

EMOTIONAL FORMS IN NIKI'S SONGS ALBUM *NICOLE*: PSYCHOLINGUISTICS ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This study, entitled “Emotional Forms in Niki’s Songs Album Nicole: Psycholinguistics Analysis” aims to identify and classify the forms of emotions and to analyze the emotional meanings revealed by using Krech et al.’s (1969) theory within a psycholinguistics framework. The research focuses on seven selected songs from Niki’s album Nicole by listening to, reading, and underlining lyrics that indicate emotional expression. As a result, this research identified 179 instances of emotional data. The data were classified into 4 forms of emotions. However, the emotional pertaining to sensory stimulation pain was not identified. The dominant emotion found in this research was grief. The findings indicate that the emotional forms in Niki’s album Nicole follow systematic psycholinguistics patterns that shape meaning and contribute to understanding how emotions are constructed and conveyed in song lyrics.

Keywords: *emotional, forms, meaning, song lyrics, psycholinguistics*

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a complex concept that includes the characteristics, knowledge, beliefs, communication styles, and practices of a particular group of people. DeVito (2015) states that people pass culture from one generation to the next through communication, not through genes. Culture forms the foundation of communication. Culture and language are connected in many ways. Culture serves as the foundation of communication. Without it, we cannot understand other people’s lives, motivations, problems, or interests. Zohirjonovna (2022), defines that culture is intrinsic to human existence and functions as a powerful tool to develop society, expand knowledge, and build relationships. Emotions are not private feelings but cultural practices that shape how individuals relate to others and to the world, showing that emotion and culture are inseparable in human communication (Ahmed, 2004). Therefore,

culture is also an essential part of language study.

Language is a complex and structured communication system that allows individuals to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Sriwulandari *et al.* (2023) defines language as a systematic, primarily oral symbol system that conveys meaning related to life situations and experiences. Language consists of the various words and sounds used within a particular system and is communicated through speech, writing, and gesture. In addition, language is understood as a uniquely human ability to receive and use complex written and phonetic structures, as well as motor signals, to express specific thought and feelings. Mariani *et al.* (2019) state that individuals use language to express emotions, attitude, and personal opinion, enabling them to convey their own subjective experiences and perspectives. According to Darwin (1872), the expression of emotion is universal among humans, revealing inner feelings through facial, vocal, and bodily signs. Therefore, the study of language is known as linguistics.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language, which covers aspects such as language structure, function, and evolution. Sriwulandari *et al.* (2023) defines linguistics as the scientific study of language, involving sounds, words, and grammatical rules. Linguistics also analyzes a system that combines form, meaning, and context simultaneously. People use language to communicate, and by studying linguistics, they can understand how language works, how it is used, and how it changes and is preserved. The major of branches of linguistics includes phonetics, phonemics, morphemic, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics. In this research, the writer focuses on one branch of linguistics, namely psycholinguistics.

Psycholinguistics is often defined as the study of language and the mind. As the name suggests, it connects the fields of psychology and linguistics. Aitchison (2011) state that the common goal of those who identify as psycholinguistics is to discover the structures and processes behind the human ability to speak and understand language. Psycholinguistics views language production as the outcome of both oral and written communication. It explains how language relates to linguistic concepts and how people can recognize emotions in words through analyzing text, speech, emotional expressions, text classification, and the use of language in expressing feelings. According to Federmeier & Lee (2024), emotional context modulates lexical processing, suggesting that emotion and language share overlapping neural

mechanisms.

According to Bradley (2009), music functions as a linguistic system of emotion, allowing feelings to be encoded and communicated beyond words. The writer used Niki's songs album *Nicole* as the research object. Niki, an Indonesian artist who has gone international and won the 2022 MTV Europe Music Awards for Best Asian Act. Niki released an album titled *Nicole*, consists of twelve songs; however, the writer selected only seven songs by Niki, which is *Before*, *Backburner*, *The Apartment We Won't Share*, *Anaheim*, *Autumn*, *Ocean & Engine's*, *Take A Chance With Me*. These songs are widely published and covered online, making it easier for the writer to collect data.

