

The meaning of fashion in the song “Made You Look” by Meghan Trainor: A semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce

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Keywords:

fashion; made you look;
meghan trainor; semiotic;
charles sanders peirce

ABSTRACT

Fashion is a primary need that cannot be separated from everyone's life. The reason is because fashion represents the personality and feelings of each person. In addition, through fashion, there is a message that the wearer wants to convey so that it influences other people's views of him. Therefore, this article was created with the aim of knowing the meaning of fashion signs and symbols in song lyrics as a source of research data. The lyrics for the song are titled "Made You Look" by Meghan Trainor. In this song, the singer (Meghan Trainor) wants to convey a message and express her feelings about fashion through the lyrics. When collecting the data, the researcher uses text analysis techniques and literature studies. For the research method, the researcher used a qualitative-descriptive. Meanwhile, the theory used is Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic concept is famous with his theory of the trichotomy of meaning, which consists of three main elements: sign, object, and interpretation. Through this concept, when analyzing song lyrics, it can be concluded that fashion greatly influences everyone's self-confidence.

Introduction

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (2019), it is explained that fashion is the latest variety, method, and form (fashion style, haircut, style, and others) within a certain period of time. From this, it can be seen that fashion is always undergoing innovation so that it has its own characteristics and uniqueness at all times. Primarily, in this era of globalization, many fashion trends are experiencing quite rapid development. This is supported by the many competing fashion industries that produce quality fashion products to meet consumer tastes. Usually, consumers will see references to appearance from beauty influencers, idols, and other public figures. The reason consumers are attracted to these people's appearance is because they are good at combining colors in their appearance so that they look fashionable. Ummah & Rahayu (2020) say that the more someone is interested in the world of fashion, the more they will always keep abreast of current fashion models by making impulse purchases (Sari & Patrikha, 2021). Sometimes, in order to follow the appearance style of idols and influencers, consumers are willing to spend their money to buy fashion items, even those that are expensive. Therefore, the development of fashion trends and brands can influence everyone's views and behavior towards these matters.



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Everyone's views and behavior regarding fashion in this study are written in every line of the song lyrics. Song lyrics are interpreted as someone's expression by using language games and words, so that a lyric creates an attraction to what is contained in the lyrics (Barzah & Al Anshory, 2022). Through the words in the lyrics of the song, the creator wants to convey that any type of fashion used by a person has its own charms and advantages. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out and discuss more deeply the meaning of fashion in semiotic theory. Semiotic theory itself is the study of signs. The discussion of the semiotic elements of this topic is explained in a song entitled "Made You Look" by Meghan Trainor. The song was composed by Meghan along with two other composers (Federico Vindver and Sean Douglas). The song was first released on October 21, 2022, on Meghan Trainor's YouTube channel.

The reason behind creating the song stems from Meghan's experience after giving birth. At first, Meghan felt insecure about her body shape after giving birth to her son, Riley Sabara. Finally, Meghan's therapist suggests looking in the mirror every day until she accepts her body and regains confidence. Apart from that, Meghan's husband (Daryl Sabara) also tried to cheer her up by saying that she looked very beautiful and sexy even though she had given birth. This was quoted from Meghan's interview in a music podcast on YouTube called Genius, taken from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SV5IjoFXfto>. Once Meghan had regained her shape, she slowly began writing the song "Made You Look. In this song, Meghan wants to convey her advice to people who are not confident and experience bullying about their body shape so they can rise up. Apart from that, in the song "Made You Look," researchers observed that the singer (Meghan Trainor) also wanted to provide education about the meaning of fashion to her listeners.

In uncovering the meaning of fashion in the lyrics of the song "Made You Look," the researcher will use Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Charles Sanders Peirce put forward the concept of a meaning triangle, which consists of three main elements, namely signs, objects, and interpretations (Darma et al., 2022). By analyzing song lyrics using these three elements, researchers hope to gain a specific understanding of the true meaning of fashion. In the lyrics of the song, it is explained that fashion greatly influences the personality of the wearer.

