

A Semiotic Analysis of Nonverbal Communication in the Music Video APT by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars

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ABSTRACT

Music videos serve as a communication medium that integrates visual and auditory elements to convey messages more profoundly. Nonverbal communication in music videos plays a vital role in constructing narratives, expressing emotions, and enriching the audience's experience. This study analyzes the forms of nonverbal communication in the music video APT, performed by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars, with a specific focus on facial expressions, body movements, and spatial utilization. This research adopts a qualitative approach using visual content analysis to examine the nonverbal communication elements present in the video. Data were collected through in-depth observation and documentation. The findings reveal that the facial expressions of ROSÉ and Bruno Mars are strategically employed to emphasize the emotional content of the lyrics, while body movements and choreography reflect the musical dynamics and energy. Moreover, the use of space and background reinforces the visual narrative and supports the audience's interpretation of the song's message. These findings confirm that nonverbal communication functions not merely as an aesthetic component in music videos but also plays a significant role in meaning-making. This study contributes to the discourse on nonverbal communication in audiovisual media and offers insights for the creative industry on optimizing visual elements to enhance the appeal and communicative effectiveness of music videos. This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings of nonverbal elements, adopting visual content analysis with a qualitative approach.

Keywords: nonverbal communication, music video, facial expressions, body movements, spatial utilization

1. INTRODUCTION

Music videos are a rich medium that merges visual and auditory elements, allowing for the delivery of messages through various communication forms, including nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication encompasses facial expressions, body gestures, eye contact, and other elements that do not involve spoken words yet play a significant role in conveying meaning and emotion. In the context of music videos, these elements enrich the narrative and deepen viewers' understanding of the artist's intended message.

In contemporary communication studies, music videos are regarded not only as visual artworks but also as complex cultural communication spaces. According to Vernallis (2013), music videos construct meaning through the integration of imagery, rhythm, and movement, forming a "visual listening experience" for viewers. Visual elements are not merely decorative; they often serve as the primary narrative driver in conveying symbolic messages, particularly through nonverbal cues such as gestures, expressions, and visual symbols embedded within the video.

One compelling subject for nonverbal communication analysis is the music video *APT.*, a collaboration between ROSÉ, a member of BLACKPINK, and Bruno Mars. Released in 2024, the song swiftly climbed international music charts and drew widespread attention. The music video features an 80s-inspired aesthetic with vibrant colors and distinctive visuals, evoking a strong sense of nostalgia.

Behind these striking visuals, various forms of nonverbal communication are employed to express particular messages and emotions. Facial expressions, body gestures, and the use of props function as symbols that strengthen the narrative of the song. For example, the synchronized dance movements of ROSÉ and Bruno Mars can be interpreted as symbols of harmony and collaboration, while their facial expressions may reflect the emotions embedded within the song's lyrics.

Previous studies by Railton & Watson (2011) emphasize that music videos operate through a “visual language” that transcends verbal lyrics. In this context, bodily gestures, eye movements, and choreography play crucial roles in depicting relationships, emotional conflict, and tension—elements that may not be explicitly stated in the lyrics. This implies that nonverbal communication in music videos forms a symbolic language that shapes cultural meaning and public perception of the artists.

This study aims to analyze the forms of nonverbal communication present in the *APT.* music video and to understand how these elements contribute to delivering the song's message to the audience. By analyzing elements such as facial expressions, body movements, and spatial usage, this research seeks to deepen understanding of nonverbal communication's role in the music video.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the literature on nonverbal communication in music media, especially within the context of contemporary music videos. While numerous studies have discussed nonverbal communication in various settings, specific research focusing on music videos remains limited. Therefore, this research seeks to fill that gap and provide new insights for scholars and practitioners in communication and media studies.

The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) How is nonverbal communication utilized in the *APT.* music video by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars? (2) How do these elements contribute to the transmission of message and emotion to the audience? These questions will be answered through in-depth analysis, focusing on the video's nonverbal elements.

