

# Interpersonal Meaning Analysis of Selected Song Lyrics from Queen's *Greatest Hits* Album

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**Abstract**— This research aims to analyze five selected song lyrics from Queen's *Greatest Hits* album, and it is to generate the meanings from the analysis results. The objectives of this study are to describe the types of interpersonal meaning by looking at the most dominant mood types and value of modality. The design of this research is qualitative data collection and analysis. The main sources of data were taken from Queen's *Greatest Hits* album which are *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Somebody to Love*, *Don't Stop me Now*, *We are the Champions*, and *You're my Best Friend* song lyrics. The data were analyzed by using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (Halliday, 1994), which is focused on mood types (Gerot & Wignell, 1994) and the value of modality (Eggins, 1994). The analysis shows that Declarative Mood and median modality are dominantly used in the song lyrics. Declarative mood realizing the speech function of a statement is used to convey information. Meanwhile, median modality tends to positions the speaker equally with the listener when the expression of willingness is used and also generated how strong the speaker commits himself to the truth.

**Keywords:** *interpersonal meaning, mood types, modality, Queen, song lyrics*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Verbal communication is a way to deliver messages from sender to receiver. Verbal communication tends to use spoken words and intonation to convey meaning (Levine & Adelman, 1993). This style of communication tends to collect the conversation point of information in-between the medium. One of the media is indicated in a song. Songs are often called as the emotion of languages (Farber, 2007). Songs can be used as a tool to share our feelings in verbal communication. For example, the songwriter creates a song not only as a medium to entertain but also it uses to communicate with the listener by expressing or sharing his/her feelings through the songs that they write for the listener.

Naturally, it is not only songs that have essential roles, but lyrics also have essential roles. Through lyrics, the readers or listeners will know what kind of topic that is contained in a song. The expressive function of language can be found through implicit meaning that is realized in song lyrics. In song lyrics, the writers can freely express and communicate their

emotions and feelings with their listeners. The song that shows the songwriter's feeling can be heard and read from one of the legendary English bands, Queen. Queen as one of the world's greatest rock bands and also known for its poetic lyrics that can be seen from almost all their songs, which resulted in two *Greatest Hits* compilation album in 1981 and 1991 (Thomas & Lupton, 2011). Interpersonal relationship can be obtained from Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics to build a sense of belonging, which occurs when the singer succeeds in delivering the impression to a listener which is related to the listener's life experience that is being validated when the lyrics are telling what happened to the singer for them.

This analysis is based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach which is focused on the interpersonal meaning that can be seen through the selected song lyrics of Queen's *Greatest Hits* album. In terms of lyrical analysis, Susanto and Watik (2017) examined the contribution of interpersonal meaning in the lyrics of Christina Perri's album "Love strong" to the teaching of modern English grammar that could help the students to analyze the interpersonal meaning of the song lyrics whether it is their favorite song or their favorite singer. Also, the analysis of mood system in song lyrics as a part of the interpersonal meaning analysis are the tools which are used to allow the speaker to express their attitude toward what they are saying. In this sense, Marhamah (2014) revealed the wordings of the clause based on the elements of interpersonal meaning, which are focusing on the most dominant mood types, modality, and mood adjunct. The study completes how the interpersonal meaning analysis based on the mood system can express emotions of the speaker, developing chronologically of the content, making cause and effect, or making movement from one attitude to a different attitude of the song lyrics.

Many previous types of research support the interpersonal meaning analysis. In this case, interpersonal meaning analysis has been applied to newsletters (Kartika & Wihadi, 2018; Yuliana & Imperiani, 2017), speech (Feng & Liu, 2010; Nur, 2015; Syafirah, 2017), cross-cultural conversation (Fitriana, 2015; Sunardi, 2016), and also song lyrics (Amalia & Pramudyawardhani, 2016; Marhamah, 2014; Putra, 2014; Susanto & Watik, 2017; Yuningsih, 2018).

This research aims to fill what previous researches have missed in terms of interpersonal meaning analysis. In addition, it will reveal how mood types and modality are realized in the song lyrics through an interpersonal meaning analysis, and it will be generated from the discourse effect appeared in the song lyrics with an academic justification from concordance software as a means of the reason behind the selection of song lyrics as the research data. To sum up, the importance of this research is expected to be useful for researchers who like songs and can help them to analyze it by using song lyrics as the research data and to open the research field, especially in Systemic Functional Linguistics approach.

