

# CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Volume: 02 Issue: 01 | Jan 2021

## *An Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions Found in Ed Sheeran's Selected Lyrics Songs*

Nguyen Van Thao<sup>1</sup>, Herman<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Philology, Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, Vinh Phuc, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup>Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Medan, Indonesia

[nguyenvanthao@hpu2.edu.vn](mailto:nguyenvanthao@hpu2.edu.vn) (Nguyen Van Thao), [herman@uhn.ac.id](mailto:herman@uhn.ac.id) (Herman)

Received 22nd November 2020, Accepted 12th December 2020, Online 22th January 2021

**Abstract:** This research is conducted in order to find out the idiomatic expressions used in the Ed Sheeran's album songs entitled *Divine*. This research was done by using qualitative research which focused on content or document analysis. The songs from Ed Sheeran's album, *Divine*, were chosen as the data source in this research. The data were analyzed by using the theory of Makkai (1972). The researchers browsed the song album from internet, seeking the script lyrics of the song, listening and transcribing. After that, the analysis of the data covered reading, analyzing, identifying, classifying the types of idiomatic expressions found from the songs lyrics, and last was drawing conclusion. After analyzing the data, the researchers found that there were two idiomatic expressions depicted in the lyrics songs, they were phrasal verb idiom and 4 Tournure idiom. Phrasal verb idiom was the most dominant with 6 data (60%) and tournure idiom with 4 data (40%).

**Keywords:** Idiomatic Expression, Song, lyrics,

### Introduction

Language is instrumental used by people to communication. Language is very important to all people because without language we shall find difficulties to get information or to make interaction with another people. According to Algeo (2005:2), language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. Communication can be done by having an interaction. When people communicate, they use utterances to share their feelings, emotions, ideas, etc to others (Herman, 2015:41; Herman, 2016:1). This definition has several important terms, each of which is examined in some detail, those terms are system, signs, vocal, conventional, human, communicate. So that it can be concluded that language is a tool to build communication and good relationships with others which the language is conveyed based on the signs or vowels used when speaking to everyone and we are able to communicate well with languages that are mutually understood.

Idiom (idiomatic expression) are a type of informal language that have a meaning different from the meaning of the words in the expression. Halliday (2007:154) as cited in Sinaga, Herman, Hutahaeen, and Niswa (2020:11) says an idiom in the language being described is anything for which no equivalent is found in the mother tongue. According to Biber, et al (2006) said that idiomatic expressions are expressions with a meaning which is entirely different from the meaning of their parts. Hence, Hurford (2007:328) as cited in Butarbutar, Sinurat, Herman and Purba (2020:2) argues that idiomatic expressions (idioms) are multi-word phrases which that combines the literal senses of the individual words in each phrase. In the other hand, idiomatic phrase is an expression whose meaning does not conform to the principle of compositionality, and unrelated to the meaning of its parts. Referred to the definitions stated, the researchers assumed that understanding indidiomatic expressions is difficult to be done, especially for people who use English as a foreign language.

When people do not know or understand for idiomatic expressions, of course interpreting the meaning will be impossible to be happened. This is in line to Butarbutar et al (2020) statement. They stated that when readers or people are difficult to interpret the meaning, there will happen misunderstanding in interpreting the meaning. Hence, many linguists define an idiom as an expression which is fixed and cannot be understood literally; and its meaning cannot be found in the common dictionary. For example “scapegoats”, the overall meaning is not the same as the meaning of “Goat” and “Black”. Idioms might have simple sentences but sometimes it’s difficult to translate. For example “hit the sack”, literally meaning of idioms “memukul atau meninju karung”. however, “hit the sack” means “ Tidur” or “ sleep” and it’s used to tell friends or family that you are very tired so you have to sleep.

