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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN WAVE TO EARTH'S ALBUM '0.1 FLAWS AND ALL'

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how emotions are represented in the selected lyrics from wave to earth's album 0.1 flaws and all by applying Fairclough's (2010) three dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This study employed a qualitative research design. The data consisted of eight selected lyric excerpts from four songs, namely bad, homesick, calla, and peach eyes. The lyrics were collected through documentation from Genius.com and verified using YouTube Music to ensure accuracy. The data were analyzed through textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. The findings reveal that emotions are represented through various linguistic features, including second person pronouns, repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphors, and natural imagery. At the discursive level, the selected lyrics present emotional experiences that listeners may interpret based on their own experiences. At the sociocultural level, the emotional themes reflect the social and cultural realities of contemporary young people. This study concludes that emotions in the selected lyrics are not merely personal expressions but are socially constructed through language, discourse, and sociocultural contexts. The findings highlight how song lyrics function as a medium for representing emotional experiences that resonate with contemporary youth.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, emotional representation, song lyrics, sociocultural context, wave to earth.

INTRODUCTION

Music is one of the most influential forms of communication because it enables people to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences through language. Beyond functioning as entertainment, music also serves as a medium through which emotions, identities, and social values are communicated. Song lyrics, in particular, play an important role in conveying emotional messages because they combine linguistic choices with personal and cultural experiences. Recent studies also show that song lyrics have become increasingly simple and repetitive, allowing emotional messages to be communicated more directly to listeners (Parada-Cabaleiro et al., 2024). Furthermore, music has been recognized as an important medium that supports emotional well-being and self-expression, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Chen, 2024; Ruth & Schramm, 2021; Sachs et al., 2018).

Studies also show that listeners often seek out music specifically to process and regulate emotions, including feelings of sadness and longing (Sazzed, 2024). Through lyrics, songwriters are able to represent various emotions such as love, loneliness, hope, fear, and happiness in ways that listeners can understand and relate to. Therefore, song lyrics can be viewed not only as artistic expressions but also as discourse that reflects social realities and emotional experiences. Consequently, the way emotions are represented through song lyrics has become an important topic in Applied Linguistics because language not only expresses emotions but also constructs social meaning.

The representation of emotions in song lyrics has attracted increasing attention in the field of Applied Linguistics, particularly within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Rather than viewing language as a neutral means of communication, CDA examines how language reflects ideology, identity, social values, and power relations. According to Yin (2025), language is a form of social practice, meaning that every linguistic choice carries particular meanings shaped by social and cultural contexts. Regmi (2017) further explains that CDA examines the philosophical relationship between language, power, and social structures, providing a critical lens through which discourse can be analyzed in relation to broader societal realities. This perspective suggests that emotional expressions found in song lyrics are not simply individual feelings but are constructed through discourse and influenced by the society in which they are produced. Therefore, analyzing song lyrics through CDA provides a deeper understanding of how emotions are represented and how those representations relate to broader social realities.

One musical group that consistently represents emotions through simple yet meaningful language is *wave to earth*, a South Korean indie band known for producing songs that emphasize emotional honesty and everyday experiences. Unlike many mainstream popular songs that often present emotions through dramatic or highly performative expressions, *wave to earth* tends to use conversational language, natural imagery, and intimate expressions to create emotional closeness with listeners. Their album *0.1 flaws and all* explores various emotional experiences, including comfort, loneliness, belonging, emotional support, resilience, and meaningful relationships. These emotional themes make the album an appropriate source for investigating how emotions are represented through language. Previous research by Fitrawati et al. (2024) found that *wave to earth* frequently employs metaphors of love and relationships, demonstrating how figurative language contributes to emotional representation in the band's lyrics. This finding further supports the selection of *0.1 flaws and all* as the object of the present study because the album consistently portrays emotions through meaningful linguistic expressions.