Therefore, it can be concluded that fashion trends have an impact on everyone's self-confidence. Someone is willing to spend a lot of money to meet other people's standards of appearance and social status recognition. In fact, this attitude will not have a good impact because it will make you stressed and dissatisfied with what you have. This requires an attitude of good self-acceptance from everyone. According to Rubin (Rohmah, 2004), self-acceptance is an attitude that reflects a feeling of pleasure regarding one's own reality.

Method

The method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative. Qualitative research is research used to examine social phenomena in society with descriptive data. It is known that qualitative research starts with the unique cases that occur in society and ends with

unique findings too. Because it is used to understand unique cases, qualitative research also uses unique methods, from data collection to data analysis (Rahardjo, 2008).

Findings and Discussion

The song "Made You Look" was created by Meghan Trainor and two composers (Federico Vindver and Sean Douglas). The first date the song was released was October 21, 2022, on Meghan Trainor's YouTube channel. This song has been popular on various music and social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Spotify, and Joox. Currently on Meghan Trainor's YouTube channel, the song, which lasts 2:54 seconds, has been watched by 134,782.60 million people with around 1.5 million likes. Meanwhile, on popular music platforms such as Spotify, the song "Made You Look" has been listened to by 477,166,466 million people.

The Meaning of Song Lyrics Based on the Triangle Concept (Trichotomy)

Data 1

Object: First verse of the song

I could have my Gucci on

I could wear my Louis Vuitton

But even with nothin' on

Bet I made you look (I made you look)

Interpretant

This verse shows that someone can be confident in all types of fashion they wear, even if it doesn't come from a luxury brand. In this case, luxury brands such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton are the main keys to the interpretation of the first stanza. The Italian brand (Gucci) in the first sentence is symbolized by two opposite G letters as the initials of the founder's name (Guccio Gucci). Meanwhile, the Louis Vuitton brand was founded by Louis Vuitton in France with the symbol of the letters LV and brown flowers. In connotation, the two brands symbolize the social status of the upper class.

Representation or Sign

A person's identity and value are not based on what they have but on their beliefs and self-confidence.

Data 2

Object: Second verse of the song

I'll make you double take soon as I walk away

Call up your chiropractor just in case your neck break

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh

'Cause I'm 'bout to make a scene, double up that sunscreen

I'm 'bout to turn the heat up, gonna make your glasses steam

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh

Interpretant

In this verse, it describes a woman who wants to cast a charm on other people. As a result of the charm of this woman, people who see her will feel hot and passionate. This is evidenced by the fourth and fifth sentences in the stanza. Apart from that, the woman in the verse also wants to make people who have humbled themselves regret their behavior and become silent. The proof is in the second sentence, which can be interpreted as satire for the bully.

Representation or Sign

Everyone must try to get up to prove to people who have humbled themselves that they are valuable and have quality.

Data 3

Object: The third verse of the song

When I do my walk, walk (oh)

I can guarantee your jaw will drop, drop (oh)

'Cause they don't make a lot of what I got, got (ah, ah)

Ladies if you feel me, this your bop, bop (bop-bop-bop)

Interpretant

The woman in the verse wants to impress others when they see her, especially those who have looked down on her. In the second sentence, the woman ensures that people who see her will be captivated until their mouths open. Furthermore, in the third sentence, the woman tries to show that the people who have humiliated her will have nothing but regret. Therefore, the woman invited other girls who received unpleasant treatment to do the same thing with her.

Representation or Sign

Someone who is determined to make positive changes to himself will shine and be respected by others.

Data 4

Object: The fourth verse of the song

Yeah, I look good in my Versace dress (take it off)

But I'm hotter when my morning hair's a mess

'Cause even with my hoodie on

Bet I made you look (I made you look)

Mhm-hm-hm

Interpretant

In this verse, it is explained that luxury brands such as Versace, which was founded by Gianni Versace in 1978 in Italy, will make a person's appearance look good and elegant. This is in accordance with the Versace logo, which is symbolized by the head of Medusa, which means that this creature can make people captivated and attracted to it. However, on the other hand, the woman also said that she could still look beautiful, even if only with a hoodie and loose hair. From this, it can be seen that the woman's self-confidence is very prominent, and she is not afraid of other people's views about her appearance.