The theoretical foundation is based on expert concepts in nonverbal communication. Wisudawaty (2018) posits that nonverbal communication in contemporary music may include facial expressions, body gestures, and the use of artifacts, all of which serve to convey meaning to the audience. Furthermore, Amalia et al. (2022), in their semiotic analysis of nonverbal signs in Rhoma Irama's *Azza* music video, highlight the importance of understanding both connotative and denotative meanings of such signs in visual media.

The research employs semiotic analysis using a qualitative-descriptive approach. Data will be collected through intensive observation of the *APT.* video, documenting and analyzing nonverbal elements that appear. Each element will be interpreted to uncover its significance and contribution to the overall message.

The findings are expected to provide comprehensive insights into how nonverbal communication functions in music videos and how such elements can effectively convey emotions and narratives to audiences. Additionally, the research may serve as a reference for professionals in the music and media industries seeking to craft more engaging and meaningful audiovisual productions.

Hence, this study contributes not only to the development of nonverbal communication theory but also carries practical implications for the creative industry. A deeper understanding of nonverbal communication in music videos can assist creators in designing more impactful and communicative visual elements, thereby enhancing the quality and appeal of their productions.

Nonverbal communication is a crucial aspect of human interaction that involves conveying messages without spoken words. According to Wisudawaty (2018), nonverbal communication includes facial expressions, body movements, vocal tone, and spatial usage, all of which serve to deliver specific meanings in social interaction. In the context of music videos, these nonverbal elements are essential for expressing emotions and narratives not always explicitly conveyed through lyrics.

The theory of nonverbal communication emphasizes that messages delivered without words can have an equal or even stronger impact than verbal communication. Birdwhistell (1970), in his theory of kinesics, argued that bodily movements and facial expressions represent a language with its own structure and meaning. This aligns with Argyle (1988), who highlighted the role of nonverbal communication in regulating social interaction, expressing emotions, and conveying interpersonal attitudes.

In addition, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is applied to analyze the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings within the visual elements. According to Barthes (1977), signs in visual media can be interpreted on three levels: denotation (literal meaning), connotation (associated meaning), and myth (ideological meaning that reinforces cultural beliefs). This framework allows deeper analysis into the layered meanings communicated nonverbally in the music video.

Facial expression is one of the primary components of nonverbal communication used to express emotions and feelings. Ekman and Friesen (1975) identified six basic emotions recognizable through facial expressions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust. In music videos, the artist's facial expressions can enhance the emotional messages being delivered, helping viewers grasp the sentiment of the song.

Body movement and gestures also play a vital role in nonverbal communication. Hand movements, body posture, and walking style can provide cues about a person's feelings and attitudes. According to Kendon (2004), gestures may function as substitutes for words or

emphasize verbal messages. In music videos, choreography and dance movements are frequently used to express the theme of a song and to enhance visual appeal.

The use of space and distance, or proxemics, is another element of nonverbal communication that refers to how individuals utilize physical space in social interaction. Hall (1966) identified four interpersonal distance zones: intimate, personal, social, and public. In music videos, the spatial arrangement of artists and visual elements can influence how audiences interpret relationships and dynamics portrayed in the narrative.

The context of nonverbal communication in music videos is highly complex, involving a combination of visual and auditory components. According to Amalia et al. (2022), nonverbal signs in music videos can be analyzed using a semiotic approach to understand both their denotative and connotative meanings. For instance, the use of colors, lighting, and other visual symbols can provide clues about the themes and emotions the video seeks to communicate.

Previous studies have shown how nonverbal elements are used to convey messages and shape viewer perception. Amalia et al. (2022) examined nonverbal semiotics in the music video *Azza* by Rhoma Irama and found that bodily movements, facial expressions, and other visuals communicated religious and moral messages. Similarly, Sopian (2024), in his study on beatbox performances in Cianjur, demonstrated how facial expressions and body gestures express rhythm and emotion in beatbox music.

In the context of the *APT.* music video by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars, analyzing nonverbal communication provides insight into how elements such as facial expressions, body movements, and spatial usage deliver messages and emotions to the audience. For example, ROSÉ and Bruno Mars' facial expressions may reflect the feelings conveyed in the lyrics, while their dance movements may reinforce the song's themes and atmosphere.