Several previous studies have examined emotional representation in song lyrics using CDA. Liando et al. (2022) demonstrated that CDA can reveal how song lyrics construct social meanings through language. Similarly, Afipah and Andriani (2022) argued that song lyrics represent not only personal emotions but also broader social meanings shaped by cultural contexts. Likewise, Zaenuri et al. (2024) and Sukma et al. (2025) demonstrated that song lyrics function as discourse

reflecting ideology, cultural values, and social realities. Siregar et al. (2025) further found that song lyrics construct both self-identity and social values through critical discourse, while Pratiwi and Rosadi (2025) showed that figurative language in song lyrics serves as a form of cultural commentary and identity construction. Although these studies have contributed to understanding emotional representation in song lyrics, they mainly focus on identifying linguistic features or emotional meanings. Few studies have integrated Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework with Yin's (2025) perspective on language as social practice and Mesquita et al.'s (2016) perspective on the sociocultural construction of emotions. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining emotional representation through textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions.

Based on this perspective, the present study applies Fairclough's (2010) three dimensional framework of CDA to examine emotional representation in selected lyrics from *wave to earth's* album *0.1 flaws and all*. Fairclough's framework analyzes discourse through three interconnected dimensions, namely textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. In addition, Yin's (2025) perspective strengthens the analysis by explaining that language reflects social values, ideology, and identity, while Mesquita et al. (2016) emphasize that emotions are shaped by cultural norms and social interactions. By combining these perspectives, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how emotions are constructed through language and interpreted within broader social and cultural contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how emotions are represented in the selected lyrics from *wave to earth's* album *0.1 flaws and all* by applying Fairclough's (2010) three dimensional framework of CDA. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of Applied Linguistics, particularly in studies related to CDA, emotional representation, and song lyrics as forms of social discourse.

METHOD

Design

This study employed a qualitative research design because the research focused on interpreting and describing emotional representation in song lyrics through language. According to Creswell (2023), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, which aligns with the purpose of this study. Qualitative research was considered appropriate since the study aimed to explore the meanings constructed in the selected lyrics rather than to measure or quantify data. The analysis applied Fairclough's (2010) three dimensional framework of CDA, which consists of textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. This framework enabled the researcher to examine how emotions were represented through linguistic choices, interpreted within discourse, and understood in relation to broader social and cultural contexts.

Data and Source of Data

The data of this study consisted of eight selected lyric excerpts taken from four songs in *wave to earth's* album *0.1 flaws and all,* namely *bad, homesick, calla,*

and *peach eyes*. The lyric excerpts were selected because they contained emotional expressions relevant to the research objective. The primary source of the data was the official lyrics obtained from Genius.com and verified using YouTube Music to ensure the accuracy of the lyrics.

Data Collecting Technique

The data were collected through documentation. Morgan (2022) explains that document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents as a source of data in qualitative research, which makes it suitable for this study since the data consist of written song lyrics. The researcher first documented the official lyrics from Genius.com as the primary source and verified them using YouTube Music. After that, the researcher selected four songs that were relevant to the research focus. The lyrics from the selected songs were then examined to identify emotional expressions. From twenty-two identified lyric expressions, eight lyric excerpts were selected as the final data because they most clearly represented the emotions analyzed in this study.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed by applying Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework of CDA. First, the selected lyric excerpts were analyzed at the textual level to identify linguistic features that represent emotions, such as pronouns, repetition, rhetorical questions, metaphors, imagery, and symbolic expressions. Second, the analysis focused on the discursive dimension to explain how the emotional meanings of the selected lyrics may be interpreted by listeners. Finally, the sociocultural dimension was used to examine how the emotional representations reflected broader social and cultural contexts. To strengthen the interpretation, the findings were also discussed using Yin's (2025) perspective on language as a form of social practice and Mesquita et al.'s (2016) perspective that emotions are shaped by cultural norms and social interactions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis identified eight selected lyric excerpts from *wave to earth's* album *0.1 flaws and all.* These lyric excerpts were selected because they represent various emotional experiences and contain linguistic features relevant to Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework of CDA. The findings indicate that emotions are represented through textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. Across the selected lyric excerpts, the analysis reveals emotional experiences related to comfort, emotional attachment, loneliness, belonging, resilience, hope, affection, and vulnerability. The findings of each selected lyric excerpt are presented below.

