

Language Style and Meaning in Rhoma Irama's Song Lyrics and Their Relevance as Indonesian Language Learning Material: A Stylistic Study

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Abstract

Literary works are a medium of expression that utilizes language as the primary means of conveying ideas, feelings, and life values. This study aims to analyze the language styles and meanings found in the song lyrics of Rhoma Irama and to examine their relevance as learning materials for Indonesian language education. The research employed a qualitative approach using content analysis methods. The data consisted of the song lyrics Begadang, Keramat, and Judi, which were analyzed based on the use of figurative language and meaning. Data collection techniques included observation, note-taking, and documentation. The findings reveal that the lyrics contain various language styles such as repetition, metaphor, hyperbole, and imperative expressions used systematically to strengthen the message conveyed. The meanings identified include both denotative and connotative meanings related to moral and social values. Furthermore, the song lyrics have strong potential as contextual learning materials because they help students understand language styles and meanings in real-life contexts while also increasing students' interest in learning.

Keywords

Indonesian Language Learning, Language Style, Meaning, Stylistics, Song Lyrics



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INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a medium of expression that utilizes language as the primary means of conveying ideas, feelings, and life values. One form of literary work closely related to people's lives is song lyrics. Song lyrics serve not only as entertainment but also contain moral, social, cultural, and religious messages conveyed through distinctive word choice and style. The beauty of a literary work is greatly influenced by the author's diction and style, thus providing an aesthetic and emotional impact on the listener (Handayani & Usiono, 2025). Therefore, examining the linguistic elements of song lyrics is crucial for understanding their meaning.

Stylistics is one approach that can be used to uncover the beauty of language in literary works. Stylistics focuses on analyzing the use of language, particularly style, to achieve a specific aesthetic effect (Mega Rizki Annisa et al., 2022). Through stylistic studies, the use of figures of

speech, diction, imagery, and the meaning contained in a work can be analyzed in depth, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the author's intended message. Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani (2021) state that stylistics is the study of the use of language as a means of creating aesthetic value in literary works. Similarly, Keraf (2019) explains that style is an author's distinctive way of expressing thoughts and feelings through specific language choices.

Rhoma Irama is one Indonesian singer and songwriter known for his rich language in his lyrics. Rhoma Irama's songs are not only popular for entertainment but also rich with moral messages, social criticism, and life values. Songs like "Begadang," "Judi," and "Keramat" contain various forms of style and meaning that can be examined through a stylistic approach. The use of figurative language in these songs makes the message more powerful, engaging, and easily accepted by the public.

Extensive research has been conducted on style and meaning in literary works and song lyrics. Pipit Pratiwiningsih and Mustofa (2024) examined the stylistic features in the lyrics of Didi Kempot's song "Sewu Kuto": A Stylistic Study. Aرسال et al. (2024) examined the stylistic features in Ramy Ayach's song "Qesset Hobb" and identified various rhetorical and figurative figures of speech. Yudi et al. (2023) analyzed the stylistic features and meaning in Nadin Amizah's song "Sorai," while Nasution & et al. (2024) examined the denotative and connotative meanings in Nadzira Shafa's song "Dialog Hati." These findings demonstrate that song lyrics possess a richness of stylistic features and meanings that are interesting to study from a stylistic perspective.

However, research specifically examining the stylistic features and meaning in Rhoma Irama's song lyrics and linking them to their use as Indonesian language learning materials is still limited. Most previous research focuses solely on identifying stylistic features, diction, or meaning within specific works without connecting them to learning implementation. In fact, the results of stylistic studies have great potential to be used as contextual learning resources in Indonesian language learning. Research by (Mega Rizki Annisa et al., 2022), (Selpiyani, 2017), (Emawati & Yuliani, 2024), and (Lumban Gaol et al., 2025) shows that the results of stylistic analysis can be relevant as teaching materials because they can improve students' literary appreciation, interpretative skills, and linguistic comprehension.

Based on this description, there is a research gap in the lack of optimal studies integrating stylistic analysis and meaning in Rhoma Irama's song lyrics with their relevance as Indonesian language learning materials. The novelty of this research lies in the stylistic analysis of Rhoma Irama's song lyrics, which not only identifies the stylistic forms and meanings used but also examines their relevance as Indonesian language learning materials. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of stylistic studies while enriching alternative literary teaching materials relevant to students' lives.

