
ATTITUDES IN THE SONG LYRICS OF OLIVIA RODRIGO'S *SOUR* ALBUM

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the types of attitudes and their manifestation in Olivia Rodrigo's *Sour* album. The data used in this research is song lyrics in the form of phrases, clauses, and sentences. This data was obtained from Olivia Rodrigo's official account on Spotify. The research method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative. The theory of attitude in this research is from Martin and White. This theory is used to identify the types and the manifestation of attitude in *Sour*. The results show that three kinds of attitudes (affect, judgment, and appreciation) are applied in the song lyrics. Based on the results, affect is the highest type of attitude found, with 74 frequencies (60.66%). Then, judgment is the second type of attitude that appears a lot with 39 frequencies (31.97%). The last type of attitude is appreciation, appearing at least with 9 frequencies (7.37%). Meanwhile, the manifestation, negative manifestation was the highest with 94 frequencies (77.05%), and the positive manifestation with 28 frequencies (22.95%). Affect is the highest type of attitude found in *Sour* song lyrics. Since more than 60% of the data is found in the form of expressions of feeling undesired, unhappiness, happiness, dissatisfaction, satisfaction, insecurity, and security. Meanwhile, negative manifestation is the highest type of manifestation found. Since 77% of the data is found in the form of expressions of misery, displeasure, disquiet, undesired, criticism, and condemnation.

Keywords: *Attitude; Attitude manifestation; context*

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INTRODUCTION

Attitude is an expression that contains feelings, values, or judgments that the writer or speaker wants to express. Martin and White (2005, p. 35) say “Attitude refers to feelings, including emotional reactions, behavioral judgment, and evaluation of things”. Through attitude, the writer or speaker expresses feelings about something or someone. The writer or speaker also judges someone’s character and appreciation for things that something or someone produces. There are three kinds of attitude: affect, judgment, and appreciation.

The researcher used attitude to describe the stereotyped value of assumptions or perceptions in the writer’s or speaker’s opinion. Attitude is one of three appraisal systems. The way someone expresses judgment and attitude is concerned with the appraisal theory. Martin and Rose (2007, p. 26) say, “appraisal is a system of interpersonal meaning that acts as a tool for people to negotiate their attitudes and feelings.” Appraisal serves as a resource for negotiating social relationships by telling the listener or reader how the writer or speaker feels about things and people. Literary works include novels, poems, plays and song lyrics. This research works on *Sour* song lyrics. *Sour* is chosen because the songs on this album can represent many feelings of sadness, anger, falling in love, satirizing, and appreciation. The songs in this album are widely used as back sounds for *Instagram* stories and *TikTok* videos to represent the feelings of listeners at that time. The songs in this album boomed in the middle of 2021. The lyrics in the *Sour* album contain attitudes. Without a clear understanding of attitude, context and manifestation, the listener would not be able to get the message from the song.

Attitude Rodrigo uses in writing song lyrics. Attitude conveys Rodrigo’s feelings, judgments, and appreciation for the people around her. To understand the meaning of feelings, judgments, or appreciations, listeners must learn more about Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL is a study in analyzing language based on the system of meaning. It is a theory used to analyze the relationship between the social context of the speaker and the addressee, as well as the linguistic aspects related to the language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL analyzes language based on three metafunctions: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Interpersonal meaning is one of the metafunctions in language related to how people interact by giving information, the way a person expresses judgment and attitude.

Henceforth, the researcher decided to examine the attitude, context, and attitude manifestation in the song lyrics in *Sour*. This research involves the study of SFL and appraisal. This research aims to help some people who do not know the types of attitudes and their manifestation. The research also uses theoretical support that is relevant to the problem. In addition, this research is beneficial and relevant for readers and other researchers who need references related to attitude.

Regarding the related studies, there are three related studies in this area of focus. The first review of related studies is “Critical Discourse Analysis on “We are the World for Haiti” Song Lyrics”. This research was written in 2020 by Herman & Silalahi. This research focused on investigating the song lyrics based on the composer’s attitudes, the social relation among the participants, the context of the situation, and the power relation in the discourse. The theories used in

this research were based on Martin and Rose (2003). The findings showed that all types of attitudes were found: expressing feelings, judging people's character, and appreciating things. However, one part of judging people's character was not found in the song lyrics. The second is "An Appraisal Analysis of Gossip News Texts Written by Perez Hilton". This research was written in 2011 by Ertyas. This research explored the appraisal items system in the gossip news text from Perez Hilton, taken from *perezhilton.com*. This research focused on finding out what appraising items applied in those texts; how they were applied; and why they were applied, including the ideology. The results show that the three kinds of attitude (affect, judgment, and appreciation) are applied in the texts, but mostly judgment. The ideology shows the writer's style in writing gossip news text that he supports the artist if he likes and conversely, he challenges the artists whom he does not like.

