

## IMPLIED MEANING AND SATIRE IN THE LYRICS OF SUKATANI BAYAR BAYAR BAYAR: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SATIRICAL STRATEGIES

<sup>1</sup>Reza Juliansa, <sup>2</sup>Otong Setiawan Djauhari

<sup>1-2</sup>English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities,  
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>[rezajuliansa46@gmail.com](mailto:rezajuliansa46@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study explores the use of implied meaning and satirical elements in the lyrics of “Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar” through a pragmatic analysis approach. The song depicts a form of public protest against illegal levies in public services, especially in regions still experiencing bureaucratic inequality. Although the lyrics use simple and repetitive diction, their meaning contains sharp criticism and hidden satire, making them interesting for pragmatic analysis. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, with a pragmatic analysis technique focusing on implicature, indirect speech acts, and irony within the lyric structure. Data were obtained by transcribing the lyrics and interpreting their meaning based on social context and language comprehension. The findings indicate that linguistic strategies such as repetition, hyperbole, and indirect speech are effectively used to convey social criticism in a satirical form. Moreover, the lyrics sharply reflect social conditions while remaining accessible to the general public. This study contributes to the development of linguistic studies, particularly in understanding the role of language as a medium of symbolic criticism in popular art. It also shows how pragmatic strategies can enhance the critical power of implicitly conveyed messages in song lyrics.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, satire, implied meaning, song lyrics, implicature, Sukatani

### Article History

Received: June 2025

Reviewed: June 2025

Published: June 2025

Plagiarism Checker No 234

Prefix DOI : Prefix DOI :  
10.8734/argopuro.v1i2.365

**Copyright : Author**

**Publish by : Argopuro**



This work is licensed under  
a [Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial  
4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans use language not only as a direct communication tool but also as a medium for expressing emotions, personal views, and criticism of social conditions. In many situations, language is often used indirectly as a strategy to avoid confrontation, which is clearly evident in the use of satire, especially in art forms such as songs.

Songs are a form of cultural expression that function as more than mere entertainment. Through their lyrics, songs can deliver social messages, voice public concerns, and reflect real conditions in society. One of the frequent themes in songs is criticism of social injustice or deviation, expressed through subtle satire. This form of indirectness often has a stronger impact due to its creative and implicit delivery.

Satire in song lyrics is usually not conveyed explicitly. Its strength lies in the hidden meaning (implicature) and indirect language use, which can be analyzed through a pragmatic approach. In pragmatics, the meaning of an utterance is not solely determined by its linguistic structure, but also by the context of speech, the speaker's intention, and the social impact of the language used. Therefore, pragmatics is an appropriate tool to dissect hidden messages and social criticism in lyrics that contain satire and irony.

The song "Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar" is a contemporary folk music piece that has attracted public attention due to its boldness in addressing illegal fees in public services. Lyrics like "bayar, bayar, bayar" ("pay, pay, pay") and "saya hanya ingin berobat" ("I just want to get treatment") actually imply a strong protest against bureaucratic inequality, especially in the healthcare sector. Though it does not use harsh or provocative language, the song conveys sharp criticism that can only be understood through a pragmatic lens.

With this background, this study aims to reveal how pragmatic strategies are used in the lyrics of "Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar" as a form of delivering social satire and to analyze the implied meanings contained within. This study is expected to contribute to pragmatic linguistic studies and enrich the understanding of how popular art can serve as an effective medium for voicing social inequality through strategic language use.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In linguistics, the pragmatic approach is a crucial tool for understanding how the meaning of an utterance depends not only on linguistic structure but also on social context, communicative goals, and relationships between interlocutors. Yule (1996) explains that pragmatics focuses on how language is used and interpreted in real practice, making shared knowledge and speech situations key factors in shaping meaning.

A key concept in pragmatics is implicature, as described by Grice (1975) in his cooperative principle framework. Grice states that in communication, speakers and listeners typically follow four conversational maxims—quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. However, in many cases, violations of these maxims are intentional to convey deeper meaning. When a maxim is violated, the listener usually seeks a hidden meaning behind the utterance. This phenomenon is known as conversational implicature. In satirical lyrics, such violations often serve as tools for indirectly conveying social criticism.

Similarly, Searle's (1979) speech act theory provides a foundation for understanding that an utterance does not always mean what it literally says. For instance, a statement that sounds like a complaint may function as criticism or warning in a specific context. In songs, such strategies are frequently used to express dissatisfaction subtly. Indirect speech acts play a significant role in masking critical intentions to make them more acceptable to the audience.

