviews with the songwriters to gain insight into their perspectives. The analysis process involved coding the data into categories and themes, followed by thematic analysis. The findings reveal the richness of language use in conveying societal critiques, personal experiences, and cultural pride. Grizzly's songs serve as a powerful medium for social commentary, urging listeners to pursue their dreams, cherish relationships, and respect themselves and others. The study sheds light on the cultural and social context of Eastern Indonesia, providing insights into the way language is utilized in music to express emotions, ideologies, and identity.*

**Keywords:** Ambonesse, Song, Translingualism

### Introduction

Song can be used to express the feelings and thoughts of the songwriter. They are known as a repertoire that encompasses the songwriter's experiences, expressed through rhythm, rhyme, melody and the language use. Hursepuny and Rijoly (2021) argue that Songs contain unfiltered expressions conveyed through the use of authentic language. When people listen to songs, they can feel represented and connected to their own stories of life. The songwriting experience can provide an outlet for emotional expression (Gfeller, 1987: 37). The fact that songs are often inspired from the writer's life story makes them more relatable, thus attracting audiences who share similar emotions with the writer. Therefore, it cannot be denied that songs are beneficial to individuals, as they frequently portray struggles as human beings.

Ambonese pop songs can be described as a music genre that originated from Ambon city, Indonesia. They consist of both classic and modern songs. According to Gaite, et al (2020), Ambonese classic pop songs are profoundly influenced by traditional culture and often performed using traditional instruments, while modern pop songs are influenced by Western music and employ modern instruments. Another difference between classic and modern song is that classic pop songs hold moral values reflecting the culture of Ambon, whereas modern pop songs revolve around themes of love, relationships, and the songwriter's daily experience. Additionally, songs are an interesting subject to be studied in discourse analysis since song's lyrics are a part of the discourse (Arif and Triyono, 2018: 119).

Discourse is described as the language that extends beyond the sentence level (Ali & Khan, 2022; Shahzad, 2019) and integrates the entire range of meaning pallets (Alba-Juez, 2016; Baig et al., 2020; Zafran, et al, 2021). In this paper, the researchers use Critical Discourse Analysis by

Norman Fairclough and translingualism by Canagarajah to analyze songs. According to Fairclough (19), language is not just a means of communication but also an instrument of power that can shape thoughts, behaviors, and social structures. The word "translingualism" describes the simultaneous use of multiple languages by bilingual or multilingual people in order to optimize communication opportunities (Canagarajah; 2011). Therefore, translingualism in song might be used by switching, mixing or blending languages in order to produce a unique linguistic utterance.

Several researchers have conducted investigations on songs using Critical Discourse Analysis model. For instances, Firmansyah (2018) conducted the research focused on investigating Iwan Fals's song with the aim to discover societal and political values. The study revealed the songwriter's thoughts and critical perspectives of various issues in Indonesia including social, political, educational and nationalistic matters. Another study has been done by Arif and Triyono (2018) investigated the highly popular song "Baby Shark" exploring its connection to marketing strategies and societal conditions. The findings discovered the song meanings reflecting Korean community's belief in the value of hard work as Shark metaphorically symbolized the Korean mindset of diligence. In addition, the study implicitly conveyed messages through the use of modest words and memorable repetitions. Furthermore, Putri and Triyono (2018) used text analysis, social cognition, and social context from Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model to discover the intended meanings behind the humanity song entitled "We Shall Overcome". The findings revealed that the song's lyrics are cohesive and coherent, and that the songwriter effectively described a clear message of hope based on the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel. Similarly, Alek. et al (2020) analysed the song "Look What You Made Me Do" by Taylor Swift to reveal the intended meaning of figurative expressions and symbolic signs in both the lyric and music video. the results found that the song used many repetitions in order to emphasize the song messages. Additionally, the study described the song's symbols, such as snake and raven, which represented the songwriter's transformation from an innocent sweet girl to a powerful and strong person

Compared to the previous studies, the significance of this study is to investigate the intended meanings of Ambonese pop songs using Norman Fairclough and Translingualism approaches. Despite the fact that Ambon is known as the "city of music" tagline (Gaite, et al, 2020), there has been a concerning lack of attention from music enthusiasts toward Ambonese pop songs. Hopefully, this research can promote Ambonese pop songs as well as Ambonese songwriters and provide the meanings of the Ambonese pop song to the wider listeners and readers. Moreover, this research can stimulate future researchers to analyse local songs, especially using either Fairclough's or Translingualism approaches. Thereby, the researchers are highly motivated and interested in studying these issues and have formulated the main research question: How did the songwriters intend to deliver their messages through the songs.