The lyric "How could my day be bad when I'm with you?" represents emotional comfort and interpersonal connection. At the textual level, the rhetorical question and the second-person pronoun "you" create an intimate and conversational tone that emphasizes the emotional closeness between the speaker and the addressee. The negated expression "my day be bad" suggests

that the presence of another person transforms an unpleasant situation into a positive emotional experience. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays an ordinary daily moment that becomes meaningful through companionship, allowing listeners to associate the emotional message with their own interpersonal experiences. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects the tendency of contemporary young people to seek emotional comfort and support through close relationships, where happiness is often understood as being closely connected to meaningful human interaction.

The lyric "You're the only one who makes me laugh / You're the only one who gives me love" represents emotional attachment and dependence. At the textual level, the repetition of "you're the only one" strengthens emotional intensity and emphasizes the unique position of the addressee in the speaker's emotional life. The parallel structure reinforces this message by presenting the addressee as the only source of happiness and affection. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays emotional reliance as a sincere expression of intimacy and devotion, allowing listeners to relate the message to their own emotional relationships. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects the increasing openness among contemporary young people to express emotional dependence and acknowledge the importance of supportive interpersonal relationships.

The lyric "In this cold place / Where the snow hasn't melted yet / My freezing breath frozen memories" represents sadness, loneliness, and emotional isolation. At the textual level, natural imagery such as "cold," "snow," and "frozen memories" creates a vivid representation of emotional stagnation and unresolved feelings. The phrase "freezing breath frozen memories" further reinforces the atmosphere of emotional numbness through repetitive sound patterns and descriptive imagery. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays an emotional experience of being trapped in painful memories and struggling to move forward. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects emotional challenges commonly experienced by contemporary young people, particularly feelings of loneliness, emotional exhaustion, and social disconnection.

The lyric "Oh, will you please take me home? / A flightless feather" represents vulnerability and the longing for belonging. At the textual level, the direct address and the polite request expressed through "will you please" create a strong sense of emotional dependence, while the metaphor "a flightless feather" symbolizes helplessness and the loss of direction. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays the speaker's desire to find a place where they feel emotionally safe, accepted, and understood. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects the importance of belonging and emotional security within contemporary society, where many young people seek supportive relationships to cope with emotional uncertainty.

The lyric "It's raining hard today / It's a bit too much for me / I know it will make you smile / So let ourselves get wet inside the rain" represents selfless love and emotional sacrifice. At the textual level, the shift from the singular pronoun "me" to the inclusive pronoun "ourselves" indicates a movement from individual emotion toward shared emotional experience. The conjunction "so" connects personal discomfort with the decision to prioritize another person's happiness. At

the discursive level, the lyric portrays love as a willingness to endure difficulties together and to place another person's emotional well-being above one's own comfort. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects values of empathy, togetherness, and emotional support that remain important in interpersonal relationships among contemporary young people.

The lyric "Someone said that your time will be over soon / But Calla, you can always grow back" represents hope and resilience. At the textual level, the conjunction "but" introduces a contrast between discouragement and hope, while the symbolic reference to "Calla" represents renewal and the possibility of recovery after hardship. The expression "grow back" conveys optimism and personal growth despite adversity. At the discursive level, the lyric encourages listeners to remain hopeful and resilient when facing emotional difficulties. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects contemporary values that emphasize perseverance, emotional resilience, and continuous self-development despite social pressures and personal challenges.

The lyric "Peach eyes and blue skies / You'll be my sunlight / How could I not rely on you, peach eyes?" represents affection, admiration, and emotional reliance. At the textual level, the color imagery of "peach" and "blue" creates a warm emotional atmosphere, while the metaphor "my sunlight" symbolizes comfort, hope, and emotional warmth. The rhetorical question further reinforces the inevitability of emotional reliance on the addressee. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays admiration that gradually develops into emotional dependence, allowing listeners to interpret the emotional message through their own experiences of love and companionship. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects the desire among contemporary young people to establish meaningful relationships characterized by emotional closeness, trust, and mutual support.

