

"Exploring Denotative and Connotative Meanings in NF's 'The Search' Album: An In-Depth Analysis"

Mochammad Iqbal Romadhon¹
Deny Kuswahono, SS., MM., M.Hum²
Ari Astutik, SS., M.Pd³

¹²³English Department, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Wijaya Putra
e-mail: ¹iqbalromadhon26@gmail.com; ²denykuswahono@uwp.ac.id;
³ariastutik@uwp.ac.id

Abstract

This research delves into the denotative and connotative meanings embedded in NF's album "The Search," employing Geoffrey Leech's theoretical framework to unveil the intricacies of the artist's song writing. Through qualitative analysis, the study explores multiple tracks from the album, categorizing the nuanced denotative and connotative layers within each song. Addressing themes such as fame, self-identity, mental health, and personal growth, NF's lyrics provide an introspective lens for listeners. The findings illuminate those 54 lyrics in the album encompass both denotative and connotative meanings, demonstrating NF's adept use of poetic language to convey narratives of wisdom, empowerment, and acknowledgment of life's challenges. The synthesis of denotative and connotative elements crafts a profound and evocative experience, fostering a connection between the artist and the audience. The research advocates for further exploration of NF's song writing process, encouraging comparative analysis with other artists in the genre to underscore his distinctive contributions to contemporary music. Overall, the study underscores the significance of uncovering deeper meanings in song lyrics, positioning NF's music as a platform for introspection, empathy, and meaningful connection. The application of Geoffrey Leech's theory enriches the comprehension of NF's artistic expression and its resonating impact on the audience.

Keywords: Connotative, Denotative, Meanings, NF, The Search.

1. INTRODUCTION

Music, as a universal language, has been a profound medium for artists to express emotions, share personal narratives, and engage in societal commentary. In general, music comprises two primary components: sounds and lyrics, with the former being paramount and the latter serving as a secondary element (Dallin, 1994). Despite their secondary role, lyrics play a significant part in enhancing the music's meaning, providing listeners with a deeper understanding of the song's message. Essentially, lyrics elucidate the intended message of a song. As stated by Dallin (1994), "Lyrics serve as a means of communication between the songwriter and the audience, often conveying a message designed to stimulate thought. This mode of interaction is influenced by the cultural context, musical preferences, and era of the audience." Each song carries its own message, and the impact it has on the listener hinges on the quality and delivery of its lyrics (Bertoli-Dutra and Bissaco, 2006: 1053).

Within the realm of lyrics, a fascinating duality exists: the interplay between denotative and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning refers to the explicit, literal interpretation of words, while connotative meaning delves into subjectivity, encompassing personal, emotional, and cultural associations (Geoffrey Leech, 1981). This thesis undertakes a deep exploration of denotative and connotative meanings within the lyrical content of NF's acclaimed album, "The Search."

NF, born Nathan John Feuerstein, emerged as a prominent American rapper, singer, and songwriter, gaining recognition for his honest exploration of personal struggles such as mental health and a troubled upbringing. His fourth studio album, "The Search," released in 2019, continues to delve into themes of mental health, self-reflection, and personal struggles. This research aims to unravel explicit messages within NF's lyrics by analysing denotative meanings, deciphering intended themes and narratives. Simultaneously, it ventures into the realm of connotative meanings, exploring multifaceted and subjective interpretations enriched by emotions, memories, and cultural influences. By shedding light on the intricate interplay of denotative and connotative meanings within "The Search" album, this study aims to contribute to a deeper appreciation of NF's artistry and craftsmanship.