## **Literature Review**

### **Critical Discourse Analysis: Norman Fairclough's Model**

CDA is a method for analysing spoken and written language established from critical linguistic of language discourse and communication realms (Van Dijk, 1998; Vulchanova et al., 2019) CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) is an approach developed by Norman Fairclough to

analyse texts and social practices that involve language. It combines linguistic theory with social, political, and economic theories to comprehensively understand and critique the relationship between language, power, and ideology in society. According to Fairclough, language is not just a means of communication but also an instrument of power that can shape thoughts, behaviours, and social structures. CDA views language as a tool used to reinforce or change social relationships, influence the distribution of power, and promote certain ideologies. In analyzing a song using CDA from Fairclough, researchers can consider these three interconnected levels: text analysis, discursive analysis, and social analysis. Regarding the analysis of a song using Norman Fairclough's model, the explanation is as follows:

- 1) Textual Analysis (Description): the lyrics of the song are examined by the themes. These themes might revolve around concepts such as liberation, breaking free from oppression, or addressing social inequality. Furthermore, the language choices investigated in the song are scrutinizingly to identify figurative and rhetorical devices. For example, the song might use strong verbs and imagery to reveal a sense of urgency and empowerment. It might also contain metaphors or similes to compare the experience of oppression to something more relatable to the listener. In addition, the rhetorical device in the song can help to persuade the listener to align with the song's message.
- 2) Discursive Analysis (Interpretation): The song might be discussed and interpreted in various contexts, such as media coverage, fan interpretations, and interviews with the artist. By exploring the range of interpretations, various perspectives can be gained and shape the understanding of the song's context.
- 3) Social Analysis (Explanation): The examination of social analysis considers the social, political, and cultural context in which the song is situated. Within this analysis, the song reflects or challenges existing power relations, ideologies, or societal norms. Additionally, the song can be investigated through the intended audience and potential impact of the song within society.

### **Translingualism**

Translingualism is the ability of a multilingual speaker to use their linguistic repertoire to communicate with one another (Canagarajah, 2011). In songs, translingualism refers to the combination of multiple languages within lyrics. This approach can be achieved through switching, mixing, and meshing of different languages, dialects, or linguistic elements in order to create a unique linguistic expression. Translingual songs have the ability to transcend linguistics barriers and appeal to diverse audiences. By incorporating fusion languages through translingualism, songwriters can explore cultural diversity and convey messages that resonate with people from different linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, a translingualism approach can be employed to discover the motives of songwriters in using multiple languages in their song. Ultimately, translingualism promotes inclusivity, assists cross-cultural communication and provides a platform for language and culture exchange. According to Canagarajah (2022), in his presentation on "Multilingualism and Translingual Practices of The Global South" at American Association For Applied Linguistics, He states that Translingualism can be helpful to promote linguistic equity for multilingual learners since English has absorbed the words from many

languages (Canagarah, 2022). Moreover, Canagarajah (2011a) defines translingualism as 'the capacity of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the many languages that comprise their repertory as an interconnected system. Canagarajah (2022) claims that translingualism skill is part of bilingual speakers' multicompetence. Canagarajah (2013) stated that multiple languages have different semiotic resources and ecological affordances, claims. Furthermore, He said that language is a collection of semiotic resources—such as sounds, music, visuals, body language, etc.—that work together to create meaning. Canagarajah also mentioned that further research is required to fully comprehend the communicative methods used that shape translingual practice and implications.

## Method

A qualitative approach is used in this study. There are five songs to be analysed namely Hela Napas, Yolo, Iris, Se Dimana, Better Know. Those songs use translingual languages such as Ambon-Malay, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. The content analysis is employed to analyse the songs. Gläser and Laudel (2013) as cited in Cohen (2018) defines qualitative content analysis as “a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, replication, inference and verification of the contents of written data” (Flick, 1998; Krippendorp, 2004; Mayring, 2004). This means that content analysis is a systematic method used to describe, interpret and analyse data. Qualitative content analysis is often used to analyse the data in written text, visual, graphs, interview transcription, etc.

The participants of the study are Ambonesse pop songs, they are Iris, Hela Napas, YOLO, Se Dimana, Better Know. The researchers used directed content analysis, directed content analysis means the coding structure derives from existing theory or hypotheses. The step of analysis is as follows:

Theory	Theme	Categories	Codes
Critical Discourse Analysis	Songs	Criticism/Rebellion	Rebelling against the music industry, Eastern musicians aspire to step forward and be recognized by a broader audience.
		Freedom of life	Inhaling serves as a ritual for hard thinkers to maintain their sanity.
			The message encourages young individuals to relish life, as they are constantly occupied with pursuing their goals.
		Love betrayal	The song reflects a songwriter's personal experience of betrayal in relationships.

