



An Analysis of Contextual Meaning on Michael Bube’s Song Lyrics

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 7 Oct 2024	This study aims to explain the contextual meaning found in the lyrics of Michael Buble using the theory of Lyons (1995) and to explain the context of the situation to support the analysis of meaning in the lyrics of Michael Buble using the theory by Halliday and Hasan (1985). This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The result showed there are four contextual meanings found; these contextual meanings grouped in 2 or (50%) words, 1 or (25%) phrases, and 1 or (25%) clauses. The e contextual meaning consists of informal language and figurative language, which is analyzed based on the context of the situation, showing that the field or the topic of each song is about love between young adults, Michael Buble, and her story about love and her child. The tenor of the participant of each song has similarities using figurative language, idioms, and informal language. The mode of each song is the same in that all of them are written text but can be read if those songs are sung.
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1. Introduction

Language is a system of communication expressed through speech and writing, used by members of a particular community or country (Oxford, 2008, p. 247). One of the primary functions of language is to facilitate communication, serving as a vital tool for establishing and maintaining relationships in everyday life. Language carries meaning and serves as a symbol through which individuals express thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

Generally, language is used for interaction and exchange of ideas. According to Crabtree and Power (1994), linguistics is broadly divided into two main branches: macro-linguistics and micro-linguistics. Macro-linguistics examines language in relation

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to other disciplines, including sociolinguistics, stylistics, psycholinguistics, and computational linguistics. In contrast, micro-linguistics focuses on the internal structures of language itself, encompassing fields such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

Each of these branches plays a crucial role in understanding how communication functions. Among them, semantics—the study of meaning—helps interpret the intended message conveyed through words, phrases, or utterances. Semantics examines the meanings embedded in language, aiming to prevent ambiguity and misinterpretation in communication (Cruse, 2000; Kroeger, 2018; Portner & Partee, 2002; Ritchie, 2013; Saeed, 2014)

Chaer (2007) emphasizes that contextual meaning refers to the meaning of a word or lexeme as it appears in a specific context. This suggests that the interpretation of meaning can shift depending on the surrounding situation or discourse. Contextual meaning is especially relevant in analyzing song lyrics, where words often carry connotations that differ from their literal or lexical meaning—that is, their dictionary definitions. In this sense, semantics not only explores what words mean but also how those meanings can change and be interpreted within different contexts.

A significant facet of semantics is contextual meaning, which posits that the interpretation of a word or phrase is heavily influenced by its situational context. This perspective acknowledges that meanings are not fixed but can vary depending on factors such as the speaker's intent, cultural background, and the communicative environment (Chaer, 2007). Studies have demonstrated that contextual cues are vital for accurately deciphering meanings, particularly in nuanced or figurative language (Wijaya & Rosita, 2023).

The analysis of song lyrics offers a practical application of semantic theories, as lyrics often employ figurative language, metaphors, and cultural references that require contextual interpretation. For instance, research on Olivia Rodrigo's songs has highlighted how contextual meaning shapes the listener's understanding of emotional narratives within the lyrics (Luthfiani & Heriyati, 2023). Similarly, investigations into Minangkabau and Acehese song lyrics have revealed the prevalence of associative meanings, reflecting cultural values and social norms embedded in the language (Bahri & Lubis, 2021; Fata et al., 2021).

Songs, as expressive forms of communication, convey a wide range of emotions, including happiness, sadness, love, and anger. According to Oxford (2008, p. 264), a song consists of lyrics—words arranged in verses and choruses that are meant to be sung. Understanding song lyrics often requires more than a literal translation; it demands a contextual interpretation. Listeners must consider the situation, cultural nuances, and emotional tone to grasp the full meaning of the lyrics

2. Literature Review

Semantic analysis of song lyrics has garnered significant attention in recent years, emphasizing the importance of contextual meaning in interpreting musical texts.