Utilizing Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory as a theoretical basis, the research analyses data from literature journals, e-books, and internet references to uncover the nuanced layers of meaning in NF's music. The objective is to enrich our understanding of the power of lyrics, their capacity to resonate with listeners, and the enduring impact they can have on hearts and minds. The research also addresses a notable gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive exploration of NF's artistic expression and the profound implications it holds for listeners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Lyrics

The nature of lyrics in music is that they serve as a form of narrative storytelling within the song. Lyrics convey meaning, emotion, and themes, much like a short story or poem does. They provide a verbal context for the music, allowing listeners to connect with the song on a deeper level. Lyrics function as a vehicle for narrative, allowing artists to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through language. Just as a story or poem has a beginning, middle, and end, lyrics often follow a similar structure, with verses, choruses, and bridges guiding the listener through the song's narrative arc. Lyrics can evoke imagery, provoke thought, and convey complex emotions, enriching the listening experience and encouraging listeners to engage with the music on multiple levels. They can also reflect the cultural and social context in which they were created, serving as a form of artistic expression and commentary on the world around us (Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, 2014).

2.2. Semantic

Semantics is one branch of linguistics that studies meaning. Pateda (2010, p. 2) argues that the term semantics is a new term in English that refers to the study of meaning (English: meaning). In line with this, Tarigan (2021, p. 7) states, "Semantics delves into the exploration of meaning. It investigates symbols or signs that convey significance, how meanings interrelate, and their impact on individuals and the broader society.". Therefore, it can be concluded that semantics is the study of meaning.

2.3. Meaning

According to Leech (1981), there are seven types of meaning that can be studied. Among them are Conceptual meaning or Denotative meaning, Associative meaning (which is further divided into Connotative meaning, social meaning, Affective meaning, Reflective meaning, and Collocative meaning), and Thematic meaning. In this study, the writer will only focus on denotative and connotative meanings.

2.3.1. Denotative Meaning

Leech (1974: 9-11) states that denotative meaning is referred to as conceptual or cognitive meaning and is widely considered a central factor in linguistic communication. Meaning is an integral part of the essential function of language. However, this does not imply that denotative meaning is the most important element in every linguistic communication act. The reason is that denotative meaning has a complex structure or carries the actual sense or intention. It is evident that denotative meaning is an inseparable part and an essential purpose of language, such that one can hardly define language without referring to this denotative meaning.

2.3.2. Connotative Meaning

According to Leech (1981:12), "Connotative meaning is the communicative value an expression has by what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content." In other words, Connotative meaning adds communicative value to an expression beyond its basic conceptual meaning, and it is influenced by the associations and emotions attached to the word.

2.2. Previous Studies

Numerous prior studies have explored the theory of denotative and connotative meanings, particularly in the context of song lyrics. One notable investigation by Ayu Lestari Yusuf focuses on Olivia Rodrigo's "Sour" album, employing qualitative analysis to unveil denotative and connotative meanings. The study contributes theoretically to linguistics, enriching the semantic domain and practically offering insights into song lyric connotations.

Another study by Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani explores denotative and connotative meanings in One Direction's songs, utilizing Withers and Keami's semantic analysis framework. The researchers identify words in selected songs that encapsulate both denotative and connotative meanings, highlighting the dominance of connotative meanings in lyrics. The study underscores the vital role semantics plays in understanding human experiences through language.

Differences among these studies lie in their specific focus, chosen frameworks, data collection methods, scope of analysis, and intended contributions. While Ayu Lestari Yusuf's analysis encompasses Rodrigo's entire "Sour" album, this research specifically dissects NF's "The Search" album. Additionally, the study by Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani focuses on specific songs by One Direction. Frameworks also differ, with this research and Ayu Lestari Yusuf's study adopting Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory, while the study by Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani uses Withers and Keami's framework. These variations contribute to nuanced interpretations.

Data collection methods vary, with this research and Ayu Lestari Yusuf sourcing lyrics from digital platforms, while Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani extract data directly from specific song lyrics. Scope of analysis differs, with this research focusing solely on "The Search" album, Ayu Lestari Yusuf analysing the entirety of "Sour," and the study by Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani targeting specific songs by One Direction. Intended contributions also diverge, with this research seeking a comprehensive analysis of denotative and connotative meanings within NF's album, Ayu Lestari Yusuf enriching linguistics and semantics, and the study by Arsiska Sari and Paramita Kusumawardhani emphasizing the dominance of connotative meanings in lyrics.