The writer conducts this research out of interest in psycholinguistics, aiming to explore how people connect with language both cognitively and emotionally. This research focuses on emotional meaning, defined as the meaning that revealed through emotional expressions in the lyrics. Therefore, no additional semantic theories are applied. Since this research emphasizes the relationship between language and emotion, Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory of emotions is considered sufficient.

Listening to songs while reading the lyrics helps the writer understand the emotions that the songwriters want to convey. Therefore, the writer analyzes the emotional expressions in the song lyrics using a psycholinguistics approach. While listening to Niki's album *Nicole* and reading the lyrics, the writer noticed many emotional expressions that are worth analyzing.

METHOD

In this research a qualitative descriptive research method is applied. Qualitative research is also descriptive research, meaning that the result of data analysis is not in the form of numbers, but text words that function as descriptions. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore. The literature in field of linguistics might yield little information about the phenomenon under research, requiring the writer to gain further understanding through exploration. Qualitative research does not always aim to find cause and effect relationship but rather seeks to understand a particular situation. In this research, the descriptive data consist of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that illustrate the classification of emotions in Niki's songs album *Nicole*.

As preparation, the writer downloaded and listened to seven selected songs from Niki's album *Nicole* on the Spotify platform as the main data source. Each song was listened to three times a day to collect the data. During each session, the writer paused the song to carefully understand their content and lyrics. Therefore, to minimize errors in interpreting the lyrics, the writer also downloaded the original lyric transcripts from the internet. These transcripts were printed and examined to identify relevant data. In addition, the writer read various articles, e-journals, and books to the research topic obtained from the internet.

In the data collection process, the writer prepared the song lyrics of seven songs from Niki's album *Nicole* in transcript form to be used for collecting data. The writer collected the data by listening to the songs and reading the lyrics at the same time. While listening and reading, the writer underlined the parts of the lyrics that showed emotions. After finding and underlining the emotional lyrics, the writer wrote the data into Microsoft Words document, grouping it based on the forms of emotions according to Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory. This theory was used as a reference to determine the relevant data in accordance with the objectives of the research.

In order to analyze the data in this research, the writer employed Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory, which divides emotions into four categories: primary emotions, emotions pertaining to sensory stimulation, emotions pertaining to self-appraisal, and emotions pertaining to other people. Furthermore, the writer interpreted the meanings of these emotions based on how they were expressed in the lyrics, guided by Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory in the book *Elements of Psychology*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Identification and Classification of Emotional Forms in Niki's Songs Album *Nicole*

a. Classification of Emotional Forms in Niki's Songs Album *Nicole*

Emotions may also arise when certain situations or events individuals to express their feelings (Krech *et al.*, 1969). According to Niedenthal *et al.* (2025), emotions influence people perceive and interpret language, shaping the tone, meaning, and communicative intent words. Therefore, emotions can be classified based on whether they are positive or negative. Actions that give rise to such feelings are closely related to the situation that gibes rise to them, which causes tensions to rise. Based on the result of this research using Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory

of classification emotion, 4 forms were found. The result show that, in primary emotions form, there are 18 joy, 24 angry, 9 fear, and 39 griefs. In emotions pertaining to sensory stimulation form, there are 4 disgust and 4 delight emotions found. In emotions pertaining to self-appraisal, there are 33 success and failure, 18 pride and shame, 10 guilt and remorse emotions found. In emotions pertaining to other people, there are 18 loves and 3 hate emotions found. However, the primary emotion pain was not identified. The dominant emotion found in this research was grief. In this case, the writer limits at most 2 data for each emotion. The emotions can be described as follows;