Furthermore, the spatial dynamics in the video—such as artist placement and interaction with the visual setting—offer cues about the relationships and storylines being portrayed. Analyzing these elements can help us understand how nonverbal communication contributes to the video's overall message.

In summary, nonverbal communication plays an essential role in music videos as a tool for expressing emotions, themes, and narratives that may not be directly conveyed through lyrics. By understanding nonverbal elements such as facial expression, body movement, and space usage, we can gain deeper insight into the messages and meanings the artists aim to convey to their audience.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze nonverbal communication in the music video *APT.* by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars. The qualitative method was chosen as it allows researchers to deeply explore the underlying meanings of the phenomenon being studied through subjective interpretation. According to Sugiyono (2017), qualitative research aims to understand human or social phenomena by uncovering the meaning embedded in the collected data.

The primary method employed in this study is visual content analysis. Visual content analysis is a technique used to identify, examine, and interpret patterns or themes within visual data. As stated by Margono (2010), content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences by interpreting the context of data. In this study, visual content analysis is used to investigate the nonverbal communication elements found within the music video. In this research, the analysis focuses on identifying visual signs, interpreting their denotative and connotative meanings, and uncovering underlying myths as proposed by Roland Barthes.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through observation and documentation. Observation was performed by watching the *APT.* music video repeatedly to identify nonverbal communication elements such as facial expressions, body movements, spatial usage, and other visual components. According to Nasution (2003), observation is the foundation of all scientific knowledge, where researchers use their observational capacity to understand the phenomena being studied.

In addition to observation, documentation was used to gather supporting data. Documentation involves collecting data from written or visual materials relevant to the research topic. Sugiyono (2017) explains that the documentation method is employed to collect data from documents that can support the research. In this case, documentation includes the collection of song lyrics, video images, and other related information about the *APT.* music video.

Research Object

The object of this study is the *APT.* music video performed by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars. This particular video was selected because it features a variety of nonverbal communication elements that are compelling and appropriate for analysis. According to Moleong (2018), objects in qualitative research are purposively selected based on specific considerations aligned with the research objectives.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was conducted through codification of the nonverbal communication elements found in the video. Codification involved categorizing the data into specific groups to facilitate analysis. As explained by Miles and Huberman (1994), the process of qualitative data analysis includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In this study, elements such as facial expressions, body movements, and spatial usage were coded and analyzed to interpret the meanings they conveyed.

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing observational results with documentation and relevant literature. Patton (1999) defines triangulation as a technique used to improve data validity by employing multiple data sources or collection methods. This process enabled the researcher to ensure that the findings were accurate and reliable.

Throughout the research process, the researcher maintained objectivity by avoiding bias and ensuring that data interpretations were based on actual findings. Moleong (2018) emphasized that qualitative researchers must remain objective and should not allow personal opinions to influence the results. Accordingly, the researcher remained neutral and focused solely on the data collected.

Upon completing the analysis, the research findings are presented in a descriptive format, outlining the key results concerning nonverbal communication in the *APT.* music video. Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research results are typically presented in descriptive narratives to provide a detailed understanding of the analyzed data.

With the methodology described above, this study aims to offer an in-depth understanding of how nonverbal communication is utilized in the *APT.* music video by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars, and the meanings conveyed through these visual elements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to analyze nonverbal communication within the *APT.* music video performed by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars. The analysis focuses on three primary aspects: facial expressions, body movements and choreography, and the use of space and background.

Description of Nonverbal Communication in the Music Video

Facial Expressions of the Artists



Figure 1. Bruno Mars flashes a wide smile at minute 1:10 while singing the lyric “Don’t you want me like I want you, baby?”

Throughout the video, both ROSÉ and Bruno Mars exhibit various facial expressions that support the song’s narrative. At minute 1:10, Bruno Mars is seen smiling broadly while singing the lyric, “*Don’t you want me like I want you, baby?*”—an expression of happiness and emotional involvement. This smile can be interpreted as a symbol of joy and emotional

intensity in the context of the song. As noted by Amalia et al. (2022), facial expressions in music videos strengthen the emotional messages intended for the audience.