The researchers used a theory of idiom’s classification from Makkai (1972) to classify the idioms that found in a song into some categories. A song is a single work of music and often stands alone, intended to be sing by a human voice with clear and specific tones and patterns. A song could be a good way to understand of an idiom. Nowadays, Many people learn a language especially idiom within the western song. Songs can also be useful tools in learning vocabulary, sentence structure, and sentence patterns. In this study, the researchers decided to use the popular song from Ed Sheeran because have a lot of idiomatic expressions that the true meaning need to be revealed.

The analysis or research about idiomatic expressions has been conducted before in a previous research done by Hernanto (2017) in his research entitled “*An Analysis of idiomatic expressions in song lyrics from of monsters and men’s album my head is an animal*”. In his thesis, he did a research oriented to the types of idiomatic analysis and characteristic of idiom in song lyrics from of monsters and men’s album my head is an animal. The findings were there were 31 idioms found from 11 songs in the albums my head is an animal by of monster and men. As the result there are two types of idiomatic expression, there are verb+ noun phrase and verb+ particle idiomatic expressions. And also there are two characteristics of idioms these are non-compositional and compositional idioms. The research done by Hernanto was different to this research. This research is only oriented with the analysis of the idiomatic expressions to the selected song lyrics.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher interest to conduct to look for idiom. The researcher used the source of the data from Ed Sheeran’s lyrics song. Especially in this study , the researcher focus on the how idiomatic

expression are found and the dominant type of idiomatic expression found in Ed Sheeran’s lyrics song.

## II LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Definition of Idiomatic Expression

Idiom (idiomatic expression) are a type of informal language that have a meaning different from the meaning of the words in the expression. idiomatic expressions are very difficult to understand if they do not have a large vocabulary. According to Lado (2006) in Suryanata (2012:9) explain that idioms is words constructions which construct a phrase it cannot be translated literally. As an example “hit the sack”, literally meaning as “hit or punching a bag”. however, “hit the sack” means “ sleep” While Biber, et al (2006) said that idiomatic expressions are expressions with a meaning which is entirely different from the meaning of their parts. Hence, Gairn and Redman (1986:35) as cited in Butarbutar, Sinurat, Herman and Purba (2020:3) stated that an idiom is a sequence of words, which operates as single semantic unit, and like many multi-word verbs the meaning of the whole cannot be deduced from an understanding of the parts, for example: “never mind”, “hang on”, “under the weather”, and so on.

Based on the explanation above, the writer concluded that idiomatic expression are groups of words that have different meanings which are different from the meanings of each word in that group because meaning is intended usually depends on the context in which the expression is used.

### B. Types of Idiom

The researcher uses a theory of idiom based on Makkai (1972). According to Makkai types of idiom divided into two types it’s lexemic and sememic idiom. We focus particularly on lexemic idioms, which are divided further into six sub-classes: phrasal verb idioms, tournure idioms, irreversible binomials, phrasal compound idioms, incorporating verb idioms and pseudo idioms.

#### 1. Phrasal Verb Idioms

This type of idioms is always the combination of verb and particle (adverb or preposition) (Makkai 1972) for example blow up, go away, break out.

#### 2. Tournure idioms

This type of idiom consists of at least three words. there are seven categories based on their structure of tournure idioms:

- a. The form containing compulsory definite or indefinite article. An example is in a body which means “ a group of people” (spears, 2005,p.330).
- b. The form containing an irreversible binomial. An example is paced up and down which means “ work

over and over the same short route nervously or anxiously” (Spears, 2005,p.486)

- c. A direct object and further possible modifiers following the primary verb. An example is keep one’s eyes open which means “ to be on the alert, watch carefully or vigilantly for something” (Sieftring,2004).
- d. The leading verb not followed by direct object but by preposition plus noun or nothing. An example is frightened out of their wits which means “ to be extremely frightened” (Sieftring, 2004,p.316).
- e. The leading verb be. An example is to be up a creek which means “be in severe difficulty, usually with no means of extricating yourself from it” (Sieftring,2004,p.65).
- f. The form containing the compulsory it. An example is to step on it which means “hurry up” (Sieftring,2004,p.276)
- g. The form functioning as an adverb composed of several words. An example is as a matter of course which means “normally or as a normal procedure” (Sieftring,2004).