Despite the wealth of studies on denotative and connotative meanings in song lyrics, a notable gap exists in the specific exploration of NF's "The Search" album. This research aims to address this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of the denotative and connotative meanings within NF's music, contributing to the understanding of the power of lyrics in conveying emotions and messages. The unique contextual and thematic elements of NF's work warrant a focused examination, providing valuable insights into his artistic expression and the impact of his music on listeners.

3. METHODS

According to Phillips and Burbules, research involves formulating assertions and subsequently refining or discarding some of them in favour of better-supported claims. Research designs encompass the entire spectrum of decisions, from fundamental assumptions to the specific methodologies employed for gathering and analysing data. (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Utilizing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study identifies and describes the phenomena under investigation, acknowledging the inherent lack of control over the existing state of affairs, akin to the natural processes it seeks to understand.

The data source for this research is NF's album "The Search," consisting of 19 songs, with lyrics present in 18 of them. Extracting three lyrics from each song forms the basis for identifying denotative and connotative meanings. The songs are listed in the order presented in the album, ranging from "Time" to "Interlude."

Data collection, a crucial phase in determining study outcomes, follows a meticulous procedure. The steps involve reading and comprehending the lyrics in "The Search" album, identifying the denotative and connotative meanings embedded in the lyrics, and systematically separating the data from non-data. Subsequently, the data undergoes a structured analysis, involving the display of data in tables for clarity, interpretation of denotative and connotative meanings, and drawing conclusions based on the interpreted findings. This comprehensive methodology, building upon established frameworks, ensures the reproducibility and rigor of the study.

4. RESULTS

Table 1. Results of the study.

<i>No</i>	<i>Title of the Songs</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
1	Time	14 th	And I know I make you feel like you're at the end of your rope
2	Let Me Go	7 th	Shouldn't I see the sunshine now

3	When I Grow Up	12 th	I been crunchin' numbers, you ain't gotta be a mathematician
4	Returns	23 rd	I'm kidnapping all of your dreams
5	Nate	10 th	You find out pretty quick that life is more than just appearances
6	My Stress	15 th	Yeah, I'm a hostage to my own pride
7	Change	8 th	I don't like it when I drift from the safe zone
8	Leave Me Alone	14 th	But I just leave 'em on the ground right next to my self-hatred
9	The Search	16 th	Hang up my heart, let it air out
10	Hate Myself	41 st	I am not a spokesman, I'm a broken record
11	I Miss the Day	14 th	Or scared I ain't makin' a flight
12	Like This	15 th	Future doesn't pop up, then the past will
13	Only	17 th	Travel in my brain, woo, might find damage and no grace
14	WHY	4 th	I don't trust this thing that beats inside my chest
15	Trauma	4 th	Stand alone, my soul is jealous
16	Options	2 nd	I could be off of my rocker potentially
17	Thinking	30 th	Wondering, I wonder if the pressure I've been under is too much on my shoulders?
18	No Excuses	11 th	I don't throw those words around, it's just not how I do this

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Time – “And I know I make you feel like you're at the end of your rope”

The denotative of the line "And I know I make you feel like you're at the end of your rope" – This line, on a surface level, speaks about someone recognizing that their actions or words have pushed another person to their limits or to a point of extreme frustration or distress.

The connotative meaning of the line "And I know I make you feel like you're at the end of your rope" – On a deeper, emotional level, this line conveys a sense of guilt, self-awareness, and acknowledgment from the speaker about the strain they might have caused in a relationship. The metaphor "end of your rope" often suggests a point of exhaustion, desperation, or being on the verge of giving up. Thus, it paints a picture of emotional turmoil and highlights the challenges and dynamics of the relationship being addressed in the song.

5.2 Let Me Go - "Shouldn't I see the sunshine now"

The denotative of the line "Shouldn't I see the sunshine now" – On a surface level, this line is questioning why the singer isn't currently experiencing or seeing sunlight.

The connotative meaning of the line "Shouldn't I see the sunshine now" – In a metaphorical or symbolic context, the "sunshine" often represents happiness, clarity, or a positive turn in life. The line conveys a sense of expectation or hope that after a certain period or event, there should be relief or happiness. It signifies a yearning or frustration that even after enduring hardships, the singer hasn't found the peace or joy he anticipated.