Body Movements and Choreography



Figure 2. At minute 0:45, ROSÉ and Bruno Mars perform energetic synchronized dance moves

The artists' body movements and choreography are designed to reflect the energy and rhythm of the song. At minute 0:45, both performers engage in synchronized, energetic dance movements that emphasize the song's vibrancy and liveliness. These movements not only enhance the visual aesthetic but also convey themes of joy and unity. According to Amalia et al. (2022), body gestures in music videos serve as effective nonverbal tools for communicating emotions and narratives.

Use of Space and Background



Figure 3. At minute 2:14, the background shifts into a party scene with neon lighting

Spatial arrangement and background settings play an essential role in conveying the atmosphere and thematic context of the video. At minute 2:14, the background transitions into a party scene with neon lighting, aligning with the lyric, *“Turn this apateu into a club.”* This use of space reinforces the song’s themes of transformation and celebration. As stated by Amalia et al. (2022), background elements in music videos can enhance the conveyed message through visual symbolism.

Message Interpretation Through Nonverbal Elements

The nonverbal elements in the music video work synergistically to deliver the core message of the song. Cheerful facial expressions, dynamic body movements, and vibrant spatial usage all contribute to creating a festive and communal atmosphere. According to Amalia et al. (2022), nonverbal communication in music videos can effectively reinforce narratives and evoke emotions intended by the artists.

Comparison of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in the Video

While the verbal communication in the video—namely the song lyrics—conveys themes of desire and celebration, the nonverbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and visual composition enhance and deepen the lyrical meanings. As emphasized by Amalia et al. (2022), nonverbal communication significantly enriches the audience’s experience by complementing and amplifying verbal messages.

Table 1: Nonverbal Communication Elements in the *APT*. Music Video

Nonverbal Element	Timestamp (Minute)	Description	Interpretation
Facial Expression	1:10	Bruno Mars smiles while singing, <i>“Don’t you want me like I want you, baby?”</i>	Expresses happiness, desire, and affection; reinforces emotional tone of the song
Body Movement (Dance)	0:45	ROSÉ and Bruno Mars perform synchronized, energetic dance moves	Symbolizes harmony, unity, and reflects the song’s rhythm and liveliness
Use of Space/Background	2:14	Background transforms into a party scene with neon lights matching the lyric <i>“Turn this apateu...”</i>	Visual metaphor for transformation and mood shift; supports the narrative

Visual Composition	Throughout video	Bright colors, retro 80s style, intense lighting	Evokes nostalgia and emotional energy; aligns with pop-R&B visual conventions
Music-Visual Synchrony	Throughout video	Movements and visual transitions match the music's rhythm	Enhances rhythmic perception and emotional expression through multisensory delivery

The table above summarizes key nonverbal communication elements found in the *APT.* music video and their respective interpretations. Each element contributes significantly to reinforcing the song's emotional and narrative messages.

The Impact of Nonverbal Communication on Message Delivery in the Song

In the *APT.* music video, nonverbal communication plays a vital role in expressing the emotions aligned with the lyrics. For instance, at minute 1:10, Bruno Mars displays a warm smile while singing the lyric "Don't you want me like I want you, baby?"—an expression that conveys love and longing. Such facial expressions help the audience emotionally connect with the intended message of the song. As highlighted by Amalia et al. (2022), facial expressions in music videos function as emotional signals that amplify the lyrical content.

Body movements and choreography also significantly contribute to conveying the song's energy and dynamics. At minute 0:45, ROSÉ and Bruno Mars perform synchronized and vibrant dance routines, visually representing the enthusiasm and joy within the song. These gestures not only enhance the video's appeal but also help viewers physically feel the rhythm and mood of the music. According to Amalia et al. (2022), body movement in music videos can serve as symbols conveying specific meanings to the audience.