1) Primary Emotions

a) Joy

- Data 1 *Carolina autumn, it had been a year since I saw you* (BF, V2/L1)
Since we ended it, had a year to grow into the girl you always wanted
- Data 2 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling* (BB, V1/L1)

b) Angry

- Data 1 *You hid me in your dorm room, it was Halloweekand* (BF, V1/L1-5)
I just flew across the globe, twenty-two hours just to see you
Just to barely fir on your twin-sized bed
And talk about your cool new friend
Who I never meet, who you dated as soon as I left
- Data 2 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,* (BF, V2/L3-6)
but not quite lovers
Well, we'll just pretend
You say, "It's complicated to make amends"
Well, is that the ways that we're headed then?

c) Fear

- Data 1 *Clearly, I've not learned my lesson even now* (BB, V1/L8-9)
Hope he doesn't strike me down
- Data 2 *Your demons I won't meet,* (TS, O/L1)
now someone else's word to keep

d) Grief

- Data 1 *You hid me in your dorm room, it was Helloweekend* (BF, V2/L1-5)

*I just flew across the globe, twenty-two hours just to see you
 Just to barely fir on your twin-sized bed
 And talk about your cool new friend
 Who I never meet, who you dated as soon as I left*

- Data 2 *Carolina autumn, it had been a year since I saw you* (BF, V2/L1-6)
*Since we ended it, had a year to grow into the girl you always wanted
 We're holding hands as not quite friends, but not quite lovers
 Well, we'll just pretend
 You say, "It's complicated to make amends"
 Well, is that the ways that we're headed then?*

2) Emotional Pertaining to Sensory Stimulation

a) Disgust

- Data 1 *Though you could pull me in while I brushed my teeth* (BF, PC/L2-4)
*And let your hands both freely speak
 Like I wasn't ever gonna leave*
- Data 2 *I can tell, you mean it when you kiss me slow* (AN, V1/L3)
But please, don't ask me, the answer's is no

b) Delight

- Data 1 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,* (BF, V2/L3)
but not quite lovers
- Data 2 *Though you could pull me in while I brushed my teeth* (BF, PC/L2-3)
And let your hands both freely speak

3) Emotional Pertaining to Self-Appraisal

a) Success and Failure

- Data 1 *Since we ended it, it had a year to grow* (BF, V2/L2)
Into the girl you always wanted
- Data 2 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling* (BB, V1/L1-4)
*You sound sad and alone, and you're stalling
 And for once, I don't care about what you want
 As long as we keep talking (As long as we keep talking)*
- Data 3 *You hid me in your dorm room, it was Halloweekend* (BF, V1/L1-5)

*I just flew across the globe, twenty-two hours just to see you
Just to barely fit on your twin-sized bed
And talk about your cool new friend
Who I never met, who you dated as soon as I left*

- Data 4 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,
but not quite lovers
Well, we'll just pretend
You say, "It's complicated to make amends"
Well, is that the way that we're headed then?* (BF, V2/L3-6)

b) Pride and Shame

- Data 1 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling
You sound sad and alone, and you're stalling
And for once, I don't care about what you want
As long as we keep talking (As long as we're talking)* (BB, V1/L1-4)

- Data 2 *It's pathetic, but at least you are, too* (BB, V2/L1)

- Data 3 *I just flew across the globe,
twenty-two hours just to see you
Just to barely fit on your twin-sized bed
And talk about your cool new friend
Who I never met, who you dated as soon as I left* (BF, V1/L2-5)

- Data 4 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,
but not quite lovers
Well, we'll just pretend* (BF, V2/L3-6)

c) Guilt and Remorse

- Data 1 *In a perfect world, I'd kill to love you the loudest
But all I do is live to hurt you soundless
Say, "You see I'm lying, babe" and let this go
I can never promise you tomorrow* (AN, V1/L5-8)

- Data 2 *'Cause I have yet to learn how not to be his
This city will surely burn if we keep this as it's* (AN, PC1/L1-2)

- Data 3 *I didn't obliterate these walls for you* (AT, PC/L1-3)

to come and raid my home
And here you are, right next to me
Ironically, I've never felt more alone

Data 4 *I fell for you, faster than I fell apart (Hmm)* (AT, V3/L1-2)
And I guess I'm the one to blame for letting myself fall too hard