The last is 'An Attitudinal Analysis of English Song Discourse from the Perspective of Appraisal Theory'. This research was written in 2016 by Xiaqing Li. This research presents the features of the distribution of attitude resources in the English song discourse: the attitude resources affect and appreciation are frequently used in the English song discourse. Through the analysis, data result shows that in the four English song discourses the attitude resources affect and appreciation are frequently used to demonstrate the emotion of the author and the interpersonal relationship between the author and the listener. As an important symbol of expression of personal emotion and views of value, the attitude resource affect and appreciation are frequently used in the English song discourse to make the personal emotion sufficiently demonstrated, and also make the emotion understood by listeners better. The researcher chose those three

previous studies because of the similarities in terms of the focus of their research, which analyzed attitude. Meanwhile, the difference or the newest aspect in this research is that the researcher analyses the attitude in *Sour*. In addition, this research will specifically explain attitude (part of appraisal) in detail.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting the research, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative research method. Through this method, the researcher will explain in detail about attitude and manifestation. The data source in this research is song lyrics from *Sour*. The data are collected from Rodrigo's Spotify official account and from several interviews that Rodrigo did on the official YouTube channel Zach Sang Show, Rolling Stone, Disney Plus, and the New York Times. In analyzing the data, the researcher put the data into the table, categorizing the data to the type of attitude and the manifestation, discussing the data, and drawing conclusions from the results of the data analysis and Rodrigo's explanation in the interviews.

The research problems in this research are based on the background and the identification of the research problem. The first research problem is looking for the answer to the types of attitudes used in *Sour*. The second research problem is going to answer how is the attitude manifested.

DISCUSSION

Martin and Rose (2003, p.43) classify three kinds of attitudes as follows: expressing feelings (affect), judging people's character (judgment), and appreciating things (appreciation). After analyzing the data, the researcher found that three types of attitudes were used in *Sour*. The highest type of attitude used by Rodrigo in *Sour* is affect with 60.66%. The second most frequent is

judgment with 31.97%. The last is appreciation with 7.37%. In this album, Rodrigo expresses her feelings, telling her sadness, pain, hatred, and anxiety. There are also expressions of happiness, love, and gratitude.

In the type of attitude affect, un/happiness is the type of affect that appears the most which is 22.13%. The second is dis/satisfaction with 20.50%. The third is in/security with 15.58%. The least that appears is desire with only 2.45%. The second type of attitude is judgment, in judgment, normality is the highest frequency as much as 18.85%. The second is propriety with 6.56%. The third is veracity with 4.92%. The least frequency is capacity and tenacity with 0.82% each. The last type of attitude is appreciation. Only one type of appreciation appears, which is reaction with 7.37%.

Affect

Affect is the highest type of attitude found in *Sour* with 74 frequencies. The research results show that Rodrigo's song lyrics mainly express her feelings. She expresses feelings of undesired, happiness and unhappiness, security and insecurity, satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The first type of affect is undesired. Undesired is found in "Good 4 U". In her interview with Zach Sang, Rodrigo said that the song described her condition when she felt very bad seeing her ex who was much better after they broke up. She expressed her desire to be okay like her ex. She said, "God, I wish that I could do that". In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to undesired, she feels like she cannot do what her ex-boyfriend did, and she wishes she could. Through this expression, she reacts to a surge of emotion which in this case is her wish that she can be fine like her ex-boyfriend, so this is included in a situational

context. This feeling expressed how she wished she could be okay like her ex-boyfriend, who was even happier when he was no longer with her. This desire becomes 'undesired' because according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, 'wish' means to have a desire for (something, such as something that cannot be achieved). While 'hope' means wanting something to happen or come true, and refers to the possibility that that desire might occur. In other words, desire has a negative connotation, whereas hope has a positive connotation. In this case, this data refers to a 'wish' which has a negative connotation because it contains her wish, which according to her, will not happen. In this data, she wishes she could also do what her ex-boyfriend did, which she finds this wish challenging to achieve.

