

## Expressive Speech Acts in NCT Dream English Song Lyrics

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### Abstract:

This research analyzes emotional expressions in NCT Dream's English song lyrics, especially in "Fireflies," "Beatbox," and "Rains in Heaven." Using a qualitative descriptive approach and applying Searle (1979) speech act theory, this research examines how emotions such as hope, pride, sadness, anxiety, and advice were expressed through the lyrics. The analysis shows that the songs serve for entertainment and emotional communication. "Fireflies" expresses hope through the metaphor of fireflies' light, encouraging listeners to remain optimistic. Meanwhile, "Beatbox (English ver.)" expresses pride and freedom of expression, encouraging listeners to be proud of themselves. "Rains in Heaven" highlights sadness and empathy through lyrics that express emotional support, building connections between the singer and listeners who feel the same way. Through emotional expression, these lyrics make NCT Dream's songs a way to express feelings and strengthen emotional bonds.

**Keywords:** expressive; speech act; song lyrics

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini menganalisis ekspresi emosional dalam lirik lagu berbahasa Inggris NCT Dream, terutama dalam "Fireflies," "Beatbox," dan "Rains in Heaven." Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan menerapkan teori tindak tutur Searle (1979), penelitian ini meneliti bagaimana emosi seperti harapan, kebanggaan, kesedihan, kegelisahan, dan nasihat diekspresikan melalui lirik lagu. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa lagu-lagu tersebut berfungsi sebagai hiburan dan komunikasi emosional. "Fireflies" mengekspresikan harapan melalui metafora cahaya kunang-kunang, mendorong pendengar untuk tetap optimis. Sementara itu, "Beatbox (versi bahasa Inggris)" mengekspresikan kebanggaan dan kebebasan berekspresi, mendorong pendengar untuk bangga akan diri mereka sendiri. "Rains in Heaven" menyoroti kesedihan dan empati melalui lirik yang mengekspresikan dukungan emosional, membangun hubungan antara penyanyi dan pendengar yang merasakan hal yang sama. Melalui ekspresi emosional, lirik-lirik ini menjadikan lagu-lagu NCT Dream sebagai cara untuk mengekspresikan perasaan dan memperkuat ikatan emosional.

**Kata kunci:** ekspresif; tindak tutur; lirik lagu

## INTRODUCTION

Language is the main aspect for humans to communicate and understand literature (Gawa et al., 2023). In addition, language is a communication tool for expressing emotions to others (Nasim & Mariana, 2024). Communication focuses on understanding the meaning expressed by speakers and listeners directly and involves utterances and



actions that can be pragmatically analyzed by examining the context (Samsudin et al., 2023). This method can also be applied to literary works, where the author expresses thoughts and feelings through his work that can be enjoyed by the listener, as seen in song lyrics.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the use of motives in meaningful communication (Griffiths, 2006). One of the approaches in pragmatics is the theory of speech acts, which shows that language functions to convey information and affect listeners' understanding (Ekoro & Gunn, 2021). Speech acts are forms of communication that use language to convey the speaker's intentions and influence the audience (Wijaya et al., 2022). These aspects are crucial in understanding the meaning of utterances. According to Searle (1979), speech acts are communication acts that express meaning through speech and can be categorized into several types, such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. This classification shows the various functions that language can fulfill in interaction. From this perspective, speech acts have a significant function in human relations, where each speech act can be interpreted as a reflection of the speaker's intention and the context of the conversation.

People use song lyrics for various purposes, such as for work and some to express their feelings. NCT Dream is a boy group from South Korea based on SM Entertainment, known for their pop songs. The lyrics of their songs, like "Rains in Heaven" show the feelings that can be expressed in words. The group members express their emotions through the lyrics and try to communicate with the listeners through their experiences. The song conveys longing and the desire to be back with loved ones. The song also shows sadness with hope, as well as happy memories that want to be repeated. Speech acts such as expressions of appreciation or emotional expressions can enhance the emotional experience by adding an aspect of the relationship between the singer and the listener. Through lyrics that contain words and sentences, listeners can feel the emotions of the song (Sari & Emelia, 2022). Messages conveyed through speech acts in song lyrics increase their importance for linguistic analysis (Letsoin & Maulidia 'Ashr, 2024). In addition, song lyrics can also provide deep emotions that can connect listeners with music. Therefore, NCT Dream's song lyrics can be an interesting way to interact with listeners.