### 3. Irreversible binomials

This type of idioms has fixed structures which cannot be changed. It usually consists of two words separated by a conjunction, for example to and for which means “(of movement) toward and away from something” (Spears, 2005:706).

### 4. Phrasal compound idioms

This type of idioms refers to a nominal compound made up of preposition/adjective plus noun, noun plus noun. For example, lost heart means “to lose one’s courage or confident” (Spears, 2005;416)

### 5. Incorporating verb idioms

Incorporating verb idioms are usually separated by (-), and has some forms such as noun- verb, and adjective verb. This kind of idiom is mostly used in formal term. For example, blood-curdling means “fill you with horror” (Sieftring, 2004).

### 6. Pseudo idioms

It is “polylexonic lexeme” one or more of whose constituent lexons, in spite of being morphotactically permissible words, are not simultaneously realizations of independent lexemes in other environment as well, unless they are banned lexons.” An example for this category is chit- chat meaning “small talk”. (Makkai, 1972).

Based on the explanation above, the writer concluded that to find idiom each of type have a different form

combination to implement it. For example between phrasal verb idioms and tournure idioms. In phrasal verb idioms to found idioms it’s combination of verb and particle (adverb or preposition) or consist two words while tournure idioms consists of three words. And so do the other idioms.

### C. Definition of Songs

A song is a single work of music and often stands alone, intended to be sing by a human voice with clear and specific tones and patterns. According to Hutajulu and Herman (2019), ong is a one of the ways to communicate the enables human to cooperate. Song is considered to be a system of communication with other people using sounds and song to express a feeling, sense, idea, emotion or thought (Thao and Herman, 2020; Herman and Silalahi, 2020). Songs are usually played together with musical instruments to serve a beautiful harmony that has its own uniqueness and rhythm. Songs contain many topics or themes such as about love, family, events that have been experienced, etc. songs can also entertain themselves from boredom or through songs can learn to combine vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, and grammar. Song has two main particulars:

### D. Lyric of Song

Lyrics are a form of words that embellish a song which consists of choruses and verses. Lyrics can give listeners a deep understanding through the meaning or message of the song. When someone hears the lyrics of the song and sings repeatedly without realizing they are memorizing vocabulary. Rainey & Larsen (2002) state that many adults who ever heard a melody can recall the lyrics from a song that they heard repeatedly as adolescents, despite the fact that they had not heard the lyrics for a years. Lyrics is the words of song, especially a pop song, or a short poem which express the personal thoughts and feelings of the person who wrote it. Its means that not only the arrangement of words into sentence, but also the representation of the composer's sense and emotion to describe their feelings such as desire, struggle, love, ideas and, feeling (Sitorus and Herman, 2019:24). In addition Abrams (2009:25) as cited in Pakpahan, Herman, Purba, and Purba (2020:37) states that lyric is “any fairy short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker who expresses a state of mind on a process of perception, thought and feeling. From the definitions above, researchers can conclude that lyrics are forms of words that contain personal feelings written by songwriters and expressed in a song, which serves the audience to recognize and memorize vocabulary.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

This research is qualitative research design. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive and tends to use analysis. Furthermore, the data was taken by using descriptive design. According to Ary, Jacob & Sorensen (2010) stated that descriptive research design is to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena and to provide rich verbal description of settings, situations and participants. Understanding of phenomenon is done by observation, interviews and documentation, which aims to describe and analyze. Model of qualitative research used in this research was document or content analysis. According to Sinaga, Herman, and Marpaung (2020:453), content analysis focuses on analyzing and interpreting recorded material to learn about human behavior. The material may be public records, textbooks, letters, films, tapes, diaries, themes, reports, or other documents. The research is considered document or content analysis because it describes and analyzes the song lyrics' data.