4) Emotional Pertaining to Other People

a) Love

Data 1 *I just flew across the globe,* (BF, V1/L2)
twenty-two hours just to see you

Data 2 *Since we ended it, had a year to grow* (BF, V2/L2)
into the girl you always wanted

b) Hate

Data 1 *And talk about your cool new friend* (BF, V1/L4-5)
Who I never met, who you dated as soon as I left

Data 2 *Ask your new lover what it's like to be given* (BF, PC/L5-6)
A real fighting chance before you wish her, "Good riddance"

2. Analysis The Emotional Meaning Revealed in Niki's Songs Album *Nicole*

In order to analyze the data in this research, the writer interpreted the meanings of emotions based on how they were expressed in the lyrics. Emotions are contagious; we influence one another's moods like a "social virus" (Goleman, 2006). This idea illustrates how emotions naturally spread among individuals, not only through direct interaction but also through artistic expressions such as song lyrics. Therefore, analyzing the emotional content in song lyrics becomes essential to understand how language conveys and evokes feelings. However, the writer does not aim to describe emotions in general, but rather focuses on specific emotional experiences as they appear in particular contexts, reflecting what the songwriters perceive, feel, and think at the moment. In this way, the songwriters effectively contribute by portraying emotions within relatable, real-life situations, guided by Krech *et al.*'s (1969) theory in the book *Elements of Psychology*.

1) Primary Emotions

a) Joy

Data 1 *Carolina autumn, it had been a year since I saw you* (BF, V2/L1)

Since we ended it, had a year to grow into the girl you always wanted

Niki's feelings are expressed in the situation where she finally meets her ex-lover after a year of separation and has become the woman, he always wanted her to be.

Data 2 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling* (BB, V1/L1)

Niki's feelings are expressed in a situation where her crush feels sad and lonely. He calls her, and she does not refuse, as long as they can still talk.

b) Angry

Data 1 *You hid me in your dorm room, it was Halloweekand* (BF, V1/L1-5)

I just flew across the globe, twenty-two hours just to see you

Just to barely fir on your twin-sized bed

And talk about your cool new friend

Who I never meet, who you dated as soon as I left

Niki feels angry because she flies for 22 hours just to see her ex-lover. However, when she arrives, he hides her in his dorm room like she didn't matter. And as if that wasn't enough, he has the audacity to talk about the new person he started dating after she left. Every word, every action feels like a punch to her.

Data 2 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,* (BF, V2/L3-6)

but not quite lovers

Well, we'll just pretend

You say, "It's complicated to make amends"

Well, is that the ways that we're headed then?

Niki feels angry after the breakup because she tried to become the woman her ex always wanted. However, when they meet again, he gives her no reassurance. They hold hands, not as friends, but not as lovers either. He tells her that the situation is too complicated to allow him to fix his past mistakes. This response leaves Niki frustrated and confused, wondering whether this unclear and painful path is truly what they are meant to follow.

c) Fear

Data 1 *Clearly, I've not learned my lesson even now* (BB, V1/L8-9)

Hope he doesn't strike me down

Niki's fear becomes apparent when she admits that she has not learned from her

who once loved each other. Although a year has passed and they have grown apart, the emotional bond still lingers. They attempt to reconnect, but in a vague and uncertain manner, somewhere between friendship and something deeper. The phrase "*It's complicated to make amends*" reflects the difficulty of repairing what has been broken, as well as their uncertainty about what lies ahead.

2) Emotional Pertaining to Sensory Stimulation

a) Disgust

Data 1 *Though you could pull me in while I brushed my teeth* (BF, PC/L2-4)

And let your hands both freely speak

Like I wasn't ever gonna leave

Niki's disgust is revealed through the way her ex treats her. She feels trapped in a confusing relationship in which he keeps her physically close but provides no clarity. Their bond appears strong on the surface, yet it conceals manipulation and control. She is disgusted by how easily he toys with her feelings while keeping her in uncertainty. Even when she wants to leave, something continues to pull her back, intensifying her frustration and aversion to the situation.