## II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to achieve the types of interpersonal meaning realized in Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics. Dawson (2007) states that qualitative research allows for insights into attitudes, behavior, and experiences. The qualitative method is chosen because it might have revealed new potential meaning from the song lyrics. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), textual analysis in a qualitative method can be used as media to preserve chronological flow, see which events led to which consequences clearly, and also get fruitful explanations.

The unit of analysis of this study is Queen's *Greatest Hits* five selected song lyrics and analyzed using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, which developed by Halliday (1994) specifically in terms of interpersonal meaning. The analysis was undertaken in terms of mood types and the value of modality which appeared from all clauses. This study was involved in several steps of analysis. It explores deep into understanding the data, representing, and drawing an interpretation of the broader meaning of the data. First, close reading is undertaken within the song lyrics to understand the whole meaning. On the other hand, the lyrics are read to generate a fuller understanding of literal meaning and content. Second, the researcher will classify the most and less dominant mood types that are realized in Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics and also the value of modality that arises from the clauses. Last, the researcher generates the result of the meaning and draws a conclusion based on the research findings.

The data collected in this study will be based on the form of clauses. To confirm the research method is appropriate to achieve the research finding, this research also used of concordance software *AntConc 3.5.7* as the supporting tool to look the frequency test of first-person personal pronoun words "I" that appeared in the selected song lyrics as a medium to justify the reason of selecting the research data. After doing a test through the use of concordance software, the researcher obtained the five selected song lyrics which are *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Somebody to Love*, *Don't Stop me Now*, *We are the Champions*, and *You're my Best Friend*.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Generally, the analysis shows that the realization of interpersonal meaning from Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics could potentially create patterns of interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the listener. Therefore, the

patterns that are found tend to convey a sense of authority with the listener. Thus, the interpersonal meaning analysis indicated that the song lyrics generate meaning, which indicates the speaker's authoritativeness voice.

### A. Declarative clauses as a realization of interpersonal meaning

The analysis was conducted by using Systemic Functional Linguistics which focuses on interpersonal meaning as well the mood system and the use of modality. The interpersonal meaning analysis covers the mood types which focusing mainly on the structure of Mood and Residue. The Mood structure consists of Subject and Finite. The Subject makes the clause functions as an exchange of information while the Finite constructs the clause pattern such as tense, polarity, and modality. Meanwhile, the Residue structure consists of Predicator, Complement, and Adjuncts. Declarative clauses were found after the researcher did the interpersonal meaning analysis in Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics by identifying how the speech function of statements in the clause was realized dominantly. From the research data, it was found that the structure of declarative clauses always begins with the Subject that the speaker rests his case in exchange primary information, followed by Finite, which contains verb or auxiliary verb which belong to speech function of statements. So, declarative clauses as a realization of interpersonal meaning are used to express the speaker's ideas, attitudes, and judgments because the speaker positioning himself as an information giver to the listener.

To answer the research questions, this research conducted a clause analysis. The analysis process includes the classifying of data from Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics, also analyzing the mood structure regarding the most and less dominant mood types and also the value of modality regarding its modal operators. Based on the value of modality, it is realized that the use of modalization and modulation on each clause could construct the propositions and proposals that the speaker is made into certainties rather than possibilities

#### 1) Declarative mood frequently used in Queen's *Greatest Hits*

Based on the findings, the most dominant Mood Types found in Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics is Declarative Mood, while statement is the dominant speech function. Declarative mood is found in 182 clauses (78.8%) from all song lyrics which contains 231 clauses spread in *Bohemian Rhapsody* (73.7%), *Somebody to Love* (66.6%), *Don't Stop me Now* (68.0%), *We are the Champions*, and *You're my Best Friend* (100%). It shows that the clauses from the song lyrics tend to declare or express feelings and ideas to the listener by using statements found in Declarative Mood. The declarative mood in the song lyrics might have generated meanings that show a sense of interpersonal interaction between the speaker and the listener.