The second type of affect is un/happiness. In expressing her unhappiness, Rodrigo shares how miserable she feels about her work life, teenage life, and love story. While in happiness, she talks about how she feels happy, interested, giving affection and loving the people around her. Happiness and unhappiness can be found in "Driver's License". In her interview with the New York Times' Joe Coscarelli, she said that the "Driver License" song was inspired by a true story, in which she drove around her suburban town, listened to music and cried about the recent breakup. As found in the lyrics, she said, "Over all the noise, God I'm so blue". In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to unhappiness, which is misery, in which she feels miserable about her current feelings and situation. She felt tormented by all the images of her ex-boyfriend that still had not left her mind. In this utterance she uses idioms, so this is included in the cultural context. 'I'm so blue' means to be depressed or sad (definition from Thesaurus Dictionary). Through this expression, Olivia expressed that she felt so

sad about her breakup. While expressing happiness, she said, “Cause I still fuckin’ love you, babe”. She expresses her feelings related to affection. Through this expression she reacts to an external agent, which in this case is her ex, so this is included in a social context. This feeling expresses how much she still loves her ex-boyfriend. The use of the word ‘fucking’ here does not have a negative connotation, but rather a positive one, through this word she expresses how much she really loves that boy.

The third type of affect is in/security. In expressing her insecurity, Rodrigo talks about how she feels insecure about the people around her. While expressing security, she expressed her confidence in things to come. Insecurity is mostly found in “Jealousy, Jealousy”. In her interview on Zach Sang Show, she said this was written based on her experience when she was still so preoccupied with how she looked on social media and how people perceived her. Security is found only in the song lyrics “Enough for You”. In this song, she expresses how she is confident that one day she will get a better love story. As found in “Jealousy, Jealousy”, she said, “Their win is not my loss”. In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to insecurity, in this case is disquiet, in which she is insecure and unsettled by the envy she has of other girls. Through her interview with Zach Sang Show, she said that this piece of lyrics is an expression of her insecurity which she turned into a reminder to herself. Therefore, through these lyrics, she expresses her insecurities into words that can motivate her to get out of her insecurities. However, even so, she said that behind this motivational sentence, there is a sense of insecurity in it. While in expressing security in “Enough for You”, she said, “And they’ll think that I am so exciting then you’ll be the one who’s crying”. In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to confidence,

which Olivia firmly believes that she will find a good boy who will love her and treat her well, while her ex-boyfriend is the one who will feel hurt when that happened. This feeling is expressed by how confident she feels that in her next relationship, she will find someone who likes her.

The last type of affect is dis/satisfaction. In dissatisfaction, Rodrigo expressed how displeased she was for the boy she liked and for the pain the boy gave her. Then, in satisfaction, she conveys things that interest her. She expresses how she is attracted to a person or certain things. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be found in “Enough for You”. In this song, she said that she feels she is not enough in many relationships. She is given everything for someone, and yet she is still not enough, and it hurts so much, it is hard. However, on the other hand, she said that this song is about being vulnerable but she also loves how this song contains hope. As found in the lyrics, she said, “Now I don’t want your sympathy I just want myself back”. In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to dissatisfaction in this case is displeasure, which she is not happy with the way she is now. This feeling expressed about how that man has changed so many things about her. She is willing to sacrifice herself to change herself according to the type of girl he likes, but when they break up, she also feels that besides losing that boy she also loses herself because so much has changed about her. Whether it is from her appearance or even her character. While in express satisfaction, she said, “Tried so hard to be everything that you liked”. In this expression, she expresses her feelings related to interest, which she is very attracted to and really likes this boy. This feeling is expressed about how she wants to try so hard to be the girl that the boy likes.

Judgment

Judgment is the second most common type of attitude that found in *Sour*. Rodrigo expressed her evaluation and judgment of the people around her and even herself. She expresses how she perceives someone's attitude towards her. Sometimes she also insinuates how the person hurts her or is being mean to her. She expressed her judgment whether the person is acting usual or unusual, the person is capable or incapable, the person is resolute or irresolute, the person is truthful or untruthful, and whether the person is ethical or unethical.

Expressing judgment is divided into two types, there are social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem is an evaluation of social behavior and has nothing to do with laws or morals. While social sanctions are more often associated with matters in written form, in the form of rules and laws. These two types of Judgment are found in the type of judgment Rodrigo uses in *Sour*.