Data 2 *I can tell, you mean it when you kiss me slow* (AN, V1/L3)

But please, don't ask me, the answer's is no

Niki's refusal reflects disgust, not only toward the relationship but also toward herself for remaining in a situation that feels wrong. The phrase "*I can tell, you mean it when you kiss me slow*" demonstrates Niki's awareness of the man's feelings. However, she establishes a clear boundary because she is unready for deeper commitment. Meanwhile, the phrase "*But please, don't ask me, the answer's no*" reveals her discomfort and rejection. Although she understands his affection, she resents how he pressures her toward something she does not want.

b) Delight

Data 1 *We're holding hands as not quite friends,* (BF, V2/L3)

but not quite lovers

Niki's delight is revealed through the phrase "Now we're holding hands." Even after a year apart and personal growth on both sides, their bond continues to feel strong. They attempt to reconnect, and despite the ambiguity, a sense of joy is present

in their closeness.

Data 2 *Though you could pull me in while I brushed my teeth* (BF, PC/L2-3)
And let your hands both freely speak

Niki's delight is revealed through the phrase "*And let your hands both freely speak*" She allows her ex to touch her without restriction and enjoys the moment, as if she has no intention of leaving him.

3) Emotional Pertaining to Self-Appraisal

a) Success and Failure

Data 1 *Since we ended it, it had a year to grow* (BF, V2/L2)
Into the girl you always wanted

In this context, Niki's success is revealed through her decision to separate from her ex and grow into the woman he always wanted on her own terms. By letting go of the relationship, she demonstrates her strength and takes control of her personal growth, not to please him, but to become someone she can be proud of.

Data 2 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling* (BB, V1/L1-4)
You sound sad and alone, and you're stalling
And for once, I don't care about what you want
As long as we keep talking (As long as we keep talking)

In this context, Niki's success is revealed through the phrase "*I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling*" which demonstrates that her crush still reaches out to her when he feels sad and lonely. Although she knows he contacts her only during his lowest moments, she perceives their continued communication as a personal victory and as proof that he still needs her, even if only for comfort.

Data 3 *You hid me in your dorm room, it was Halloweekend* (BF, V1/L1-5)
I just flew across the globe, twenty-two hours just to see you
Just to barely fit on your twin-sized bed
And talk about your cool new friend
Who I never met, who you dated as soon as I left

In this context, Niki's feelings of failure are revealed through her deep disappointment in her loved one. She travels a long distance to reunite and relive the intimacy they once shared. However, her hopes collapse when she discovers that he

has already begun a new relationship during her absence. This moment illustrates her failure to preserve what they once had and her heartbreak in realizing that she may no longer have a place in his life.

In this context, Niki's feeling of failure is revealed through her frustration with the uncertain reality. Although they have been apart and grown individually, a strong emotional connection still persists. They attempt to reconnect, but their relationship remains ambiguous, caught between friendship and something deeper. The phrase "*It's complicated to make amends*" illustrates the struggle to repair what was broken. This situation leaves Niki feeling as though she has failed to rebuild what they once had, resulting in disappointment both in the outcome and in the person.

Data 1 *I can't lie, it feels nice that you're calling* (BB, V1/L1-4)
 You sound sad and alone, and you're stalling
 And for once, I don't care about what you want
 As long as we keep talking (As long as we're talking)

Data 2 *It's pathetic, but at least you are, too* (BB, V2/L1)

This city will surely burn if we keep this as it's

Niki's guilt is revealed in her helplessness and anxiety over being trapped in a destructive relationship that negatively affects others. The phrase "*Cause I have yet to learn how not to be his*" demonstrates her struggle to break free from someone's influence. Meanwhile, the phrase "*This city will surely burn if we keep this as it is*" suggests the broader consequences if the situation remains unchanged.