The concept of linguistic satire also contributes to understanding how language is used in lyrics. According to Simpson (2003), satire is a communicative strategy that combines irony, sarcasm, and ambiguity to express disagreement with social or political conditions. In lyrics, satire often appears through light-sounding structures that carry sharp messages. Devices such as repetition, hyperbole, and euphemism are used to disguise criticism while enhancing rhetorical impact.

Previous studies confirm that song lyrics are effective in conveying implicit social criticism. Fitri (2020) shows that in Indonesian hip-hop, metaphors and irony are used to criticize government policies. Likewise, Prasetyo (2021) finds that regional folk songs often hide satirical messages in simple expressions rich in cultural context. These studies affirm that linguistic analysis of song lyrics can reveal implicit communication strategies used to express public dissatisfaction.

However, studies that specifically examine viral local songs like "Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar" are still limited, especially from a pragmatic perspective. This song is notable because it emerged from ordinary citizens and voices criticism of illegal fees in healthcare services, without using harsh or confrontational language. Its uniqueness makes it worth studying, particularly to understand how everyday language can be used to convey social criticism through subtle but powerful linguistic strategies.

Based on this understanding, this study positions song lyrics as objects of linguistic inquiry, where language is not only an artistic expression but also a symbolic communication

tool. By using a pragmatic approach, this study aims to uncover how language operates to form social resistance through a light yet effective medium: popular music.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method as the primary approach to explore language use and implied meaning in the lyrics of “Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar.” This approach is selected due to the narrative and context-bound nature of the data, which demands deep interpretation, particularly of pragmatic elements embedded in the lyric structure. As emphasized by Creswell (2014), this method is suitable for uncovering a holistic understanding of linguistic phenomena related to the socio-cultural context surrounding them.

The song “Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar” serves as the main research object because its theme explicitly criticizes the phenomenon of illegal levies (pungli) in public services, especially in the health sector. This song is purposively selected due to its virality and widespread circulation on various digital platforms, indicating a strong connection between the lyrics and the public’s social unrest. In addition to being a form of popular cultural expression, the song also contains rich linguistic potential, such as implicatures, irony, and indirect speech acts, which are highly relevant for analysis through pragmatic theory.

Primary data were obtained by transcribing the lyrics from videos uploaded on social media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. During this process, the researcher ensured the accuracy of the transcription, including aspects of prosody such as intonation, repetition, and word emphasis, which affect interpretation. To strengthen the analysis, supporting information was also collected from news articles, public comments on social media, and various local references that provide background on the song’s origin and public reception.

**Data collection steps include:**

1. Carefully listening to and transcribing the lyrics.
2. Identifying pragmatic elements in the lyrics such as maxim violations, indirect speech, repetition, and forms of satire.
3. Analyzing the relationship between the lyrics and the underlying social reality, particularly issues of illegal fees and public service.
4. Interpreting the use of language strategies that imply social criticism through non-explicit forms of expression.

The analysis process employed content analysis. The theoretical framework includes Grice’s (1975) implicature and cooperative principle, Searle’s (1979) speech act theory, and Simpson’s (2003) linguistic satire theory, which emphasizes the importance of context and duality of meaning in satirical utterances. Each finding is examined contextually to ensure that the revealed pragmatic meaning genuinely reflects the social conditions underlying the song.

Through this method, the study aims to reveal how language functions as a tool for subtle yet effective criticism through song lyrics. Moreover, this analysis also seeks to demonstrate how language structures are strategically used to express resistance to social inequality in a communicative and widely acceptable format. Thus, this study not only explains the linguistic aspects of the lyrics but also illustrates the close relationship between language expression and the surrounding social conditions.

### **4. DISCUSSION**

The song “Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar” represents a form of symbolic resistance by the people against the widespread practice of illegal levies in public services, particularly in the health sector. Although the message is not delivered through harsh or provocative language, the song carries powerful social criticism through simple yet meaning-laden language. This analysis focuses on pragmatic elements, especially implied meaning, indirect speech acts, as well as irony and satire embedded in the lyrics.