### B. Declarative Mood in *Bohemian Rhapsody*

As shown in Table I., declarative Mood dominates the clause from *Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics which has 43 clauses (73.7%) from 58 clauses. Also, the clause is followed by Imperative Mood (15.8%) and Interrogative Mood (10.5%) to strengthen the occurred information from Declarative Mood.

The results indicate that the speaker wants to share information and ideas. Then, the speaker tends to express his feelings of life condition through the use of mood and residue found from the clause.

TABLE I. DECLARATIVE MOOD IN *BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY*

No	Types of Mood in <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Declarative	43	73.7%
2.	Imperative	9	15.8%
3.	Interrogative	6	10.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics are dominated by Declarative Mood. From examples of findings above, the element of mood structure in the clauses are realized because it has its subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct. Declarative clauses in *Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics are presented and provides information through the realized statement. It means that the tendency of declarative clauses can be seen through the meaning conveyed from the song lyrics that tell about someone's life condition as told by the speaker. The meaning conveyed can be interpreted from the use of the residue component that described someone's life condition. Also, the clause is completed with interrogative and imperative mood which is generally functions to emphasize and questions which is answered by declarative mood to strengthen the information. Thus, *Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics presented a story that is not conveyed from the speaker itself but it also tends to present the interaction from the listener.

1) *Declarative Mood in Somebody to Love*

Declarative Mood dominates the clause from *Somebody to Love* song lyrics which has 36 clauses (66.6%) from 54 clauses. Also, the clause is followed by Imperative Mood (25.9%) and Interrogative Mood (7.5%) to strengthen the occurred information from Declarative Mood. The results indicate that the speaker wants to share information and ideas. Also, the speaker tends to express the difficulties to find love that has been undertaken through the use of mood and residue components in declarative clauses.

TABLE II. DECLARATIVE MOOD IN *SOMEBODY TO LOVE*

No	Types of Mood in <i>Somebody to Love</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Declarative	36	66.6%
2.	Imperative	14	25.9%
3.	Interrogative	4	7.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Somebody to Love* song lyrics is dominated by Declarative Mood. From examples of findings above, the element of mood structure in the clauses are realized because it has own subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct. Declarative clauses in *Somebody to Love* song lyrics are presented and its functions

to give information that might influence the listener. It means that the speaker tends to convey the meanings of the song lyrics that describe the difficulties in terms of finding *Somebody to Love*. The meaning conveyed can be interpreted from the use of a residue component that describes someone's hard work to find *Somebody to Love*. Also, the clause is completed with interrogative and imperative mood which is generally functions to emphasize and questions which is answered by declarative mood to strengthen the information. Thus, *Somebody to Love* song lyrics presented a story that is not conveyed from the speaker itself but it also tends to present the interaction from the listener.

2) *Declarative Mood in Don't Stop me Now*

As shown in Table III, Declarative Mood dominates the clause from *Don't Stop me Now* song lyrics which has 34 clauses (68.0%) from 50 clauses. Also, the clause is followed by Imperative Mood (32.0%) to strengthen the occurred information from Declarative Mood. The results indicate that the speaker wants to share information and ideas. Then, the speaker tends to influence his positive vibes to enjoy the life that has been undertaken through the language choices in mood and residue regarding the meanings in declarative clauses.

TABLE III. DECLARATIVE MOOD IN *DON'T STOP ME NOW*

No	Types of Mood in <i>Don't Stop me Now</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Declarative	34	68.0%
2.	Imperative	16	32.0%
3.	Interrogative	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Don't Stop me Now* song lyrics are dominated by Declarative Mood. From examples of findings above, the element of mood structure in the clauses are realized because it has its subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct. Declarative clauses in *Don't Stop me Now* song lyrics are described and it serves as the way to describe to have a good time through the statement. It means that the speaker is doing what he wants of what kind of things makes him happy and also how he is not letting anyone stop him through the example of the imperative mood. Moreover, the speaker tries to influence the positive vibes by repeating the 'having a good time' lines as a discourse signal to enjoy life.