#### B. Source of Data

In this research, the researchers used Ed Sheeran's lyrics song. The data was taken one album from sources in website. This album was divide. Divide is a third album of Ed Sheeran. In this study, the researcher only focused on two songs with the title is shapes of you and castle on the hill which was released on March 2017.

#### C. Technique of Data Collection

The data was taken from Ed Sheeran's lyrics song. There were several steps to collect the data, they were

1. Searching and downloading the album song from website
2. Searching the scripts lyrics of the songs.
3. Listening to the songs as the data for this research.
4. Transcribing all the lyrics of the selected songs..

#### D. Technique of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the writer followed several steps in order to analyze the data, they are:

1. Reading the lyric's song be carefully.
2. Analyzing the lyrics based on idiomatic expression found in the lyric's song.
3. Identifying the types of idiomatic expressions depicted from the song lyrics
4. Classifying the types of idiomatic expressions found from the songs lyrics
5. Drawing conclusion

### IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, the researchers found the idiomatic expressions was using theory of Makkai (1972) which focus on lexemic idioms and divided into six sub-classes: phrasal verb idioms, tournure idioms, irreversible binomials, phrasal compound idioms, incorporating verb idioms and pseudo idioms. The researcher found that in both songs analyzed only use two sub classes namely phrasal verb idioms and tournure idioms, which is more dominant using phrasal verb idioms. The detailed findings and discussion from the data can be seen in the following paragraph.

As already explained in the scope of previous chapter that the researchers only took 1 album with two songs. Data was analyzed using theory of Makkai (1972) said that type of idiom is divided into two lexemic and sememic idiom, but the researcher only focus on lexemic idioms which are divided further into six sub-classes: phrasal verb idioms, tournure idioms, irreversible binomials, phrasal compound idioms, incorporating verb idioms and pseudo idioms. The data was analyzed to know how idiomatic expressions are found and to find the dominant type of idiomatic expressions. The idiomatic expression could be seen in the following table. They were:

**Table 1. Data of Idiom Expression Found in Ed Sheeran Song**

No	Types of Idiom	Song title	Idiom	Meaning
1	Phrasal verb idiom	Shapes of you	Come over	To influence someone's behavior suddenly.
			Grab on my waist	To take hold of something
			Fill up your bag	To make something completely full
		Castle on the hill	One works down by the coast	To describe an activity such as a job
			I rolled down	To move downward, rotating as wheel or a ball
			my friends have not thrown up in so long	To propel or discharge something into the air
2	Tournure idiom	Shapes of you	don't mind me	to tell someone not to be disturbed
			Take my hand	The act of taking and keeping something in your hand or arms.
		Castle on the hill	But I can't wait to go home	To be very eager, anxious or impatient about something.
			One's just barely getting by	Living with the minimum amount of necessities required to survive, barely making ends meet.

More explanation from the table 1 can be seen in the following point.

1. Phrasal verb idiom

a. Come over

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “shape of you”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “verbs+ preposition”. “come” as verb while “over” as preposition. The meaning of come over are to influence someone’s behave suddenly.

b. Grab on my waist

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “shape of you”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “verbs+ preposition”. “grab” as verb while “on” as adverb. This idiom means to take hold of something.

c. Fill up your bag

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “shape of you”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “verbs+ preposition”. “fill” as verb while “up” as preposition. This idiom means to make something completely full.

d. One works down by the coast

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “Castle on the hill”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “verbs+ adverb”. “work” as verb while “down” as adverb. This idiom means to describe an activity such as a job.

e. I rolled down

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “Castle on the hill”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “verbs+ adverb”. “rolled” as verb while “down” as adverb. This idiom means to move downward, rotating as wheel or a ball.

f. my friends have not thrown up in so long

This phrase was categorized in phrasal verb idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “Castle on the hill”. This phrase consisted of with the formula “ verbs+ adverb”. “thrown” as verb while “up” as adverb. This idiom means to propel or discharger something into the air.