5.3 When I Grow Up - "I been crunchin' numbers, you ain't gotta be a mathematician"

The denotative meaning of the line "I been crunchin' numbers, you ain't gotta be a mathematician" – Literally, this line indicates that the speaker has been working with numbers or perhaps analysing some statistics. Furthermore, the latter part suggests that the person being addressed doesn't necessarily have to be an expert in mathematics to understand or perceive the same.

The connotative of the line "I been crunchin' numbers, you ain't gotta be a mathematician" – Figuratively, the line conveys the idea that the speaker has been putting in effort, doing the hard work, or analysing their progress/situation. The mention of not needing to be a "mathematician" suggests that the results of this effort, or the signs of the speaker's grind and hustle, are evident and straightforward, even for those who aren't "experts" or deeply involved in the details. This might imply a sense of pride in the work they've done or a challenge to doubters.

5.4 Returns - "I'm kidnapping all of your dreams"

The denotative meaning of the line "I'm kidnapping all of your dreams" – At face value, this phrase suggests the act of taking away or seizing someone's dreams against

their will, as the word "kidnapping" typically means to abduct or forcibly take someone.

The connotative of the line "I'm kidnapping all of your dreams" – Metaphorically, this line can indicate dominance, control, or overshadowing someone in a particular area, perhaps in the music industry or any competitive field. By "kidnapping" someone's dreams, NF may be saying he's so influential or dominant that he's taking over or outshining others' aspirations, goals, or achievements. It can be seen as a statement of confidence, ambition, or a challenge to competitors.

5.5 Nate - "You find out pretty quick that life is more than just appearances"

The denotative meaning of the line "You find out pretty quick that life is more than just appearances" – At a basic level, this line indicates that one soon realizes that life holds more depth and substance than just how things outwardly seem or look.

The connotative of the line "You find out pretty quick that life is more than just appearances" – Figuratively, this line delves into the realization that superficial judgments, external facades, or societal perceptions don't encompass the entirety of life's experiences or an individual's true essence. It emphasizes the depth, complexities, and realities beneath the surface that are often overlooked in a world fixated on image. This can also resonate with NF's recurring theme of introspection, authenticity, and confronting one's internal struggles beyond what is projected externally.

5.6 My Stress - "Yeah, I'm a hostage to my own pride"

The denotative meaning of the line "Yeah, I'm a hostage to my own pride" – On its surface, this line indicates that the speaker feels trapped or held captive by their own sense of pride.

The connotative meaning of the line "Yeah, I'm a hostage to my own pride" – Metaphorically, this lyric delves into the internal emotional struggles associated with pride. It speaks to the idea that one's own ego, stubbornness, or unwillingness to admit faults can be imprisoning. It suggests that pride can become an internal barrier or obstacle, preventing the individual from expressing vulnerability, seeking help, or making necessary changes in life. The word "hostage" emphasizes the intense power pride can hold over an individual's thoughts and actions, hinting at the idea that it's not always easy to break free from such self-imposed constraints

5.7 Change - "I don't like it when I drift from the safe zone"

The denotative meaning of the line "I don't like it when I drift from the safe zone" – Literally, this statement suggests the speaker's discomfort when moving away from an area or state that is designated as "safe" or secure.

The connotative meaning of the line "I don't like it when I drift from the safe zone" – Figuratively, this line delves deeper into the emotional or psychological discomfort one feels when straying from familiar or comfortable territory. The "safe

zone" can symbolize mental stability, routine, familiarity, or a specific comfort level. Drifting away can mean venturing into the unknown, facing unfamiliar challenges, or confronting unresolved emotions. The lyric captures the anxiety or fear one might feel when confronting change or uncertainty, a sentiment that resonates with many who grapple with stepping out of their comfort zones.