This study aims to describe the forms of figurative language found in Rhoma Irama's song lyrics, uncover their meanings, and explain their relevance as Indonesian language learning materials. The results are expected to serve as a reference for developing more engaging, contextual, and meaningful literature learning.

METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a content analysis research design. Content analysis was used to identify, classify, and interpret linguistic elements contained in song lyrics, particularly stylistic elements and meaning. This approach was chosen because the research focused on examining the textual content of song lyrics as literary documents containing aesthetic, moral, social, and religious messages. According to (Moleong, 2021), qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in depth through descriptive data in the form of words, while stylistic analysis is used to uncover the use of language as a means of creating aesthetic effects in literary works (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2021).

The object of this research is the lyrics of the songs "Begadang," "Keramat," and "Judi" by Rhoma Irama. The song "Begadang" was released on the album "Soneta Volume 1: Begadang" in 1975. "Keramat" was a popular song in the 1980s, conveying religious values and respect for parents (Kurniawan et al., 2023), while "Judi" was released on the album "Soneta Volume 14: Judi" in 1988. These three songs were chosen because they share diverse stylistic characteristics and convey meaning relevant to social life.

The research data consisted of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and stanzas containing stylistic and meaningful meanings. The data source was the lyrics of Rhoma Irama's songs "Begadang," "Keramat," and "Judi," obtained through documentation from sources containing the complete lyrics.

The data collection technique was a documentation method using listening and note-taking techniques. The researcher read and listened to the song lyrics repeatedly, then noted sections containing stylistic and meaningful meanings. The obtained data were then classified based on stylistic categories according to (Keraf, 2019) and types of meaning, including denotative and connotative meanings, as proposed by (Hanifah, 2023) and (Nasution & et al., 2024).

The primary research instrument was the researcher (human instrument) assisted by data cards and classification tables. The researcher played a role in determining the data, grouping it based on analytical categories, and interpreting the meaning contained in the song lyrics.

The data analysis technique used a content analysis model, which was carried out in several stages: (1) collecting data in the form of song lyrics; (2) reading and understanding the text thoroughly; (3) identifying data containing stylistic and meaning content; (4) classifying data based on stylistic and meaning types; (5) interpreting the function of stylistic and meaning in song lyrics; (6) analyzing the relevance of the findings to Indonesian language learning; and (7) drawing conclusions.

Data validity was achieved through increased observational rigor and theoretical triangulation by comparing analysis results based on stylistic theory (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2021), stylistic theory (Keraf, 2019), and theories of meaning used in previous studies. The analysis results were then presented descriptively to provide a comprehensive overview of stylistic style, meaning, and its relevance as Indonesian language learning materials.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the lyrics of Rhoma Irama's songs "Begadang," "Keramat," and "Judi," various forms of figurative language were found to reinforce moral, social, religious, and educational messages. These figurative language styles include repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, antithesis, apostrophe, and imperative sentences. Furthermore, the use of denotative and connotative meanings was found to build deeper life messages. Denotative and connotative meanings are important elements in semantic studies because they can explain the relationship between language and the message conveyed in a text (Hanifah, 2023); Nasution & et al., 2024). These findings indicate that Rhoma Irama's song lyrics not only have an aesthetic function as a work of art, but also function as a social educational medium relevant to people's lives. This finding is in line with the opinion of Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2021, who stated that stylistic elements in literary works not only function to create beautiful language but also convey certain values and messages to readers. In addition, research by Mega Rizki Annisa et al., 2022, Nur Rohmah et al., 2022, and Anshori et al., 2025 shows that the results of stylistic studies have strong relevance as Indonesian language learning materials.

The results of the analysis show that the song Begadang is dominated by repetition, imperative, and connotative language styles. Examples of song lyrics "Stay Up" (Rhoma Irama, 1973)

Table 1. Findings of Style and Meaning in the Lyrics of Rhoma Irama's Songs "Begadang," "Keramat," and "Judi"

"Don't stay up late, if it doesn't mean anything."

The line "Stay up late, don't stay up late, if it doesn't mean anything" is found in the first and second stanzas of Rhoma Irama's song "Begadang" (1973). It contains repetition of the word "begadang," which serves to emphasize a prohibition. Furthermore, there is an imperative form of prohibition that directly invites the listener.