3) *Declarative Mood in We are the Champions*

As shown in Table IV, Declarative Mood is the only mood type that occurs in the clause from *We are the Champions* song lyrics which has 34 clauses (100%). The results from the table above display declarative mood as the only expression appeared because the speaker uses his declaration utterances to express the statement. Also, the speaker tends to motivate the listener

by showing his hard work effort that has been undertaken through the use of language choices in mood and residue component from the clause.

TABLE IV. DECLARATIVE MOOD IN WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

No	Types of Mood in <i>We are the Champions</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Declarative	34	100%
2.	Imperative	0	0%
3.	Interrogative	0	0%
Total		34	100%

*We are the Champions* song lyrics that are only dominated by Declarative Mood. From examples of findings above, the element of mood structure in the clauses are realized because it has own subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct. In contrast with the previous findings on clauses (1, 2, 3), this clause has two different subjects that realized from the song lyrics which are I and We. It indicates that the speaker does not only act as the primary information giver but he tends to engage the listener as part of the interlocutors. Declarative clauses in *We are the Champions* song lyrics are described and it serves to give information through only declarative mood. It means that the information is conveyed only by the speaker itself through the statements and the tendency of the clauses might have influenced the listener.

4) *Declarative Mood in You're my Best Friend*

This clause has similarities with the previous clause (4) in terms of Declarative Mood that occur from *You're my Best Friend* song lyrics which has 36 clauses (100%). The results from the Table. V below display Declarative as the only expression appeared because the speaker only uses his utterances to express the statement and to engage the listener. Also, the speaker tends to express the sense of belonging that has been undertaken through the use of language choices in mood and residue component to influence the listener.

TABLE V. DECLARATIVE MOOD IN YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND

No	Types of Mood in <i>You're my Best Friend</i>	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Declarative	36	100%
2.	Imperative	0	0%
3.	Interrogative	0	0%
Total		36	100%

*You're my Best Friend* song lyrics are only dominated by Declarative Mood. From examples of findings above, the element of mood structure in the clauses are realized because it has own subject, finite, predicator, complement, and adjunct. Similar to the previous findings on clause (4), this clause has two different subjects from the song lyrics which are I and You. It indicates that the speaker does not only act as the primary information giver but he tends to make sure that the listener

could be positioned themselves as the receiver of information. Declarative clauses are presented and it serves to give clear information through the speech function which occurs in the declarative mood. It means the listener gives a sense of acknowledgment that the best friend described in the lyrics is the listener itself.

C. *Modality realized in Queen's Greatest Hits selected song lyrics*

Based on the findings, few of modalization and modulation are found from all clauses. Most of them are in the form of modals finite. In *Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics, 'will', 'can', and 'can't' is the modal finite found, while 'sometimes' is the modalization. First, 'can't' is categorized in high modality. Then, 'will' is categorized in median modality while 'can' and 'sometimes' are categorized in low modality. In *Somebody to Love* song lyrics, the modals finite appear are 'can't' and 'can' which are categorized in high and low modality. Also, the modals finite 'will' can be found in *Don't Stop me Now* and *We are the Champions* song lyrics which categorized as a median modality. Last, in *You're my Best Friend* song lyrics, 'can' and 'will' are found as a median and low modality.

TABLE VI. MODALITY REALIZED IN QUEEN'S GREATEST HITS SELECTED SONG LYRICS

No	Song Lyrics	Value		
		High	Median	Low
1.	Bohemian Rhapsody	Can't,	Will	Can, Sometimes
2.	Somebody to Love	Can't	-	Can
3.	Don't Stop me Now	-	Will	-
4.	We are the Champions	-	Will	-
5.	You're my Best Friend	-	Will	Can

Based on Table VI, a different value of modality is realized from the clause that might have to convey different kinds of assertiveness through the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and listener. For example, the use of expressions related to a high modality such as 'can't' that indicates an obligation which aims to increase the power of a claim. The speaker positions himself higher than the listener to show high certainty about the event. Then, median modality such as 'will' that indicates as inclination which aims to express willingness from the action. It means that the speaker tends to relate his certainty about telling the story of the meanings conveyed from the song lyrics. Last, a low modality which is realized by 'can' indicates as a capability which aims to minimize the speaker's judgment about his possibility to allow the listener to relate the information and also 'sometimes' indicates as usuality which aims to show how often the information happen. Modality also plays an important role in terms of carrying out the interpersonal meaning from the clauses that showing to what kind of value the proposition is valid.