5.8 Leave Me Alone - "But I just leave 'em on the ground right next to my self-hatred"

The denotative meaning of the line "But I just leave 'em on the ground right next to my self-hatred" – Literally, this line indicates the action of leaving something unspecified on the ground, positioning it beside the speaker's own self-loathing.

The connotative meaning of the line "But I just leave 'em on the ground right next to my self-hatred" – Figuratively, this lyric delves into the emotional landscape of the artist. Without knowing what "them" refers to from the preceding lines, the lyric generally conveys a sense of neglect or dismissal of certain feelings, thoughts, or issues. By placing them next to "self-hatred", the lyric emphasizes the intense inner conflict and negative self-perception the speaker grapples with. The act of leaving these unspecified things on the ground might reflect the artist's struggles with managing or confronting these emotions, suggesting a state of overwhelmed feelings or choosing not to address them directly.

5.9 The Search - "Hang up my heart, let it air out"

The denotative meaning of the line "Hang up my heart, let it air out" – On a literal level, this line suggests the act of taking the heart and hanging it in a manner similar to how one might hang clothes, allowing it to be exposed to the air.

The connotative meaning of the line "Hang up my heart, let it air out" – Figuratively, the lyric delves into the emotional realm. The heart is often a symbol for one's emotions, feelings, or innermost self. By expressing a desire to "hang it up" and let it "air out", it suggests a need for emotional cleansing, rejuvenation, or healing. It could be a way of saying the artist needs a break from intense emotions or experiences, or that he wants to be open about his feelings, allowing them to breathe instead of bottling them up. The imagery implies a vulnerability and openness, as well as a desire for clarity and relief from emotional burdens

5.10 Hate Myself - "I am not a spokesman, I'm a broken record"

The denotative meaning of the line "I am not a spokesman, I'm a broken record" – Literally, this line contrasts two things: not being a representative or advocate who speaks on behalf of others, and being a damaged vinyl disc that plays music (record) which, when broken, often repeats the same segment over and over.

The connotative meaning of the line "I am not a spokesman, I'm a broken record" – Figuratively, this line delves into the artist's personal struggles and feelings. By

saying he's not a "spokesman," NF might be suggesting he's not a perfect representative or role model, and he doesn't claim to speak for everyone. The term "broken record" metaphorically signifies repetitiveness and being stuck in a cycle, possibly referring to his recurring thoughts, emotions, or struggles. It can also denote his feelings of brokenness or being flawed. Overall, the lyric captures a sense of vulnerability, introspection, and the burden of repetitive negative thought patterns or emotions

5.11 I Miss the Day - "Or scared I ain't makin' a flight"

The denotative meaning of the line "Or scared I ain't makin' a flight" – On the surface, this line refers to the fear or anxiety of not being able to catch or be on time for an airplane flight.

The connotative meaning of the line "Or scared I ain't makin' a flight" – Beyond the literal sense, this line can evoke broader feelings of missing out, being left behind, or not seizing opportunities in life. It can symbolize the fear of not reaching one's goals, potential, or aspirations. The mention of "flight" may also hint at a desire for escape or change, and the fear associated with not achieving that escape or change. The line captures a sense of urgency, apprehension, and the transient nature of opportunities.

5.12 Like This - "Future doesn't pop up, then the past will"

The denotative meaning of the line "Future doesn't pop up, then the past will" – Literally, this line suggests that if something from the future doesn't appear or emerge, something from the past will.

The connotative meaning of the line "Future doesn't pop up, then the past will" – In a symbolic or emotional context, this line touches on the theme of being haunted by one's past, especially when uncertain about the future. If one doesn't have a clear direction or hope for what's ahead, memories and unresolved issues from the past can resurface and dominate one's thoughts. It speaks to the internal struggle between moving forward and being pulled back by previous experiences.

5.13 Only - "Travel in my brain, woo, might find damage and no grace"

The denotative meaning of the line "Travel in my brain, woo, might find damage and no grace" – Literally, the lyric suggests that if one were to explore the artist's mind (or thoughts), they would discover harm or injury and an absence of favor or leniency.