The first type of judgment is normality. Normality is a type of social esteem judgment. It is about how unusual someone is, such as questioning is someone's behavior usual or unusual. Normality is mostly found in "Deja vu" lyrics with 11 frequencies. In this song, Rodrigo tells about the unusual actions committed by her ex-boyfriend and her ex's new girlfriend. In her interview on Rolling Stone's YouTube channel, she said that she just thinks *deja vu* is really cool. She gets *deja vu* all the time, and she thinks it is an interesting phenomenon. She thought it would be a cool way to talk about *deja vu*, to talk about when you break up with someone and they move on. Sometimes you watch them on social media, and it turns out they are living the same life as when they were still with you. In that way, she felt that *deja vu* was not only common for her but also for

everyone. She feels that her ex will also feel *deja vu* and eventually act unusual that he is not acting as he should. Likewise, with her ex's new girlfriend, who will act unusual by feeling special even though all the treatment she received was the same as she received. As found in "Deja vu", she said, "I bet she's bragging to all her friends saying you're so unique". This judgment is the kind of normality in social esteem judgment. Through this expression, 'bragging' means to speak too proudly about what you have done or what you own (definition from Cambridge Dictionary). Through the word 'bragging', She expresses a judgment for that girl about her point of view of the girl who must have shown off to her friends about how well she was treated by her boyfriend. She knew that the girl thought that her boyfriend was treating her in a way that was unique and special to her. Through the statement, she explains that the girl is an unusual person who does not behave as she should.

The second type of judgment is capacity. It is about how capable someone is. Capacity can be found in "Brutal". In this song, she said, "And I'm not cool, and I'm not smart". In this type, she is evaluating herself. She evaluates her own capacity and abilities. This judgment is the kind of capacity in social esteem judgment which is expressed directly by her to herself regarding she is not a cool person and not a smart person. Through this expression, she said that she was not a capable person because she felt that she was neither cool nor smart.

The third type of judgment is tenacity. It is about how resolute someone is. Tenacity can be found in "1 Step Forward and 3 Steps Back". In this song, Rodrigo said, "It's back and forth, maybe this is all your fault". This judgment is the kind of tenacity in social esteem judgment which is expressed directly by her to the boy she likes. Through this

expression, she said that what was happening to her at that time was because of the fault of the boy she liked. She was the only one left behind, she was confused and wondering if she said something wrong or she did the wrong thing, but all she could conclude, whatever she was thinking and feeling was because of the boy's fault who did not provide clarity about their relationship.

The fourth type of judgment is veracity. It is about how truthful someone is. Veracity can be found in "Happier". In the song, Rodrigo said, "An eternal love bullshit you know you'll never mean". This judgment is the kind of veracity in the social sanction judgment which is expressed directly by her to her ex-boyfriend. Through this expression, she feels that her ex-boyfriend is a liar who does not prove his words. She felt that the boy was talking nonsense about eternal love. She knew that, when he said their love was eternal, he did not really mean it. Through the statement, she explains that her ex-boyfriend is a dishonest person.

The last type of judgment is propriety. It is about how ethical a person is. Propriety can be found in "Good 4 U". In the song, Rodrigo said, "Like a damn sociopath". This judgment is the kind of propriety in social sanction judgment which is expressed directly by her to her ex-boyfriend. Through this expression, 'sociopath' means a person who is completely unable or unwilling to behave in a way that is acceptable to society (definition from Cambridge Dictionary). Through the word 'sociopath', she feels that her ex-boyfriend is a mean person to her, has no concern for other people. She felt that how this boy did not care about her, by not asking how she was doing, hurting her heart, and other acts that she considered evil, that way she assumed that this boy was a sociopath who does not even fit to live in society. Through the statement, she explains that her

ex-boyfriend is someone who does not behave well.

Appreciation

Appreciation is the last type of attitude found in *Sour*. In this type of attitude, Rodrigo expresses her evaluation of things or people in the form of appreciation. In the songs on this album, she expresses good appreciation for the people around her. She appreciated people's good nature, and appreciated people's looks. These appreciations are expressed in compliments and some are expressed in the form of expressions of love.

Appreciation can be found in "Happier". In the song, Rodrigo said, "She probably gives you butterflies". This expression is kind of appreciation reaction. This appreciation is the kind of positive quality which is expressed directly by her to her ex-boyfriend new girl. Through this expression she appreciated the girl, she says that the girl must have made her ex-boyfriend happy with her. Through these words, she appreciated the girl with her sincere compliments. 'Gives you butterflies' here means if you have butterflies in your stomach or have butterflies, you are very nervous or excited about something (definition from Collins Dictionary). Through this utterance, she says that that girl must make her ex-boyfriend always nervous, excited, and happy at the same time.

Manifestation

There are two types of manifestation, there are in positive manifestation and negative manifestation. Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that all types of manifestation are used by Rodrigo in *Sour*. The most frequently used manifestation by Rodrigo in *Sour* is negative manifestation, which is 77.05%. The positive manifestation is 22.95%. On this album, Rodrigo expresses

her feelings more in a negative way. She mostly expresses feelings of misery, disquiet, displeasure, undesired, as well as negative judgments about people's attitudes, therefore, negative manifestation is the type of manifestation that appears the most.