The lyric "My life is so jerky / So would you let me hide inside your eyes" represents vulnerability and the search for emotional security. At the textual level, the informal expression "jerky" conveys instability and uncertainty, while the metaphor "hide inside your eyes" symbolizes the desire to find protection, comfort, and emotional refuge in another person. The modal verb "would" softens the request and reinforces the speaker's vulnerability. At the discursive level, the lyric portrays the need for emotional reassurance during difficult moments and presents close relationships as a source of psychological comfort. At the sociocultural level, the lyric reflects the growing willingness among contemporary young people to express emotional vulnerability openly and to seek emotional support through trusted interpersonal relationships.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the selected lyric excerpts consistently represent emotions through interconnected textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. At the textual level, various linguistic features, including rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, natural imagery, symbolism, pronouns, and parallel structures, contribute to the construction of emotional meaning. At the discursive level, the lyric excerpts present emotional experiences that listeners may interpret according to their own personal situations and relationships. At the sociocultural level, the emotional themes represented in the selected lyric excerpts reflect issues closely associated with the lives of contemporary young people,

including emotional comfort, belonging, loneliness, resilience, emotional support, affection, and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that emotions in the selected lyric excerpts are systematically represented through the interaction of textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions proposed by Fairclough (2010). Rather than functioning solely as artistic expressions, the selected lyric excerpts construct emotional meanings through deliberate linguistic choices that reflect broader social values and cultural experiences. Across the eight selected lyric excerpts, recurring linguistic features such as rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, natural imagery, symbolism, pronouns, and parallel structures consistently contribute to the representation of emotions. These findings indicate that emotional meaning is not expressed randomly but is carefully constructed through language to communicate particular emotional experiences and perspectives.

From the textual dimension, the analysis reveals that rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, natural imagery, and pronouns play significant roles in constructing emotional meanings. Rhetorical questions frequently express comfort, longing, and emotional dependence without expecting direct answers, while repetition strengthens emotional intensity and emphasizes interpersonal attachment. Similarly, metaphors and natural imagery, such as *"sunlight," "snow," "rain,"* and *"flightless feather,"* transform abstract emotional experiences into concrete and relatable representations. The consistent use of second-person pronouns also creates a sense of intimacy by directly positioning listeners within the emotional situations presented in the lyrics. These linguistic patterns demonstrate that emotional representation is achieved not only through what is expressed but also through how language is strategically organized to influence listeners' emotional interpretation.

These findings support Fairclough's (2010) perspective that language should be understood as a social practice rather than merely a neutral means of communication. Likewise, Yin (2025) argues that every linguistic choice reflects particular social values, ideology, and identity. The selected lyric excerpts consistently employ simple, conversational, and emotionally accessible language, suggesting that *wave to earth* intentionally constructs emotions through expressions that resemble everyday communication. Instead of presenting emotions through exaggerated or highly poetic language, the lyrics portray ordinary experiences of comfort, loneliness, hope, affection, and vulnerability in ways that listeners can easily recognize and relate to. Consequently, the selected lyric excerpts demonstrate that language functions not only to express emotions but also to construct particular perspectives on interpersonal relationships, emotional well-being, and human connection.

From the discursive dimension, the findings reveal that emotional meaning is constructed through the interaction between the lyric excerpts and their listeners. Although each lyric excerpt presents a different emotional experience, they share a common emphasis on emotional openness, vulnerability, and meaningful human relationships. The selected lyric excerpts portray comfort, emotional attachment,

loneliness, belonging, resilience, hope, affection, and emotional security in ways that encourage listeners to interpret the emotional messages according to their own experiences and social backgrounds. This finding suggests that emotional representation is not determined solely by the songwriter's intention but is continuously reconstructed through listeners' interpretations. Therefore, the selected lyric excerpts function not only as artistic texts but also as communicative discourses that facilitate emotional interaction between the artist and the audience.