		Self-determination/encouragement	It motivates individuals to pursue their dreams with unwavering determination.
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### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis procedures are clearly explained with a reference to the role and competency of the researcher(s).

- 1) The researchers initially decided to choose Ambonese Pop Songs containing mixed languages (English and Ambon-Malay)
- 2) The researchers then identified the previous studies to find the translingualism theories in order to support the data
- 3) The researchers conducted the interview with the songwriters to explore his perspectives
- 4) The researchers therefore began to analyze the findings by coding them into categories and themes.
- 5) The researchers narrated the data by using thematic analysis.

### Result And Discussions

#### 1. Criticism

##### 1.1. Iris by Grizzly (2018)

The lyrics of this song have a somewhat rough style and are full of strong expressions. The songwriter stated hardly that he was coming back to music industry proved by the following lines "Pica sunyi Alifuru back again, Look it's an east side brand, Look how we bragging at" he also stated that he would like to bring his identity as Ambonese hip-hop artist. It can be viewed as identity pride that originated from ideology. Blommaert and Rampton (2012) revealed that languages have been shaped and constructed by ideology. The songwriter plays words by weaving languages (Ambon-malay to English) in order to create rhyme. this can be proved from these following lines: "Nusu nusu sorang dorang mari torang bringin hell, Watch da fuckin out! Ini timur pung naraka" These lines are in lined with Canagarajah (2013b) that seeing languages are synergically affecting each other and creating new emergent meanings through their interactions. The term "emergent meanings" implies that new meanings or linguistic expressions may arise from the interactions between languages. This perspective challenges the traditional view of languages as static and isolated entities, highlighting the dynamic and fluid nature of language use in diverse linguistic environments. Moreover, the song seems to criticize the state of the music industry as well as the artist. It can be proved from the following lines "Iris... iris...Stop making stupid people famous! Iris, Miris... miris. MC kumur kumur kini makin laris." since artists often count on their visuals, controversial rather than talents. furthermore, the songwriter stated that eastern songs are more flamingly energetic than other region songs in Indonesia "Macam grind beef, tapi jadi porridge. Ku beri ko rift, dan ko butuh courage, Rap like sniff, ko perlu banyak knowledge, Man you sniff? You really need a collage". That being said, the eastern songs are more superior than others. There are also sentiments about boredom with mainstream rap music and competition from musicians in Eastern Indonesia compared with Western Indonesia. Some lyrics have repetition to

emphasize the enthusiasm from their music, even though the listeners still do not pay attention to Ambon rap songs, they still want to continue to develop their music. This song is a rebellion against the music industry, Eastern musicians want to step forward and want to develop to be known by many people. this song encourages young people to pursue their dreams by studying thoroughly and attentively.

## **2. Freedom of Life**

### **2.1. Hela Napas by Grizzly (2023)**

This song mostly used English. There are parts where the writer writes the lyrics in English to emphasize people to take a rest because it is a long drive. This song encourages everyone to take a rest while working, talking with family while having a cup of tea. "Ini sore bae staring at the bay, Hela bae bae hit the grass now we lay, Conversation get delay but the moment never late man, Gunung pung tahela awan tabrak hit the hatred". It is in line with Garcia (2009) who defined that switching between languages with ease and uses their complete linguistic repertoire as a means of communication and meaning-making. It shows that the songwriter mixed the language with rhyme Ambon-Malay and English in order to make the song easy to listen. Hela napas (inhale) is a song inspired by the singer who always has a rest time in the hill with his friend, it started with a group of children who were tired of drinking coffee indoors who started enjoying the afternoon outside, in Siwang peak, which became a ritual that was carried out every weekend. The writer encourages everyone for a moment to take a glass of coffee with a positive purpose as a ritual that keeps us sane "Putar itu kopi, Atau putar itu sloki, Lalu Putar itu topi turn it ke belakang, Bumbu tinggal gulung ada koki jang takotang". Rewarding long journeys by relaxing and de-stressing, there is also advice from family.