Spatial usage and background settings further reinforce the song's narrative. At minute 2:14, the scene transitions into a party atmosphere with bright neon lights, visually echoing the lyric "Turn this apateu into a club." This visual transformation enhances the viewer's understanding of the storyline and emotional context. As noted by Amalia et al. (2022), the background elements in music videos can provide additional context that enriches the audience's interpretation.

The Role of Nonverbal Communication in Enhancing Audience Understanding

Nonverbal communication in the *APT.* music video enhances the audience's comprehension of the song's emotional and narrative elements. Facial expressions, body movements, and spatial compositions work in harmony to construct a compelling visual narrative that complements the lyrics. This enables viewers to grasp the emotional journey and storyline portrayed by the artists. Amalia et al. (2022) assert that nonverbal cues in music videos significantly improve the audience's understanding of the intended messages.

Connection Between Nonverbal Elements, Cultural Context, and Musical Genre

Nonverbal communication elements in music videos are often influenced by cultural context and musical genre. In *APT.*, the energetic choreography and cheerful facial expressions reflect the pop-R&B genre and mainstream cultural aesthetics. These nonverbal codes help viewers familiar with the genre to identify and appreciate the song more intuitively. According to Amalia et al. (2022), nonverbal signs in music videos often reflect cultural values and characteristics specific to particular genres, assisting the audience in interpreting the content within the appropriate framework.

Emotional Influence of Nonverbal Communication on Viewers

Nonverbal communication in music videos profoundly affects viewers' emotional responses. Sincere facial expressions, dynamic body language, and well-designed spatial arrangements can evoke specific feelings such as happiness, nostalgia, or excitement. In *APT.*, the combination of these elements creates an atmosphere of celebration, encouraging audiences to immerse themselves in the song's festive spirit. As noted by Amalia et al. (2022), nonverbal cues in music videos can influence audience emotions and perception, making the viewing experience more immersive and impactful.

Overall, nonverbal communication in *APT.* by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars plays a key role in delivering the message, enhancing audience understanding, reflecting cultural and genre-based context, and shaping the emotional impact on viewers. A thorough analysis of these nonverbal aspects offers valuable insights into how visual elements can be effectively employed in music video production to achieve meaningful communication and deeper audience engagement.

Myth Construction in the Music Video

Beyond facial expressions and gestures, the music video constructs modern myths through its visual choices. The 80s-inspired aesthetic symbolizes a longing for simpler, nostalgic times—evoking a myth of romanticized past values. The setting of a high-rise apartment (apateu) transformed into a party space reflects urban escapism and the ideal of freedom within confined spaces, serving as a myth of modern luxury and emotional liberation. Gender representation through ROSÉ and Bruno Mars also reinforces balance in emotional expression, echoing cultural expectations in romantic relationships.

4. CONCLUSION

After conducting an in-depth analysis of nonverbal communication in the *APT.* music video by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars, it is evident that elements such as facial expressions, body movements, and spatial usage are fundamental in conveying the song's message. The artists' facial expressions effectively illustrate the emotions corresponding to the lyrics, while choreography adds energy and rhythm that reinforce the visual narrative. Meanwhile, the use of space and background provides contextual layers that enrich audience interpretation of the storyline.

These findings hold significant implications for nonverbal communication theory, particularly in the context of music videos. The study confirms that nonverbal elements are not mere aesthetic accessories but rather function as primary communicative components that carry meaning and emotional weight. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the power of nonverbal communication in strengthening the interpretation of lyrical content and improving the audience's overall comprehension.

For future research, it is recommended to broaden the scope by analyzing music videos across various genres and cultural contexts. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how nonverbal communication operates in different musical landscapes. Additionally, further studies could explore how audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds interpret nonverbal elements in music videos, offering insights into the cultural dimensions of nonverbal communication perception.

In summary, nonverbal communication in the *APT.* music video by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars plays an essential role in delivering the song's message, deepening audience understanding, reflecting genre-specific values, and influencing emotional engagement. A detailed examination of these elements offers valuable contributions both to communication theory and to practical applications in creative industries, particularly in producing more expressive and impactful music videos.

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