The meanings include a denotative meaning, namely a prohibition against staying up late without a purpose, as well as a connotative meaning, namely an invitation to live a disciplined life and maintain good health.

Stylistically, the use of repetition strengthens the listener's memory of the message. This aligns with Hidayat and Sari's (2021) assertion that style can clarify and emphasize meaning.

The song "Keramat" demonstrates a dominance of metaphor, repetition, and style. Hyperbole.

Example of lyrics for the song "Keramat" (Rhoma Irama, 1977).

"Your flesh and blood comes from your mother's milk"

The line "Your flesh and blood comes from her milk" is found in the second stanza of the first line of Rhoma Irama's song "Keramat." This line contains a metaphor depicting the biological and emotional relationship between a child and a mother. Furthermore, the repetition of the word "mother" emphasizes the importance of the mother's role.

The meanings include the denotative meaning of the mother as the source of life, as well

as the connotative meaning of the mother as a figure to be respected and honored.

Furthermore, there are elements of hyperbole in the depiction of the mother's immense services, which aims to reinforce the moral message. This finding aligns with Rahmawati (2024), who stated that Indonesian song lyrics frequently use metaphors to convey moral values implicitly.

The song "Judi" is dominated by repetition, hyperbole, and connotative language.

Example Lyrics from the Song "Judi" (Rhoma Irama, 1988)

"Judi meracuni kehidupan"

The line "Judi meracuni kehidupan" is found in the second stanza of the first line of the song "Judi" by Rhoma Irama (1988). This sentence contains a metaphor because the word "meracuni" is not literally meant, but rather describes the negative impact of gambling on life.

The meanings contained include a denotative meaning, namely gambling as a negative activity, as well as a connotative meaning, indicating that gambling can damage morals, the economy, and social life.

Furthermore, the use of repetition in the song's lyrics serves to emphasize the dangers of gambling to society. This demonstrates that figurative language serves more than just an aesthetic function, but also serves as a means of conveying a social message, as argued by Wibowo (2020).

Based on the analysis of the three songs, several dominant types of figurative language were identified, as follows:

Table 1. Classification of Style of Language and Its Function in Song Lyrics

No.	Style of Language	Function
1.	Repetition	Message Emphasis
2.	Metaphor	Strengthening Figurative Meaning
3.	Hyperbole	Emphasizing Meaning
4.	Imperative	Invitation/Prohibition
5.	Connotative	Deepening Meaning

These findings demonstrate that the use of style of language in song lyrics is systematic and has a strong communicative function. The results of this study demonstrate that style of language plays a crucial role in constructing meaning. The meaning in song lyrics is both denotative and connotative, and the use of style of language can strengthen moral and social messages. This aligns with stylistic theory, which states that language variation is directly related to meaning (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2021). Furthermore, these results support previous studies that suggest that song lyrics contain a rich and meaningful variety of style of language (Lestari, 2020; Rahmawati, 2024).

The results of this study show that song lyrics can be used as learning materials because they contain concrete examples of figurative language use, facilitate students' understanding of contextual meaning, and increase learning interest. In the Independent Curriculum, Indonesian language learning emphasizes the ability to understand and analyze texts.

Therefore, song lyrics can be used as learning materials for figurative language, denotative and connotative word meanings, and as material for simple text analysis activities in elementary schools. This is in line with Ardianto (2022) and Wulandari (2022), who stated that the use of contextual texts can increase students' understanding of language use.

CONCLUSION

Style and meaning are crucial elements of language use because they are related to how a message is conveyed in a text. Style serves more than just a variation of language form; it also serves as a means to strengthen and clarify the meaning conveyed to the listener.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that Rhoma Irama's song lyrics contain various types of style, such as repetition, metaphor, hyperbole, and imperatives, which are used systematically to reinforce the message. The meanings contained in the song lyrics include denotative and connotative meanings related to moral and social messages. The use of style in song lyrics has been shown to play a crucial role in constructing meaning and clarifying the intended message.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that song lyrics have great potential as Indonesian language learning materials because they contain concrete examples of the use of style and meaning in everyday contexts. Song lyrics can help students understand the concepts of style, denotative and connotative meaning, and increase learning interest through contextual learning. Therefore, using song lyrics as teaching materials can be an effective option to support Indonesian language learning, particularly at the elementary school level...

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