Data 3 *I didn't obliterate these walls for you* (AT, PC/L1-3)
to come and raid my home
And here you are, right next to me
Ironically, I've never felt more alone

Niki's remorse is revealed in her attempts to make sacrifices, open herself up, and seek emotional support from someone she trusted. However, instead of receiving comfort, she experiences betrayal and emotional pain. The phrase "*And here you are, right next to me. Ironically, I've never felt more alone*" illustrates how remaining in the relationship only intensifies her loneliness, despite her efforts to stay.

Data 4 *I fell for you, faster than I fell apart (Hmm)* (AT, V3/L1-2)
And I guess I'm the one to blame for letting myself fall too hard

Niki's remorse is revealed through her disappointment in herself for falling in love too quickly. The phrase "*I fell for you, faster than I fell apart*" demonstrates her willingness to love wholeheartedly, despite being aware of the risk of emotional pain. The line "*And I guess I'm the one to blame for letting myself fall too hard*" illustrates her awareness and regret for allowing herself to be so vulnerable.

4) Emotional Pertaining to Other People

a) Love

Data 1 *I just flew across the globe,* (BF, V1/L2)
twenty-two hours just to see you

Niki's feelings of love are revealed by her willingness to travel long distances for 22 hours just to meet her ex-lover.

Data 2 *Since we ended it, had a year to grow* (BF, V2/L2)
into the girl you always wanted

Niki's feelings of love are revealed by her attempt to become the woman her ex

always wanted, even after their breakup a year ago.

b) Hate

Data 1 *And talk about your cool new friend* (BF, V1/L4-5)

Who I never met, who you dated as soon as I left

Niki's feelings of hatred are revealed in a situation where she travels for 22 hours to meet her loved one. However, pain, disappointment, and hatred arise when she discovers that he has begun a new relationship with someone else following their separation.

Data 2 *Ask your new lover what it's like to be given* (BF, PC/L5-6)

A real fighting chance before you wish her, "Good riddance"

Niki's feelings of hatred are revealed through her pain and regret in a failed relationship where she felt ignored. The phrase "*Ask your new lover what it's like to be given*" demonstrates her jealousy and bitterness toward her ex's new partner, highlighting her perception that she was never given a fair chance. The phrase "*A real fighting chance before you wish her, good riddance*" illustrates her resentment and cynical hope that the new relationship will end poorly.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of this research, the writer concludes there are 4 emotional forms identified and classified. In primary emotion form, there are 18 joy, 24 angry, 9 fear, and 38 grief emotions found. In emotions pertaining to sensory stimulation form, there are 4 disgust and 4 delight emotions found. In emotions pertaining to self-appraisal, there are 33 success and failure, 18 pride and shame, 10 guilt and remorse emotions found. In emotions pertaining to other people form, there are 18 loves, 3 hate emotions found. There is primary emotion; pain cannot be found in the data. The dominant emotions found in this research is grief; the emotion refers to the reflection of the singer's personal experience. Specifically, in the *Nicole* album, Niki tells the story of an emotional journey full of nostalgia, presenting a story of love, loss, and personal growth.

The emotional meaning revealed shows in lyrics of Niki's songs album *Nicole*. In the primary emotions joy in these songs often fleeting and ironic showing false hope or emotional, anger emotion expressed in the lyrics as a response to betrayal and unresolved

problems, pain hiding and frustration, fear emotion reflects insecurity and doubt in love and grief shows the sadness from letting go or losing someone. In the emotions pertaining to self-appraisal; pride emotion expressed is internal about survival, self-respect, and learning to let go, shame emotion connects to feelings of not good enough, guilt and remorse express regret over actions and broken relationships. In the emotions pertaining to sensory stimulation; disgust emotion reflects the feeling uncomfortable or disappointment in an intimate moment and reaction of rejection or emotional distance, delight emotion expresses in the feelings of joy while in the happy or sweet moment even if the relationship is unclear. In the emotion pertaining to other people; love emotion shows in the affection, sacrifice, longing and emotional weakness, hate reflects in sarcasm or silent resentment of how disappointment in emotional distance. This research concludes that the emotions in Niki's album *Nicole* strongly reflect real emotional experiences. Niki expresses them clearly through her lyrics.

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