- **Implicature and Violation of the Cooperative Principle**

In this song, conversational implicatures arise from violations of Grice's (1975) cooperative principle. The phrase:

“Bayar, bayar, bayar” (Pay, pay, pay)

when interpreted literally, may seem like a simple command. However, within the pragmatic framework and surrounding social context, the repetition clearly violates the maxim of quantity by providing redundant information without additional explanation. This violation is precisely the means through which the lyrics communicate a hidden message pointing to the systemic reality of illegal charges. Without explicitly mentioning terms such as “illegal levies” or “corruption,” listeners can grasp that the repetition symbolizes the social pressure experienced by the lower class when dealing with bureaucracy.

- **Indirect Speech Acts as Covert Protest**

Several lines in the lyrics, such as:

“Saya hanya ingin berobat” (I just want to get medical treatment)

“Saya rakyat biasa” (I am just an ordinary citizen)

are not merely factual statements, but function as indirect speech acts expressing complaints, pleas, and subtle protests. From the perspective of Searle's (1979) theory, such utterances are categorized as expressive and simultaneously indirect directives. The speaker seems to deliver aspirations or criticism of unfair treatment, but in a non-confrontational form. The effectiveness of this strategy lies in its ability to evoke empathy without provoking open resistance.

- **Irony and Satire in Language Structure**

The lyrics also utilize irony as a tool of social critique, where the verbally expressed meaning contrasts with the intended message. The expression:

“Saya rakyat biasa” (I am just an ordinary citizen)

explicitly states a social status, but within the song's context, it contains sharp criticism of the discriminatory treatment experienced by the common people. This creates tension between literal and pragmatic meaning—a hallmark of satire as described by Simpson (2003). This kind of irony becomes an effective way to voice social dissatisfaction in a covert yet impactful manner.

- **Repetition as a Tool for Satirical Emphasis**

The repetition of the phrase:

“Bayar, bayar, bayar” (Pay, pay, pay)

functions not only as a rhythmic marker in the song but also as a rhetorical device emphasizing the inequality being criticized. In pragmatic studies, repetition is often used to amplify emotional impact and highlight excessive or painful aspects. In this song, repetition serves as a satirical strategy that transforms the word “pay” from a simple transactional act into a symbol of the people's coercion under an exploitative system.

- **Social Context as the Key to Meaning**

The meaning in this song's lyrics cannot be fully grasped if divorced from the social context in which the song emerged. In areas like Sukatani, where reports of illegal fees in healthcare services have become a public issue, the song reflects the harsh reality faced by the lower-class population. Without understanding the social context, listeners might interpret the lyrics as mere personal grievances. Therefore, pragmatic analysis is crucial, as it can reveal meaning that is not explicitly stated but embedded in structure, diction, and intonation used by the songwriter.

## **5. Conclusion**

Through pragmatic analysis of the lyrics of "Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar," it becomes evident that language in this song is used as a medium for conveying social criticism implicitly and cautiously. Linguistic elements such as implicature, indirect speech acts, irony, and repetition serve as the main strategies in voicing opposition to the practice of illegal levies in public services, without resorting to confrontational or harsh expressions.

The additional layer of implied meaning is visible when seemingly simple lyrics convey profound messages about structural problems in bureaucracy. Violations of the maxims of quantity and quality, as described in pragmatic theory, allow criticism to be subtly embedded. Furthermore, the use of indirect speech acts serves to present social grievances wrapped in factual statements, which are in fact protests against social injustice.

Irony and satire are dominant elements that create depth in the lyrics. Expressions such as "rakyat biasa" (ordinary citizen) do not merely indicate social status but act as a form of critique against the unfair treatment often experienced by the lower class. Meanwhile, the repetition of the word "bayar" (pay) highlights the economic burden felt by ordinary people in accessing basic services like healthcare.

This song proves that language can act as a symbolic tool of resistance against social injustice. By connecting linguistic forms with real social contexts, a pragmatic approach provides a deeper understanding of messages that are not stated explicitly but carry significant power in raising public awareness.

## **REFERENCES**

- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In Cole, P. & Morgan, J. L. (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics Vol. 3: Speech Acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.
- Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Simpson, P. (2003). *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a Stylistic Model of Satirical Humor*. Amsterdam:
- John Benjamins.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yustika, N. P. (2022). Perlawanan Sosial dalam Musik: Analisis Wacana Kritis Lirik Lagu Tradisional di Media Sosial. *Jurnal Kajian Budaya*, 17(1), 88-102.
- Pemilik Akun YouTube. (2023). *Sukatani Bayar Bayar Bayar - Lagu Kritik Sosial tentangPungli*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/kCilUclB2Zg?si=JlPu9373GOWvE9LU>