This research examines NCT Dream's English songs including 'Fireflies', 'Beatbox (English ver.)' and "Rains in Heaven" to explore the speech acts in the song lyrics. It focuses on what types of speech acts are contained in the lyrics and what expressive speech

acts are used to express the singer's emotions and feelings in the song lyrics. This research applies Searle (1979) theory and aims to analyze the kinds of speech acts in the song lyrics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech acts are a form of communication that involves interaction and can be understood through certain meanings (Yule, 1996). Speech acts also involve daily conversations that can be influenced by the listener's ability to understand the intent conveyed by the speaker, including while listening to songs (Ramadhani, 2024). Speech acts are not only applied in daily conversations but also apply to songwriting. Songwriters can express an emotional message to listeners through song lyrics. Songwriters use expressive speech acts to create an emotional connection with listeners (Nasim & Mariana, 2024). Speech acts in song lyrics are sometimes symbolic and poetic, so their meaning can be understood in many ways (Rosita, 2019). As a creative medium, the use of language in songs can give songwriters the opportunity to convey messages and emotions indirectly compared to everyday conversations (Samsudin et al., 2023). Therefore, listeners also play an important role in understanding the intent and message of the song lyrics.

According to Searle (1979) speech acts are categorized into five categories: assertive, commissive, expressive, directive, and declarative. Each category has different functions depending on the purpose of the utterance.

In song lyrics, Assertive Speech acts as an expression to convey information to the audience that is considered true by the speaker. Such as in the song 'Just the Way You Are' by Bruno Mars in the lyrics "When I see your face, there's not a thing that I would change" show assertive speech acts conveying the singer's belief that the singer loves his lover just the way she is. Commissive speech acts will happen if the speaker makes a promise to someone in the future. For example, in the song 'La La Lost You' by Niki, the lyrics "I'll come back to you in another life" state the singer's promise that she will return to someone in another life. Expressive speech acts are used to express the singer's feelings towards a situation or to express an emotion. This speech act is commonly used in song lyrics because it is used to express emotions such as sadness, regret, pride, anxiety, hope, blame, and advice.

Then sadness is shown in Adele's song 'Someone Like You' in the lyrics, "Never mind, I'll find someone like you, I wish nothing but the best for you too," which reflects sadness about the breakup between the singer and her lover. The song 'Happier' by Ed



Sheeran expresses regret through the lyrics, “I could try to smile and hide the truth, but I know I was happier with you.” These lyrics show regret because the singer felt happy with his relationship, but unfortunately, the relationship ended. Furthermore, pride is shown in Taylor Swift’s song ‘The Man’ in the lyrics, “I’m so sick of running as fast as I can, wondering if I’d get there quicker if I was a man” reflecting pride because the singer is proud of her hard work that might be underestimated because the singer is a woman. Anxiety appears in the song ‘Monster’ by Justin Bieber in the lyrics, “I was 15 when the world put me on a pedestal, I had big dreams of doing shows and making memories,” showing that the singer is anxious about the pressure he gets from his fame at a young age.

An example of hope is seen in the song ‘Happier’ by Olivia Rodrigo in the lyrics, “I hope you’re happy, but not like how you were with me” showing the singer wants her ex-lover to be happy but hopes that his happiness is not more than their experience together. The example of blame in the song ‘Lose You to Love Me’ in the lyrics “You promised the world, and I fell for it” shows that the singer blames someone for breaking his promise. Also, advice is shown in the lyrics, “If I could change the way that you see yourself, you wouldn’t wonder why you hear ‘they don’t deserve you’” showing that the singer advises someone to look at themselves from a positive side.