The connotative of the line "Travel in my brain, woo, might find damage and no grace" – On a deeper, symbolic level, this lyric portrays the vulnerability and struggles within the artist's psyches. The "damage" may represent traumas, painful memories, or emotional scars. The lack of "grace" suggests a self-awareness of the artist's imperfections, possibly the absence of self-forgiveness or an internal harshness towards oneself. This line underscores the introspective journey NF often emphasizes in his work and the complexities of his internal world.

5.14 Why - "I don't trust this thing that beats inside my chest"

The denotative meaning of the line "I don't trust this thing that beats inside my chest" – On a basic level, the lyric refers to a "thing" that "beats" inside one's chest, which is clearly the heart. It's a straightforward statement of distrust towards that organ.

The connotative meaning of the line "I don't trust this thing that beats inside my chest" – Symbolically, the heart is often associated with emotions, feelings, and one's innermost desires or motivations. By expressing a lack of trust in his heart, NF may be conveying a sense of inner conflict, uncertainty about his emotions, or a fear of vulnerability. The lyric can also suggest a distrust in his own instincts, feelings, or desires, possibly due to past experiences, traumas, or fears of being hurt or misunderstood. This expression underscores a deeper emotional turmoil or internal struggle.

5.15 Trauma - "Stand alone, my soul is jealous"

The denotative meaning of line "Stand alone, my soul is jealous" – At face value, this phrase suggests that someone is standing by themselves, and their inner being or soul feels envy or jealousy.

The connotative meaning of the line "Stand alone, my soul is jealous" – On a deeper level, this could be a reflection of the artist's internal conflict or emotional state. The idea of "standing alone" can be symbolic of isolation, loneliness, or independence. Meanwhile, the "jealous soul" could imply that the artist's core or true essence craves for connection, recognition, or something that someone else possesses. The juxtaposition of these sentiments might capture a feeling of wanting to be self-sufficient and strong, yet also yearning for something more, or feeling left out or less than in some way.

5.16 Options - "I could be off of my rocker potentially"

The denotative meaning of the line "I could be off of my rocker potentially" – Literally, this phrase suggests the possibility that the speaker might not be thinking or behaving rationally or could be in a state of instability.

The connotative of the line "I could be off of my rocker potentially" – On a deeper level, this line hints at self-awareness and the acknowledgment of one's own imperfections or vulnerabilities. The term "off my rocker" is an informal way of expressing the potential for irrationality or madness. The addition of "potentially" captures a level of uncertainty, suggesting that while the speaker recognizes this possibility about himself, it's not a confirmed trait but a potential one. It can convey a sense of unpredictability or the struggles that come with introspection and self-understanding.

5.17 Thinking - "Wondering, I wonder if the pressure I've been under is too much on my shoulders?"

The denotative meaning of the line "Wondering, I wonder if the pressure I've been under is too much on my shoulders?" – On a basic level, the speaker is questioning if the stress or challenges they have faced are becoming overwhelming, using the metaphor of weight or pressure on one's shoulders.

The connotative meaning of the line "Wondering, I wonder if the pressure I've been under is too much on my shoulders?" – Beyond the literal meaning, this line delves into the introspective nature of the speaker, emphasizing internal reflection and vulnerability. The metaphor of pressure on the shoulders evokes feelings of burden, responsibility, and potential fatigue or collapse. The repetition of "wondering" and "wonder" highlights the depth of contemplation and the gravity of the situation in the speaker's mind. It speaks to the universal human experience of feeling overwhelmed by life's challenges and seeking to understand one's own limits.

5.18 No Excuses - "I don't throw those words around, it's just not how I do this?"

The Denotative meaning of the line "I don't throw those words around, it's just not how I do this?" – On a literal level, this line indicates the speaker's refusal or reluctance to use certain words casually or carelessly. They have a particular way or method of expressing themselves.

The connotative meaning of the "I don't throw those words around, it's just not how I do this?" – This line carries deeper implications about the weight and significance the speaker gives to words. It suggests a level of respect, seriousness, and authenticity in their communication. The speaker seems to emphasize the importance of intention and sincerity when expressing thoughts or emotions. This can be inferred to indicate a disdain for superficial or insincere expressions, hinting at the value they place on genuine communication and understanding.