2. Tournure idiom

a. don't mind me

This phrase was categorized in tournure idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “shapes of you”. This idiom mean to tell someone not to be disturbed

b. Take my hand

This phrase was categorized in tournure idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “shapes of you”. This idiom mean The act of taking and keeping something in your hand or arms.

c. But I can't wait to go home

This phrase was categorized in tournure idiom. This phrase would be found in song named “Castle on the hill”. This idiom means to be very eager, anxious or impatient excited about something.

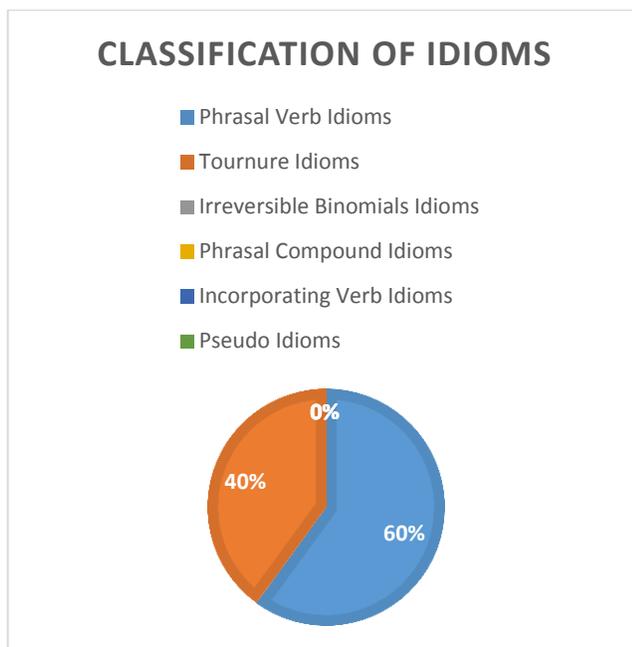
d. One's just barely getting by

This idiom was categorized in tournure idiom. This idiom would be found in song named “Castle on the hill”. This idiom means lving with the minimum amount of necessities required to survive; barely making ends meet.

From all data that have been analyzed before, the researchers would like to provide the total number of the idioms depicted in this songs in the following table 2 and figure 1.

**Table 2. Classification of idioms in Ed Sheeran Songs**

No	Classification of idioms	Amount	Percentage (%)
1	Phrasal Verb Idioms	6 idiom	60
2	Tournure Idioms	4 idiom	40
3	Irreversible Binomials Idioms	0 idiom	0
4	Phrasal Compound Idioms,	0 idiom	0
5	Incorporating Verb Idioms	0 idiom	0
6	Pseudo Idioms	0 idiom	0



## V. CONCLUSION

After analysing the data in the previous point above, the researchers conclude that there were only two idioms depicted, they were phrasal verb idioms and tournure idiom. The phrasal verb idioms is the most dominant to be depicted in this research with 60% and followed by tournure idiom with 40%. This research is still far from a high quality paper since the data used were still very few, but the researchers hope that this research will help other researcher as a reference in conducting more research about idiomatic expressions, and of course with the broaden scope and high quality one.