In song lyrics, directive speech acts often appear as requests or invitations. As in the lyrics “Won’t you stay with me?” found in the song ‘Stay With Me’ by Sam Smith that asks someone to stay with him. Meanwhile, declarative speech acts aim to change and determine the situation through statements. In the song ‘Thank U, Next’ by Ariana Grande, the lyrics “I’m so grateful for my ex” express the singer’s gratitude for the relationship that has ended. Combining various types of speech acts creates an emotional connection between the singer and the listener to convey messages verbally (Tri Budiasih, 2018). However, in this study, the researcher only wants to examine the expressive speech acts that are contained in NCT Dream's English songs.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the meaning of song lyrics. Taylor et al. (2015) explained that descriptive qualitative studies about social events through people’s views through detailed explanations. This research aims to analyze the expressive speech acts in the song lyrics of NCT Dream’s English songs.

Analysis data in this research is derived from song lyrics using Searle (1979) speech acts theory. Data collection was conducted by listening and observing song lyrics through the Apple Music application. The data collection process is carried out with the following steps: (1) listening to the song NCT Dream's English songs (2) observing the song lyrics (3) categorizing the song lyrics based on the theory of speech acts that are used (4) analyzing the speech acts in the song lyrics (5) concluding the research results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In NCT Dream's 'Rains in Heaven', there are emotional messages expressed through various speech acts, including themes of longing and lost hope.

### Fireflies

In this song, the singer expresses hope, excitement, and confidence. The lyrics motivate the listener to always dream and be excited when facing difficulties, using the simile of a firefly's light. The following are the lyrics of the song:

#### Fireflies

##### [Verse 1]

Tell me 'bout your dreaming  
I believe I was there too  
I could sense your breathing  
Lying in a different room

##### [Verse 2]

'Cause laws of the universe  
Always there to observe  
You shimmer  
Your inner compass is taking you there  
I'll be your beacon illuminate while you  
on your way  
Girl I've been there too (Been there too)

##### [Pre-Chorus]

Don't be afraid tonight  
Just know you never be lonely  
I know it's hard sometimes to see the  
light  
But you and I keep on dreaming (come  
on)

##### [Chorus]

We gon' light it up  
Light it up now darling  
We can make the stars align  
We gon' light it up now we sparkling  
Brighter than the fireflies

##### [Verse 3]

Think it then believe it  
And truth'll find its way  
I know that you'll see it  
If you come with me (Alright, alright,  
hey)

##### [Verse 4]

Show you what it's all about  
Now we're gonna go all out  
Don't gotta sing the blues  
If you ever need me shout  
I'll always be around

##### [Back to Pre-Chorus]

##### [Back to Chorus]

##### [Post-Chorus]

Oh-oh-oh  
We gonna light up  
Oh-oh-oh  
Look how we shining now  
Oh-oh-oh  
You know it's only love  
Brighter than the fireflies  
[Bridge]  
Light it up 2x  
Like it's the first day of our lives  
Fireflies, fireflies

They see us dancing in the sky  
[Back to Chorus]  
[Back to Post-Chorus]

[Outro]  
Fireflies

The following is an analysis based on Searle (1979) speech acts theory:

### *Sadness*

“I know it's hard sometimes to see the light”

Although sadness is not the primary emotion in this song, there are expressions that express the feeling of confusion shown in the lyrics. The lyrics show that the singer knows that a person may find it difficult to look at the possibilities while facing a problem.

### *Regret*

The song does not show regret clearly, but there are expressions of life's struggles and motivation to survive. Such as the following lyrics:

"I know it's hard sometimes to see the light"  
“But you and I keep on dreaming”

These lyrics express hope in life that sometimes is hard to see, which may cause feelings of despair and regret. However, this song focuses on the excitement of keeping dreaming.

### *Pride*

#### *Data I*

"We gon' light it up now we sparkling"  
“Brighter than the fireflies”

The lyrics show the singer's pride in someone's efforts to keep shining while facing various challenges in life. The lyrics 'we sparkling' emphasize pride in themselves, while 'Brighter than the fireflies' shows the singer's excitement and confidence in facing life's struggles.

#### *Data II*

“I'll be your illuminate while you on your way”

The lyrics show the singer's pride in being someone's life guide and someone's light. The singer believes that they can support someone amidst the struggles that they face.