Anindya (2018) conducted a semantic analysis of Celine Dion's song "A New Day Has Come," identifying 64 words with contextual meanings, such as "miracle," "strong," "tear," and "darkness." The study highlighted how the song's context and the speaker's mood influence the interpretation of these words, underscoring the significance of situational context in understanding song lyrics.

Napitupulu (2019) examined five songs by My Chemical Romance, uncovering 256 instances of contextual meaning. The findings revealed various types of contextual meanings: 134 instances related to the context of person (55.0%), 6 to place (2.3%), 16 to time (6.3%), 5 to formality (2.0%), 45 to mood (17.6%), and 43 to subject matter (16.8%). The predominance of the context of person emphasizes the personal and emotive nature of the lyrics.

Trisnantasari and Umalekhoa (2018) analysis of Ed Sheeran's songs, including "Shape of You," "How Would You Feel," "Thinking Out Loud," "Photograph," and "Give Me Love," identified numerous words with both lexical and contextual meanings. For instance, in "Shape of You," words like "magnet," "handmade," and "crazy" were examined for their contextual significance, illustrating how common words can acquire unique meanings within specific lyrical contexts.

Fata et al. (2024) explored the meanings embedded in Acehese contemporary song lyrics from Apache13's album "Bék Panik." The study aimed to analyze the types of meanings present using a semantic approach, highlighting how cultural and situational contexts influence lyrical interpretation. The research identified 186 distinct meanings, with conceptual meaning being the most prevalent, followed by social, affective, collocative, and connotative meanings. This prevalence suggests a focus on social criticism, conditions, and personal narratives within Apache13's songs.

Wijaya and Rosita (2023) analyzed Olivia Rodrigo's songs, identifying 27 instances of contextual meaning across five songs. The study categorized these instances into contexts such as person, situation, formality, mood, and object, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of contextual meaning in contemporary music. Additionally, the research found instances of semantic change, including widening, total change, and dysphemism, indicating the dynamic nature of meaning in song lyrics.

Further studies have expanded on these findings. Maulida et al. (2023) analyzed Lauv's songs, identifying 40 instances of lexical and contextual meanings, with situational context being dominant, reflecting themes of loneliness and mental exhaustion. Fauziyah et al. (2024) examined Ben Howard's lyrics, revealing that associative meaning was the most common connotative form, influenced by song themes. Muskitta and Maruanaya (2021) conducted a socio-semantic analysis of slang in Bruno Mars' songs, finding that coinage was the dominant characteristic, requiring contextual interpretation. Wardhana et al. (2023) studied Lyn Lapid's songs, analyzing lexical and contextual meanings to understand the content of the songs. Aryawan et al. (2019) focused on figurative language in Eminem's songs, identifying 136 instances across 12 types, with simile being the most prevalent, highlighting the expressive

function of language in conveying meaning and background. These studies collectively emphasize the significance of contextual analysis in understanding song lyrics.

3. Method

The research used a qualitative method to collect the data. The data used in this study were taken from Michael Buble albums, namely Higher in 2022, It is Time in 2005, Love in 2018), and Crazy in 2009. In collecting the data, the researcher took some steps, such as downloading the song lyrics from the internet, reading the lyrics, taking note of the data, and grouping the data based on words, phrases, and clauses that contained contextual meaning. The theory of this study is divided into two parts: the first is to find out the contextual meaning found in Michael Buble song lyrics by the theory of Lyons (1995), and the second is to analyze the meaning context of the situation proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1989).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The contextual meaning found in the lyrics of Michael Buble

Michael Buble's songs have many contextual meanings. Figurative language also has certain meanings that can be categorized using figurative language, making it difficult to understand. The tables below explain the results of this study.