The first type of manifestation is negative manifestation. The most negative manifestation is found in the lyrics of "Good 4 U". There are 13 data found in the song lyrics, and all of them are conveyed with a negative manifestation. Rodrigo shared how she felt, about what she wanted and about how unhappiness she was feeling at the time. Apart from that, she also gave an evaluation of her ex-boyfriend's unusual acts, as well as his dishonest and unethical. In an interview with Zach Sang Show, she said that "Good 4 U" is a song that is upbeat and hides the true feelings she wants to express. She said it was like how she said "oh I'm so in love and happy" which was not how she felt. she said, this is her favorite thing in conveying a really depressing song covered with a happy chord. According to her, these lyrics are full of sarcastic remarks, which have a different vibe than her previous slower songs about heartbreak. This song is basically a sarcastic about wishing your ex well when you really wish them nothing of the sort. As found in the lyrics, she said, "Good for you, you're doin' great out there without me, baby". This expression is a type of manifestation with a negative way. This is included in the negative way because what she said is a type of criticism or negative judgment that she expresses about her ex-boyfriend. This is included in the type of normality in social esteem which through the utterance, she said that she was happy to see her ex doing great without her, which in fact she was not really happy for that. As she said in the interview with Zach Sang, what she says in this song is not what she really wants to say. So even though she says 'good for you', in fact she is

not really good for him. Another finding in "Good 4 U", Olivia said, "Maybe I'm too emotional but your apathy's like a wound in salt". This expression is a type of manifestation with a negative way. This is included in the negative way because what she said is a type of criticism or negative judgment that she expresses about her ex-boyfriend. This is included in the type of normality in social esteem which through the utterance, she said that she was indeed too emotional about matters related to her ex, but on the other hand she also offended her ex because what she was experiencing at that time was because of the boy's indifference to her which made her situation much worse. 'Wound in salt' means to make a difficult situation even worse for someone (definition from Cambridge Dictionary). According to her, it is not about her being overly emotional or over the top, but if only her ex cared a little, things could be better than this.

The second type of manifestation is positive manifestation. The most positive manifestation is found in the lyrics of "Hope Ur Ok" and "Favorite Crime". All data found in these two song lyrics uses positive manifestation. These two song lyrics express interest in this case satisfaction affect, and affection for happiness affect. she talked about how she was so attracted to a boy that she would do whatever he wanted, she also expressed her love and affection for her friends. Through her interview on the Zach Sang Show, she said that the song "Hope Ur Ok" made her really sad, the song made her really emotional. It is a super personal song about the people she really loves. She felt that this was very hopeful. Sour is a very sort of sad, angry, and emotional record, and she wanted to end it with a song that was like, 'We're all gonna be all right. We're gonna get over it. Everything's gonna be OK, and we have each other.' It was very important for her to end this sort of sombre record on

that note. Meanwhile, through her interview with Elle, she said that the song “Favorite Crime” is about her who has forgiven herself and understands that heartbreak is a two-way street, so she does not focus anymore on her pain but she chooses to be responsible for the feeling she gets. In this song, she only focuses on telling how she is willing to be hurt for the boy she loves so much. As found in “Hope Ur Ok”, she said, “Does she know how proud I am she was created”. This expression is kind of positive feelings she expresses about her friend. This expression is included in the positive manifestation because what she expressed was a feeling of happiness, about her feeling grateful that her friend exists and be her friend. Olivia expresses her affection for her friend. She was grateful that her friend was born, exists in this world, and became her friend. She wished her friend knew that she felt grateful for that. Other finding in “Favorite Crime”, Olivia said, “The things you did, well, I hope I was your favorite crime”. This expression is kind of positive feelings she expresses about the boy she fell in love with. This expression is included in a positive way because what she expressed was a feeling of satisfaction in this case is interest, which she says that she loves this guy so much that she is even willing to let her get hurt. Here she tells that hurting her is a crime that the boy has committed against her. However, because she really loves this boy, she is willing to be hurt and she hopes that this crime is the crime that the boy likes the most.

CONCLUSION

As the title of this album is *Sour*, so is the content of the songs on this album. There are so many expressions of feelings of sadness, pain, anxiety, sarcasm, negative criticism, and negative condemnation. Far from half of the total data findings are found in the form of negative manifestations.

Rodrigo expressed many feelings of misery, displeasure, disquiet, undesired, and negative judgments about her life as a public figure who is still a teenager with a painful love story. That is why negative manifestations are the highest type of manifestations found. These songs with lots of expressions of feelings, satire, and judgments make the songs on this album widely used as back sounds for Instagram stories, reels, and TikTok videos as songs that describe the feelings of the user at that time.

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