### *Anxiety*

#### *Data I*

“Don't be afraid tonight, just know you'll never be lonely”

The lyrics show the anxiety that arises from feeling lonely. A comforting expression follows the lyrics and encourages people not to worry too much.

***Data II***

“I know it’s hard sometimes to see the light”

It shows the singer's anxiety about the troubles and hesitations in finding hope while facing life's difficulties. The lyrics also show the singer's hesitation towards the future and concern for someone in a similar condition.

***Hope***

***Data I***

“We gon’ light it up, Light it up now darling”

The lyrics show the motivation to shine and give hope that every hardship will be overcome with good changes.

***Data II***

“We can make the stars align”

The lyrics show that the singer believes they can achieve great results and hopes that everything will happen as expected.

***Data III***

“Think it then believe it, And truth’ll find it’s way”

The lyrics show the importance of self-confidence in achieving success and the hope that having positive thoughts can bring success.

***Blame***

The song does not show blame because it highlights support and encouragement for moving forward.

***Advice***

***Data I***

“Don’t be afraid tonight”

The lyrics of this song advise people not to be afraid or worried about anything. The lyrics show the singer's support for being strong.

***Data II***

"Just know you never be lonely"

The lyrics of the song advise that even though a person is having difficulties, they are never alone. Therefore, the person will have peace of mind while facing difficulties.

**Data III**

“Think it then believe it, And truth’ll find its way”

The lyrics advise someone to believe in self-ability and that happiness awaits those who make an effort.

**Beatbox**

This song shows the excitement and confidence in self-expression. The lyrics show freedom of expression and creativity and reflect the courage to be creative. The following are the lyrics of the song:

**Beatbox (English Ver.)**

**[Verse 1]**

Yeah  
 Wake up to my heart beat bum, bum,  
 bum  
 New kicks for the kick on the drum,  
 drum, drum  
 Sugar pop I got some, some, some  
 Music in my head like a morning call  
 Uh, watch it go like we puttin’ on a  
 show  
 Everyone about to know who bring the  
 boom to radio  
 Dance the dance the dance, dance  
 That’s when the radio’s bumpin’ to my  
 jam

**[Pre-Chorus]**

Watch me, ooh  
 24/7, I be doin’ my thing  
 You want me  
 I can run it back put it on replay

**[Chorus]**

Yeah, Pull up to the spot turn it up  
 Yeah, yeah  
 Make a Beatbox box and it bump  
 Yeah, yeah  
 Rhythm with the flow **궁합**  
 Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox  
 Yeah, hands up to the top bring ‘em up  
 Yeah, yeah  
 Make a beatbox box and it bump  
 Yeah, yeah

Everywhere I go make the room hop  
 Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox 2x

**[Verse 2]**

Get low with the bass goin’ boom,  
 boom, boom  
 Fill it up with a cherry top yum, yum,  
 yum  
 Call your friends better ring, ring, ring  
 ‘em up  
 Gotta listen up  
 Let me hit you with the snap  
 Got you flippin’ on the track  
 Take your tongue n’ make it pop like  
 soda  
 Yeah, make it pop like soda

**[Pre-Chorus]**

Shout it out from the top new flavor  
 Watch me ooh, Just watch me  
 ‘Cause I could do this all day  
 Do this all day

**[Chorus]**

Make you feel that rhythm put it back  
 on replay  
 Yeah, Pull up to the spot turn it up  
**[Chorus]**  
 Yeah, yeah  
 Make a Beatbox box and it bump  
 Yeah, yeah  
 Rhythm with the flow **궁합**  
 Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox 3x

**[Bridge]**

I feel the music in my brain goin’ crazy

We know there's no stopping  
So sing it loud it's time to start  
The roof to the floor  
Nobody is stopping the flow  
Spinning so loud round the globe  
The whole world's gonna hear us right  
now

**[Interlude]**

Dance the dance the dance, dance  
Everywhere I go make the room hop  
Everywhere I (go) bring the Beatbox  
Everywhere I go  
Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox

**[Chorus]**

Yeah, Pull up to the spot turn it up

Yeah, yeah  
Make a Beatbox box and it bump  
Yeah, yeah  
Rhythm with the flow **공합**  
People wanna know, yeah  
Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox  
**[Refrain]**  
Keep it goin', we're flowin' like the  
ocean  
Let's celebrate the moment, uh-uh  
Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox  
Keep on hopin', we're shining and we're  
golden  
We won't stop for a moment, uh  
Everywhere I go bring the Beatbox 3x

The following is an analysis based on Searle (1979) speech acts theory:

***Sadness***

The singer does not show sadness in the lyrics of this song because it has a bright mood that can arouse the listeners' energy.

***Regret***

The singer does not express regret in this song. It is about self-expression, and the singer wants to encourage listeners to move forward without thinking about past wrongdoings.

***Pride***

***Data I***

“Everyone about to know who bring the boom to radio”

The singers show pride by emphasizing their big impact so everyone knows they're bringing excitement to the radio. They also express their self-confidence while in the spotlight.

***Data II***

“24/7, I be doin' my thing”

The lyrics show the singer's commitment towards their job. The singer proudly keeps on doing something they love happily and without hesitation.

***Data III***

“Just watch me, I could do this all day”

The lyrics of 'Just watch me' inspire the listener by showing their sincerity and commitment. The lyric 'I could do this all day' shows the singer's commitment and confidence in their capabilities, which shows that the singer wants to keep exploring and trying new things with their capabilities.

### *Anxiety*

The singer does not show anxiety directly in this song but shows that self-confidence can reduce anxiety in themselves.

### *Hope*

#### *Data I*

“Keep on hopin’, we’re shining and we’re golden”  
“We won’t stop for a moment”

The lyrics express the singer's hope to be happy and successful, showing their confidence in a better future.

### *Blame*

The singer does not show blame in this song. However, the song's lyrics highlight the positive things in life and the importance of avoiding negativity to be happy.

### *Advice*

#### *Data I*

“Let’s celebrate the moment”

The lyrics are the singer's advice for the listeners to enjoy life, take a chance, and do something interesting.

### **Rains in Heaven**

This emotional song expresses the singer's loss and longing for someone they love and cherished memories. The following are the lyrics of the song:

#### **Rains in Heaven**

**[Verse 1]**

In the morning when you wake up  
 Thinking 'bout how you wanna run away  
 from here  
 Wanna cry and disappear  
 There's something that you need to see

**[Pre-Chorus]**

Every night you become my sky  
 'Cause one glance, It ain't ever enough

**[Chorus]**

We are all the same but hurt different  
 I heard when you cry, it rains in heaven  
 I won't let you fall down  
 Unless you're in my arms  
 Only in my arms  
 Keep your heart with me, let me read it  
 All your tears remind me you're beautiful  
 It won't change, how I think  
 I love the way you are  
 The way you are

**[Pre-Chorus]**

We ain't ever looking back, looking back  
 no  
 Don't let any of our past chase us down,  
 you know  
 We're more than what we're made to think  
 Time to believe

**(Back to Chorus)**

**[Bridge]**

Remember the reason to love  
 Tell me that you won't give up  
 Crawl then we walk so we run

You don't believe it  
 There's something that you need to see  
 Ooh yeah, it's your reflection  
 Clouds up in heaven  
 They have a message for you and me  
 I know that you feel alone  
 I know that you lost all hope  
 But I'm always  
 I am always  
 Always by your side

**[Verse 2]**

Yeah, I said now, take it step by step  
 Say onto the next, oh  
 And dream with no regrets  
 Hold on, never let go  
 I wanna hold you  
 Girl, I adore you  
 Just let me show you  
 Let your heaven shine through  
 Let's go

Get off the ground, go up higher and  
 higher now  
 Falling like a shooting star  
 Catch you anywhere you are  
 You ain't even gotta call  
 'Cause I'll be there

**(Back to Chorus)**

I love the, the way you are 3x  
 Let's go!  
 I love the, the way you are 3x  
 The way you are

The following is an analysis based on Searle (1979) speech acts theory:

**Sadness**

**Data I**

“Wanna cry and disappear”

The lyrics express the singer's sadness clearly, showing that the singer wants to cry and disappear, which shows the singer wants to run away from the pain they feel.