Table 1. The types of figurative language of Michael Buble songs in album Higher (2022) and album crazy love (2009)

Category	Contextual Meaning	Total	Percentage
Words	Bone, saint, Baby, Run, cold, image, place, over, Melody, Beating, shelter, Hold, one, laughable, hair, run, song, feel, rain, Eye, sun, lying, big, tuck, sweet	25	74%
Phrases	Morning Dew, Whole World, Lucky Guy, Comic Valentine, Pale the Month, Sparkling Wine, Little Week	7	21%
Clauses	Take my lips, Give your heart	2	6%

Based on the Table 1, it shows that there are 34 contextual meanings in the eleven song lyrics by Michael Buble. There are 25 (74%) data on words, 7 (21%) data on phrases, and 2 (6%) data on clauses. According to the table above, the 25 data words are Bone, saint, Baby, Run, cold, image, place, over, Melody, Beating, shelter, Hold, one, laughable, hair, run, song, feel, rain, Eye, sun, lying, big, tuck, sweet. The 6 data phrases are Moring Dew, Whole World, Lucky Guy, Comic Valentine, Pale the Month, Sparkling Wine, and Little Week. The 2 data of clauses are, take my lips, Give your heart. To find the contextual meaning of the data to be analyzed, the writer needs to know which words have various meanings based on the context of the situation, depending on the words, phrases, and clauses. The writer identifies words, phrases, and clauses by word class.

- a) The contextual meaning of “Mother”

Data 1

“You would work your hands to **the bone**”

From the lyrics above, the writer finds the word “bone” from the sentence you would work your hands to the bone. The song writer uses figurative language in that sentence to make it look like dancing for the listeners. Therefore, the writer needs to analyze the contextual meaning of the sentence. According to the Oxford Dictionary, “bone” means any pieces of hard material that make up the skeleton in vertebrates. Based on the context of the song, bone means hard work, which, based on the context of the situation in the song, tells of a mother who works hard for her child without needing praise for working sincerely to earn a living so that she can support her child every day.

Data 2

“And another word for **saint**”

The writer is interested in analyzing the contextual meaning of the word Saint in the lyrics above. According to the Oxford Dictionary, Saint means good people who Christians believe will go to heaven when they die. Based on the song’s content from the lyrics above, Saint means mother, which is based on the situation of a child who considers his mother a saint who will later go to heaven because of the love given and struggle and hard work. In Christianity, the term Saint is given to someone who has lived a life of heroic virtue or holy. According to Wikipedia, it can be used by people to define life and death and is accepted in the world of religion.

- b) The Context of Situation of “Mother”

The context of the situation is very helpful in supporting the rider or author in conveying the message. Besides, the context of the situation also helps the listeners and readers feel the situation and meaning of the song. According to Halliday and Hasan (1989), there are three aspects in the context of the situation that are very helpful in finding out the contextual meaning of the song.

Field: This song is about an expression from a child to his mother who struggles sincerely without getting praise and works hard and hard just to make a house where his child lives. The topic of this song is the sincerity and love of a mother. This song’s theme is about a child’s expression towards his mother.

“You never took some time
You never needed praise
You would work your hands to the bone
You would work your hands to the bone
You always made the time

You got me on my way
You would work your hands to the bone
Just to turn our house to a home”

Tenor: The participants of this song are children and mothers. This song can be heard by small children, too, because in this song, it does not contain an element of maturity and is not related to love; we can see from the title of the song.

Mode: The mode of this song’s lyrics is written text, but it can be spoken if this song is sung. The songwriter used informal language, figurative language, and idiom. The songwriter used figurative language to disguise a feeling and condition. The function of this song is to entertain the readers and listeners.

c) The contextual meaning of “You’re My First, My Last, My Everything”

Data 3

“Girl, you’re like a first **morning dew** on a brand new day”

From the lyrics above, the phrase morning dew in the sentence “Girl, you’re like a first morning dew on a brand new day” uses figurative language to equate her lover with the morning dew. Therefore, the writer analyzes the phrase as data. According to Wikipedia, dew is water vapor that undergoes a process of condensation- the process of turning a gas into a liquid. Dew usually appears in the morning, between window panes or behind leaves. Based on the context of the situation in the sentence Girl, you’re like a first morning dew on a brand new day phrase. Morning dew means beautiful to look at. It can be concluded that someone who feels that his lover is something beautiful to look at that gives coolness to the heart seems to greet and welcome a beautiful new day even though the beautiful one lasts only for a moment.

d) The context of the situation of “You’re My First, My Last, My Everything”

Field: This song is about a person who thinks his lover is everything, where everything he sees and does and what he goes to is everything for the person he loves.