6. CONCLUSION

In conducting a meticulous examination of NF's "The Search" album, the investigation meticulously scrutinized the lyrics of each of its 18 songs, yielding a comprehensive dataset of 54 points. This album emerges as a captivating exploration of the human experience, skilfully weaving denotative and connotative meanings to craft a nuanced narrative. At the denotative level, the lyrics unfold clear, grounded narratives, while a deeper analysis unveils a rich tapestry of connotative meanings laden with poignant emotions, personal struggles, introspection, and societal reflections. NF adeptly navigates themes such as identity crises, the complexities of fame, feelings of isolation, and a yearning for comprehension. His candid critiques of the music industry shed light on the internal turmoil faced by artists, juxtaposing the visible glamour with profound internal struggles. The intricate interplay between direct expression and symbolic representation not only underscores NF's lyrical prowess but also positions "The Search" as a profound and introspective journey. The album's open-ended nature invites listeners to derive their interpretations, rendering it a universally relatable piece of art.

Looking ahead, future research could benefit from a comparative analysis of the lyrical content of "The Search" with NF's other albums or those of similar artists in the genre. This approach would illuminate evolving themes, stylistic choices, and the impact of societal changes on songwriting. Additionally, a holistic understanding of denotative and connotative meanings could be achieved by examining the integration of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, and instrumentation alongside the lyrics. Incorporating listener feedback and interpretations would further enrich the study, providing an expanded perspective on the album's influence and its broader impact on contemporary culture. While acknowledging these valuable insights, it is essential to recognize the limitations of the present study and encourage future endeavors to delve deeper into the multifaceted dimensions of musical expression and its profound connection with the human experience.

REFERENCES

- Akmal, S. (2011, March 13). Nasib Bahasa Aceh di tengah euforia nasionalisme Keacehan [The fate of the Acehnese language amidst the euphoria of Acehnese nationalism]. *Serambi Indonesia*, p. 1. – [printed newspaper](#)
- Amery, R. (2019). Language is more than communication: Why we should maintain the mother tongue and promote linguistic diversity. *Proceedings of the 2nd English Education International Conference* (pp. 1-5). Universitas Syiah Kuala. – [conference proceedings](#)
- Andrewes, S. (2003). Group work vs. whole-class activities. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/group-work-v-whole-class-activities> – [online text/reading](#)
- Baron, R. A., Branscombe, N. R., & Byrne, D. (2009). *Social psychology*, 12th ed. Pearson/Allyn and Bacon. – [book](#)
- Bertoli-Dutra, P and Bissaco, C.M. (2006). *In the Name of Love – Theme in U2 Songs*. 33rd International Systemic Functional Congress.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Dallin, R. (1994). *Approaches to Communication through Music*. David Foulton Publishers. Available online at: <http://www.southdowns.nhs.uk/index.cfm?request=c2007985>.
- Jackson, Virginia and Prins, Yopie. (2014). *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*.
- Lee, E. M., & Lim, L. (2000). Diphthongs in Singaporean English: Their realizations across different formality levels, and some attitudes of listeners towards them. In A. Brown, D. Deterding & E. L. Low (Eds). *The English language in Singapore: Research on pronunciation* (pp. 101-111). Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics. – [chapter book](#)
- Leech, Geoffrey N. (1981). *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*. 2nd ed., Pelican Books.
- Lightfoot, A. (2013, March 26). Mentors support children with limited English but 'gaps' in specialist skills remain. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/mar/26/english-language-support-uk-schools>– online newspaper

Muthalib, K. A. (2017). *Dialect features of Leupueng children: a study of dialect in post tsunami Aceh* [Doctoral dissertation, Deakin University]. Victoria. – dissertation

Yusuf, Y. Q., Pillai, S., & Mohd. Ali, N.T.A. (2013). Speaking Acehnese in Malaysia. *Language and Communication*, 33(1), 50-60. – journal