**Data II**

“I know that you feel alone”  
 “I know that you lost all hope”

The singer is aware of loneliness, despair, and the sadness of losing hope. This lyric shows awareness of someone's struggle; therefore, this lyric is an expressive speech act of sadness.

### *Data III*

“I heard when you cry, it rains in heaven”

This lyric expresses sadness because the word 'cry' can be interpreted as such. Relating crying to the rain in heaven shows that sadness can affect something.

### *Regret*

The singer expresses no regret in this song. It highlights the singer's love, hope, and support for someone.

### *Pride*

There is no pride in this song, but in the lyrics “I love the way you are,” the singer shows appreciation for the personality of their beloved person just the way they are.

### *Anxiety*

#### *Data I*

“Thinking ‘bout you how you wanna run away from here”

The lyrics express anxiety, showing that someone is trying to run away from their struggles. It shows feelings of being afraid about the future.

### *Hope*

#### *Data I*

“There’s something that you need to hear”

The singer is showing hope for something good that will happen by listening to the message they are trying to tell someone. They reassure their beloved that there will be a brighter future.

#### *Data II*

“Time to believe”

The word 'believe' shows hope that believing makes a good impact and encourages someone to be more confident about the future.

### *Data III*

“Tell me that you won’t give up”

Through the lyrics, the singer hopes that someone will not give up easily. The singer also hopes that someone will be strong in facing difficulties and believes that everything will get better.

### ***Blame***

There is no blaming in the lyrics of this song. The song lyrics are about understanding and showing positive support for someone.

### ***Advice***

#### ***Data I***

“Take it step by step”

In the song lyrics, the singer says 'step by step' which suggests that the singer advises someone to take it slowly and not rush when facing life's difficulties.

#### ***Data II***

“Hold on, never let go”

This lyric represents the singer's advice not to give up easily and helps someone facing difficulty. The lyrics 'Hold on' advise people to stay strong while 'never let go' advises someone not to be swayed easily, although in difficult conditions.

#### ***Data III***

“And dream with no regrets”

The singer said 'Dream with no regrets' which encourages someone to keep dreaming without regrets for the past. The singer advises someone to keep living with more confidence.

#### ***Data IV***

“Get off the ground, go up higher and higher now”

In the lyrics 'get off the ground' the singer encourages someone to try getting up from difficulty and lyrics 'go up higher and higher now' encourage someone to keep improving and become a better person.

#### ***Data V***

“We ain't ever looking back”

The lyrics reflect the singer's advice to not regret anything that happened in the past and encourage people not to be affected by something that cannot be changed.

#### ***Data VI***

“Crawl then we walk so we run”

The singer advises facing problems with steps, from taking slow steps to finally going running. They advise being patient until reaching the goal in the future.

Based on the analysis, in NCT Dream's English song, the singer uses expressive speech acts to express their emotions towards the listeners. Applying Searle (1979) theory, all three songs use expressive speech acts to express the singer's emotions. For example, the song "Fireflies" expresses hope in the middle of difficulties by using the metaphor of fireflies to express self-confidence. "Beatbox" expresses pride and confidence, encouraging listeners to be proud of themselves. Then, the song "Rains in Heaven" expresses sadness and empathy with emotionally supportive lyrics. Lyrics like "Hold on, never let go" encourage listeners to be strong while facing problems, and "Time to believe" shows hope for a better future. These three songs entertain the listener and express the singer's emotions toward the listener.

## CONCLUSION(S)

Analyzing the lyrics of NCT Dream's English songs shows that expression is important in expressing hope, pride, sadness, and support. 'Fireflies' and 'Beatbox' encourage listeners to be self-confident and excited about fulfilling their dreams, while 'Rains in Heaven' expresses empathy and support amid difficulties. Thus, NCT Dream makes their song lyrics more than just entertainment, but also a way for them to express their feelings, which can strengthen their relationship with their listeners.

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