### **2.2. YOLO by Grizzly feat Filaz (2021)**

The title of the song is YOLO stands for You Only Live Once which is a familiar abbreviation for young people to enjoy the youth because we only live once. This song just put English lyrics in some chorus and the hook to emphasize some social norms of people surrounding to stay lowkey and avoid hostility. Terkadang perlu sans, Tuk jalani hari Lepaskan beban mu mari lah menari, (We only live once dawg, All keep flows, YOLO jangan taCOLO), Mari Nikmati sore ini, Kau masih punya waktu di esok hari, (Masi ada waktu, besok coba lagi) There is a phrase "YOLO jangan taCOLO" which means as a human we have to enjoy our lives so we will not drown into life problems. It is related to the notion of translanguaging by Wei (2018) that viewed language as a multilingual source used by humans to think and communicate thoughts. The phrases "YOLO, jang tacolo" are repeated three times in the song lyrics to show the urgency of relaxing and spending time with precious ones. This is related to the theory of Fairclough (1999) about textual analysis that examines songs by the themes, such as freedom of life. This song illustrates young generations in Ambon who always go to the mountain or beach to spend their time while having a conversation with friends with a glass of coffee. Sun Runnin Low Profile (Tong tetap Lowkey), Avoid All hostile (Tong nai slowly), Dripin and Rollin. Plus, i got a V, now we doin sixty (V60), drip it". This song challenges the oppression of people who have a lot of pressure to go out and enjoy life by doing something fun at the beach like fishing while enjoying the sun.

### **3. Love Betrayal**

#### **3.1. Bad Love Business by Januarta The Goat & Keilandboi (2022)**

In this song lyric, the song writer expressed his betrayed relationship using harsh words and laid-back style of music. This song is in line with the Fairclough (1999) model in terms of social context. The eastern young people often voice themselves using strong and severe words. Moreover, the songwriter enunciated the words Nona, referring to lady as a cheater who ruined an ongoing relationship “Nona why you treated like nobody (No), You Treated me like nobody, Nona why you feelings for somebody (No), You treated me like nobody”. the phrases are repeated 8 times with intention to show an utmost disappointment toward Nona. The collection of words “i can't believe you doing me like this, i can't believe it caramu terlalu sadis,” showed rhyming terms in order to beautify the song. Besides that, it creates new emergent semiotic resources. According to Canagarajah (2013), languages have different semiotic resources and ecological affordances, Furthermore, Canagarajah (2013) argued that language is a collection of semiotic resources—such as sounds, music, visuals, body language, etc.—that work together to create meaning. In the lyrics, it describes the songwriter's feelings to move on from the relationship with his girl because it shows how hurt the girl betrayed him “ku slalu ada untuk mu saat kau jatuh, tidaklah kau sadari semua itu, baby, You broke my heart, you broke my heart, You broke my heart baby, you broke my heart baby”

### **4. Self-Determination**

#### **4.1. Better Know-Keilandboi (2021)**

This song describes some aspects such as self-confidence of the song writer, diversity, culture, and religious values. The song writer wants to show for the listener to maintain self-confidence of each individual, ignore what people say because people better to know what the unique part of ourselves so they cannot be easy to underestimate others. So, it is important for people to respect each other. There is also the emphasis on the importance of the following religious teaching and maintaining a balance between body and soul. Overall, this song represents people's feeling to respect themselves, knowing better about themselves and maintaining the important values that contain in themselves. In the opening of this song, the song writer starts with “Yo! Cek aku punya style, kau boleh check” which means to persuade the listener to be respected like the song writer. It is such like a good attitude to respect others rather than be intimidated before people know someone better. That is why the positive value from this song wants to show directly. Please do not judge other people if yourself not good enough, especially in attitude. In this song, the song writer does the repeating of “You should better to know” for many times because want to stress to the listener how the important point of respect ourselves first before being busy taking care of other people's business. For the next song lyric, “You, You better stay lowkey” the song writer advises the listener it is better to learn more about life value. because if you're not full yet in knowledge or manner, do not be loud.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the four songs, several key themes emerge: criticism, freedom of life, love betrayal, and self-determination. These themes reflect the social and cultural context of Eastern Indonesia, particularly Ambon, and the way language is used to convey meaning and emotion in music. The songs analysed demonstrate Grizzly's adeptness at using music as a platform to express a range of societal and personal themes.

In "Iris," Grizzly critiques the music industry's reliance on visuals over talent and highlights the superiority of Eastern Indonesian music, encouraging young artists to pursue their dreams despite challenges. "Hela Napas" celebrates the freedom of life and the importance of relaxation and family time, while "YOLO" emphasizes the need to enjoy life and stay lowkey amidst societal pressures. "Bad Love Business" delves into the pain of love betrayal, using strong language to express deep emotions. Finally, "Better Know" promotes self-determination and respect, urging listeners to embrace their uniqueness and ignore judgment from others.

Translingual practice can be employed in the classroom activity since the approach can exploit students' ideas as much as possible. Moreover, students can easily generate their ideas using their own native language. Therefore, the teacher needs to encourage students to acquire a target language by weaving their own repertoire.

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