Representation or Sign

Confidence in appearance is very important because all types of fashion will look attractive, even if they are simple.

Data 5

Object: The fifth verse of the song

And once you get a taste (woo), you'll never be the same

This ain't that ordinary, this that 14 karat cake

Ooh, tell me what you, what you, what you gon' do, ooh (what you gon' do, ooh, ooh)

Interpretant

The first sentence shows that the woman in the verse has the ability to influence other people. Furthermore, the second sentence explains that the woman likes things that look elegant and unusual. From this, it can be seen that this woman is a quality woman who will not remain silent and surrender if an unpleasant action happens to her.

Representation or Sign

A quality person is someone who respects himself and has a positive influence on others.

Based on the results of the analysis of the lyrics of the song "Made You Look" by Meghan Trainor, it can be interpreted that the title of the song represents the singer's goal. Meghan's goal is to provide support and motivation for someone who is insecure about changes in their body shape. The reason a person feels inferior about changes in his body usually occurs because of himself and the bad opinions of others. Therefore, the person will make various efforts to make his body look attractive again. Common efforts include dieting, facial care, buying make-up and buying quality fashion products. However, sometimes the efforts made by most people are excessive, making it difficult for yourself. People are willing to spend a lot of money for body changes not only so that feelings of inferiority disappear, but also social recognition.

To rectify these wrong thoughts and actions, Meghan conveys them through the words in every line of her song lyrics. An example is the fragment of the lyrics "But even with nothin' on" to the sequel "Bet I made you look (I made you look)." The point of these two lyrics is that a person can still look attractive even without wearing fancy fashion brands. The reason is because a good fashion concept is not determined by the

luxury of a brand. Fashion will look good because someone is good at combining colors in clothes and wears them with confidence.

Through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic study with the concept of the triangle of meaning (trichotomy) in the discussion above, it can be concluded that fashion is a marker of a person's identity and social status. Fashion worn by everyone contains messages and expressions to be conveyed. For example, if someone uses a luxury brand, the goal is to look elegant in the eyes of other people and be recognized for their social status. However, in the lyrics of the song "Made You Look" the singer has a different opinion that someone will be recognized for their existence if they are confident in all types of fashion they wear and are able to have a positive influence on other people. Thus, people who have ever looked down on someone will be reluctant.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study discusses the meaning of fashion in the lyrics of the song "Made You Look" by Meghan Trainor. In collecting data about the meaning of fashion, researchers used text analysis techniques and literature studies based on qualitative methods. Meanwhile, the theory used by researchers is Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. Charles Sanders Peirce put forward the concept of a meaning triangle, which consists of three main elements, namely signs, objects, and interpretations (Darma et al., 2022). The results of the analysis obtained with the concept of a triangle of meaning (trichotomy) in this study are the effects of fashion on self-confidence.

The problem of confidence in performing the song "Made You Look" is caused by changes in one's body shape. As a result of this change in body shape, some people have a negative view of people who experience it. In addition, another problem contained in the song is one's lack of understanding of the concept of good fashion. In the lyrics of the song, the researcher finds people's view that fashion will look good with luxury brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Versace. Therefore, in the song "Made You Look," Meghan tries to correct wrong views about fashion and invites people who have experienced bullying about their body shape to rise from feelings of insecurity.

In the lyrics of the song "Made You Look," Meghan explains that someone can still look beautiful and attractive even without luxury items. The main key lies in each person's ability to combine fashion and self-confidence. Apart from that, in the lyrics of the song, Meghan also teaches people who have experienced bullying about their body shape to change for the better. Therefore, when a person is able to change his behavior and outlook to be more positive, he will become a quality person.

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