#### D. Generated Meaning from Interpersonal Meaning Analysis

Interpersonal meaning, as explained by Matthiessen, Teruya, & Lam (2010), relates to exchanging a piece of information or goods and services in the form of communication. It could facilitate an exchange between participants which are the speaker and the listener through the use of mood and modality. The overall results from the analysis show that the mood of a clause can be identified from its grammatical structure which is the declarative mood that is frequently used in all clauses. Based on the results, it indicates that Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics gives information about interpersonal relationship to the listener. Conforming to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) argument that language is used to exchange information in statements as Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics acts out as the information giver to the listener.

The song lyrics have been generated the pattern of interpersonal relationships from the speaker's perspective which is keen to tell a story regarding the conveyed meanings of life, love, and changes. The chronological events from the story have been conveyed through the use of language choice that occurred in the Residue component which describes the action that mostly can be seen in predicator and adjunct. It indicates many possibilities from the generated meanings through *Bohemian Rhapsody* song lyrics which tells about someone's issue that has been presented from the speaker. Then, from *Somebody to Love* song lyrics, it tells about the sense of struggling to find true love. Meanwhile, *Don't Stop me Now* song lyrics tell about someone who enjoyed his life regarding the good time that he has. On the other hand, *We are the Champions* song lyrics present the story about the hard work results to be a champion of the world. Last, *You're my Best Friend* song lyrics give a sense of belonging to a best friend who has been told by the speaker.

In general, it can be said that Queen's song lyrics create a pattern of storytelling and it can be seen from the selected song lyrics which is very complicated ones like *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the sacrifice like *Somebody to Love*, floating like *Don't Stop me Now*, engaging like *We are the Champions*, until the simple ones like *You're my Best Friend*. All of the storytelling patterns are realized through the use of a mood system that has been described in declarative mood which indicates the speaker's action/event and residue component to describe the evidence of information given from the speaker. The use of the different value of modality found from the selected song lyrics can convey the different sense and qualify the message which influences the listener.

These findings confirm Jata, Netra, & Ediwani's (2017) studies that Queen's song lyrics generally contain metaphorical expressions that are used to beautify the songs and present the meaning deeper rather than the literal meaning. All the metaphorical expressions show how it can influence the lyrical meaning because it can evoke a particular sense which can help the listener to understand what the speaker means. Also, it becomes a medium to express the emotions of the speaker, develop chronologically of the context, making cause and effect or making a comparison from one attitude to a different attitude of the song lyrics. So, from all the findings and discussion realized above, it can be said that Queen is an example of a very engaging storyteller that makes the songs favored by various

generations from the youth until elder. Also, the things that make Queen's songs interested to analyze because the songs are supported with the use of different mood types, modality, metaphorical expressions, and the background context

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This research aims to answer the following questions. To answer the first question, it could be concluded that Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics dominantly use Declarative mood as the source of information to deliver statements to the listener. Declarative mood is found dominantly in 182 clauses (78.8%) from all the song lyrics which contains 231 clauses. Other than that, few of modalization and modulation are found from all clauses in terms of modals finite. Three kind value of modality is realized which belongs to high, median, and low. It indicates that the speaker wants to present his propositions as reality in regards to the action that found in declarative clauses. From the modalization, sometimes is the only modalization that indicates the speaker describes how he argues with usuality. Then, from modulation there are 'can't', 'will', and 'can' underlying motives of the speaker's judgments to imply his decision regarding the stated information.

To answer the second question, it could be concluded that Queen's *Greatest Hits* selected song lyrics presents a story regarding the meanings of life, love, and changes which mostly occurred from all the song lyrics. It can be seen through the use of Residue component which describes the action that mostly realized in predicator as verbs that form meaning and adjunct as the description behind the meanings. The generated meanings are concluded that *Bohemian Rhapsody* tells about personal issue, *Somebody to love* tells about the search for true love, *Don't stop me now* tells about enjoying life, *We are the champions* tells about the struggle to be a champion, and *You're my best friend* tells about the thankfulness towards portrayal of a best friend.

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