“Ah, the first, my last, my everything
And the answer to all my dreams
You’re my sun, my moon, babe, you’re my guiding star
My kind of wonderful, that’s what you are”

This song is about love, and its theme is that love is everything.

Tenor: The participant in this song is a person with his lover. The special traits of young adults are love, problem-solving, skill, and discord (Xia et al., 2018). Therefore, children are not recommended to listen to this song because it is about romantic love, and the slang is *bucin*.

Mode: The mode of this song's lyrics is written text, but it can be spoken if this song is sung. The songwriter used informal language, figurative language, and idiom. The songwriter used figurative language to disguise a feeling and condition. The function of this song is to entertain the readers and listeners.

e) **The Contextual Meaning Of "All Of Me"**

Data 4

"Take my lips, I wanna lose them"

From the song lyrics above, there is a clause that uses figurative language that the songwriter uses to enhance the context of the song and make it look interesting, but sometimes, many do not understand. Therefore, the author uses this as one of the data, as no man wants to lose organs, especially lips. Based on the context of the situation in the song "Take My Lips," it means a breakup that ends in a broken heart. According to Wikipedia, a broken heart is a common metaphor used to describe the emotional pain or deep suffering a person feels after the loss of a loved one through death, divorce, separation, physical separation, or rejection of love. It can be concluded that the song lyrics above, Take My Lips, is a form of someone's heartbreak who is uncertain because of love because he feels lost and feels that everything is useless.

f) **The context of the situation of "all of me"**

Finding the contextual meaning requires analyzing the context of the situation. Based on the theory of Halliday and Hasan (1989), there are three aspects to the context of the situation.

Field: This song tells about a person who is heartbroken because of being abandoned by a loved one and feels that his life will not be fine without his lover; their separation makes deep sadness and thinks apart from the heart why not everything is taken; it is a form of disappointment and heartbreak (All of me, why not take all of me?).

"Can't you see?
I'm no good without you
Take my lips, I wanna lose them
Take my arms, I'll never use them
Your goodbyes, they left me with eyes that cry"

This song is about love, and its theme is heartbreak caused by separation from the lover you love.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it was found that 34 data have a contextual meaning in the album of Michael Buble. There are Eight songs by Michael Buble entitled "Home",

“How Sweet Is”, “A Song For You”, “You Don’t Know Me”, “My Funny Valentine”, “When You Are Smiling”, “Save The Last Dance For Me”, “Love You Anymore”, “Forever Now”, “Higher”, “Crazy Love”. Contain the contextual meaning inside the lyrics. In processing the data, the researcher found something interesting while analyzing the data source. The researcher concludes that someone has a high imagination to express expectations that the listener might feel what they feel towards their lover. Based on analyzing the contextual meaning, there are 25 (74%) data on words, 7 (20%) data on phrases, and 2(4%) data on clauses. The researcher found four words in the “Home” song lyrics that give this song a lot of contextual meaning. The same “A Song for You” has 4 data words of contextual meaning. This is followed by “You Don’t Know Me” with three words and one phrase, and then “My Funny Valentine” has two words and two phrases of contextual meaning. The researcher found three words and one phrase of contextual meaning. Followed by “When You Are Smiling” with one phrase and two words, and then “Save The Last Dance For Me” with one word, two phrases, and one clause. The researcher found four words in the song “Love You Anymore.” the last place is “Forever Now” within only two words, “You’re My First, My Last, My Everything” has one phrase, and the last “All Of me” has one clause. This song is about love, and its theme is heartbreak caused by separation from the lover you love.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors’ contribution

The authors state that author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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