## REFERENCES

- Abrams, M.H. (2009). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.(9th Ed). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C.,& Sorensen,C.(2010). *Introduction To Research in Education*. USA: Wadsworth
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech. G., Conrad, S.,& Finegan, E. 2006, Longman: Grammar of spoken and written English. *In Longman: Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Longman.
- Butarbutar, E. V., Sinurat, B., Herman., and Purba, L. (2020). Idiomatic Expressions in “A Thousand Words” Movie. *Actual Social Science Review, Vol 1 No 1 (2020), PP. 1-11*. Retrieved from: <https://syniutajournals.com/index.php/ASSR/article/view/159>
- Halliday, M.A.K. (2007). *Language and Education* (Vol. 9). New York: Continuum.
- Herman. (2015). Illocutionary Acts Analysis of Chinese in Pematangsiantar. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Volume 4 Issue 12, PP.41-48*. Retrieved from [http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4\(12\)/Version-2/E0401202041048.pdf](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4(12)/Version-2/E0401202041048.pdf)
- Herman. (2016). **Students’ Difficulties in Pronouncing the English Labiodental Sounds**. *Communication and Linguistics Studies. Vol. 2, No. 1, 2016, pp. 1-5*. doi: 10.11648/j.cls.20160201.11. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/journal/paperinfo?journalid=357&doi=10.11648/j.cls.20160201.11>
- Herman and Silalahi, D. E. (2020). Critical Discourse Analysis on “We are the World 25 for Haiti” Song Lyrics. *Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET), e-ISSN: 2622-5867, p-ISSN: 2685-743x, Volume 4 number 1, March 2020, Page 36-48*. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.unib.ac.id/index.php/JEET/article/view/9710>

9. Hernanto, P. G. (2017). *An analysis of idiomatic expressions in song lyrics from of Monsters and Men`s album My Head is an Animal*. Skripsi thesis, Sanata Dharma University
  10. Hurford, J.R. (2007). *Semantics: A Course Book* (2nd edition). New York: Cambridge University Press.
  11. Lado, M. J. (2006). *Ungkapan Kata Kerja dan Idiom*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
  12. Makkai, Adam. (1972). *Idiom Structure in English*, Paris: The Hague
  13. Pakpahan, D. P., Herman., Purba, C. N., and Purba, R., (2020). **An Analysis of Connotative Meaning on Westlife Song Lyrics Based on Semantics**. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)*, Volume 04 - Issue 10, PP. 34-44. Retrieved from: <https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/D204103444.pdf>
  14. Panjaitan, P. S. A., Herman., and Sinaga, Y. K. (2020). **Figurative Language Analysis t Song Lyrics Of Billie Eilish “When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?” Album**. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)*, Volume 04 - Issue 10, PP. 10-20. Retrieved from <https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/B204101020.pdf>
  15. Rainey, D. W. And Larsen, J. D. (2002). The Effect of Familiar Melodies on Initial Learning and Long-term Memory for Unconnected Text. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter 2002), pp. 173-186. <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2002.20.2.173>. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/mp.2002.20.2.173>
  16. Siefring, J. (2004). *Oxford dictionary of idioms*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
  17. Sinaga, D. A., Herman., Hutahaean, D. T. and Niswa, K. (2020). Semantic Analysis on Idiomatic Expression in the "Central Intelligence" Movie. *European Exploratory Scientific Journal ISSN 2616-5740, Vol 4 No 3 (2020)*, PP. 10-19. Retrieved from <https://syniutajournals.com/index.php/EESJ/article/view/164>
  18. Sitorus, E. and Herman. (2019). **A Deixis Analysis of Song Lyrics in Calum Scott “You Are the Reason”**. *International Journal of Science and Qualitative Analysis. Vol. 5, No. 1, 2019, pp. 24-28*. doi: 10.11648/j.ijjsqa.20190501.14. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencepg.com/journal/paperinfo?journalid=358&doi=10.11648/j.ijjsqa.20190501.14>
  19. Spears, R. A. (2005). *McGraw-Hill’s dictionary of American idioms*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Thao, N. V. and Herman. (2020). An Analysis of Deixis to Song Lyrics “My Heart Will Go on” by Celine Dion. *Communication and Linguistics Studies. Vol. 6, No. 2, 2020, pp. 23-26*. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/journal/paperinfo?journalid=357&doi=10.11648/j.cls.20200602.12>
- <https://m.kapanlagi.com/lirik/artis/ed-sheeran/thinking-out-loud-dan-terjemahan/>
- <https://www.kompasiana.com/marloysa65062/5c57bf436ddcae18e94d41f3/apa-itu-lagu-lirik-lagu-dan-hubungan-lirik-lagu-dan-puisi-bag-1>