From the sociocultural dimension, the findings indicate that the emotions represented in the selected lyric excerpts are closely connected to the emotional realities experienced by contemporary young people. As Mesquita et al. (2016) explain, emotions are culturally constructed through social interactions and shared cultural norms rather than existing solely as individual psychological experiences. This perspective is reflected in the selected lyric excerpts, which consistently represent emotional themes related to comfort, belonging, loneliness, emotional support, resilience, affection, and meaningful relationships. In the context of South Korean society, where *wave to earth* produces its music, these emotional themes reflect the growing willingness among younger generations to express emotional needs and vulnerabilities more openly. At the same time, the emotional experiences represented in the selected lyric excerpts also resonate with young people across different cultural contexts, demonstrating that emotional representation in song lyrics is capable of transcending cultural and geographical boundaries through universally recognizable emotional experiences.

The findings of this study also confirm and extend previous research on emotional representation and Critical Discourse Analysis in song lyrics. Liando et al. (2022) demonstrated that Critical Discourse Analysis can reveal how song lyrics construct social meanings through language. Similarly, Afipah and Andriani (2022) argued that song lyrics represent not only personal emotions but also broader social meanings. Likewise, Budi et al. (2025) found that linguistic choices in song lyrics construct social values and represent human experiences, a finding that is also evident in the present analysis through the use of pronouns, repetition, rhetorical questions, and symbolic expressions. Furthermore, Ardiantari et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of lexical choices and repetition in constructing emotional meanings. In addition, Pratiwi and Rosadi (2025) argued that figurative language contributes to the construction of identity and cultural meanings, while Siregar et al. (2025) demonstrated that song lyrics construct both self-identity and broader social values through discourse. Overall, the present study extends these previous findings by demonstrating that emotional representation emerges not only through lexical choices but also through the interaction of textual features, discursive processes, and sociocultural contexts within Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that emotions in the selected lyric excerpts are systematically constructed through interconnected textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. The analysis shows that linguistic features, including rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, imagery, symbolism, pronouns, and parallel structures, function collectively to represent emotional experiences that are both personal and socially meaningful. By integrating Fairclough's (2010) CDA

framework with Yin's (2025) perspective on language as social practice and Mesquita et al.'s (2016) concept of culturally constructed emotions, this study demonstrates that emotional representation in the selected lyric excerpts reflects not only individual feelings but also broader social values, cultural experiences, and the emotional realities of contemporary young people. These findings reinforce the role of song lyrics as a meaningful form of discourse through which emotions, identities, and social experiences are constructed, communicated, and shared.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study analyzed emotional representation in eight selected lyric excerpts from wave to earth's album 0.1 flaws and all using Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings demonstrate that emotions are systematically represented through textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. At the textual level, the selected lyric excerpts employ various linguistic features, including rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphors, natural imagery, symbolism, pronouns, and parallel structures to construct emotional meanings and create emotional intimacy. At the discursive level, the selected lyric excerpts present emotional experiences that listeners may interpret based on their own personal and social experiences. At the sociocultural level, the emotional representations reflect issues closely related to the lives of contemporary young people, including comfort, belonging, loneliness, resilience, emotional support, affection, and vulnerability.

These findings indicate that emotions in the selected lyric excerpts are not merely personal expressions but are systematically constructed through the interaction of language, discourse, and sociocultural contexts. By applying Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework and incorporating the perspectives of Yin (2025) and Mesquita et al. (2016), this study demonstrates that song lyrics function not only as artistic expressions but also as meaningful discourses that represent emotions while reflecting broader social values and cultural realities. Therefore, this study contributes to Applied Linguistics, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis, by providing a broader understanding of how emotional representation is constructed through language and discourse in contemporary song lyrics.

Based on these findings, future researchers are encouraged to investigate emotional representation using a wider range of songs, albums, artists, or musical genres to provide broader perspectives on emotional discourse. Future studies may also combine CDA with audience responses, interviews, or other qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of how emotional meanings are interpreted by listeners. In addition, applying other CDA frameworks, such as van Dijk's sociocognitive approach or Wodak's discourse-historical approach, may offer alternative perspectives on emotional representation in song lyrics. It is expected that this study will serve as a useful reference for future research in Applied Linguistics, particularly in the areas of Critical Discourse Analysis, emotional representation, and the relationship between language, discourse, and sociocultural contexts.

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