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Analysis of Meaning in Song Lyrics "I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping" By Sal Priadi

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Abstract

The development of contemporary Indonesian music gave rise to a complex, metaphorical lyric style, demanding a deep understanding to uncover the hidden meaning behind the songwriter's language play. Semiotic analysis is an essential approach for dissecting the relationships between markers to bridge the gap in understanding between music creators and connoisseurs. This research has a dual purpose: to identify and analyze the representation of denotative and connotative meanings in the lyrics of the song "I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping" by Sal Priadi, and to describe the unity of meaning the author seeks to convey through language symbols. The method used is a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis, involving the systematic processes of reading, listening, taking notes, and analyzing textual data in the form of song lyrics and audio recordings. The results showed the use of absurd and metaphorical markers such as "more often gaping", "cartoon characters on television", "the body evaporates into rain", and "playing in the clouds" which convey signs in the form of deep admiration, hope for eternity, transformation of love, and the desire to become an integral part of a lover. These findings reveal patterns of symbolic language use in contemporary song lyrics and provide insight into the construction of connotative meanings through deviations from denotative meanings. This research is expected to serve as a reference for the study of linguistics and literature and to make a practical contribution to the appreciation of contemporary Indonesian music.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of song lyrics in Indonesian music has changed over time. Music is not only an entertainment medium but also a complex form of communication through its lyrics (Pranata & Deni, 2024). The lyrics of the song have now become a poet's personal expression of what he sees, hears, and experiences. To express this experience, songwriters often use linguistic styles and meaning distortions to create attraction and distinctiveness (Ahammi et al., 2025).

Sal Priadi has an unusual, eccentric, theatrical, and metaphorical writing style. His works crash into the logic of language, using little-known diction to describe simple human emotions, thereby creating a confusion of meaning that demands a more profound understanding (Wicaksono, 2024).

This distinctive style of language is found in the song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"*. Unlike other love songs that use familiar, sweet words, this song presents images that, if interpreted denotatively (literally), would feel strange, even absurd (unreal). Lyrics such as "want to stay behind your teeth" are examples of how Sal Priadi perverts meaning. Denotatively, the lyrics cannot be understood by common sense, but connotatively (implicitly), they express a strong desire for closeness with someone they love, even when it is not visible to others. This difference in meaning aligns with the view that denotation refers to the literal meaning or dictionary definition, while connotation involves the values of taste and emotion (Antika et al., 2020).

The gap between the written text (marker) and the intention that the poet wants to convey (sign) is what often causes "confusion" for the listener. Listeners can feel the emotions of the song through its melody, but it is still possible to miss the message behind Sal Priadi's language play. Therefore, a listening approach alone is not enough; Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic knife is needed to decipher the relationship between signifiers (signs/forms of words) and signifieds (signs/mental concepts) in the lyrics. This analysis is important for dissecting how the simple things in the lyrics are transformed into symbols that represent possessive feelings and fear of loss, yet remain soft.

In expressing their experiences, poets or songwriters use wordplay and language to create appeal and uniqueness in their lyrics. These language games can be vocal playing, language styles, or distortions of meaning. This game is strengthened by the use of melodies and musical notation adapted to the lyrics of the song, so that

the listener is carried away by the thoughts of the poet or songwriter (Awe, 2003, p. 51; Fitri, 2017).

The meaning of song lyrics varies with each individual's understanding, but each writer conveys his own message through his lyrics, either directly or implicitly. Song creators often use words with meanings different from their literal meanings, or what is called connotation, in their song lyrics as a form of imagination; this is conveyed in (Akhiruddin et al., 2024). In (Hayati et al., 2022), Meaning is the meaning of a word. A word has a connotative meaning if it contains a particular emotional value in the language of ideas, opinions, or thoughts. The same is true of song lyrics, which contain many meanings and values so that the lyrics of the song are written not only in a series of words, but a literary work that is closely related to meaning, especially in the aspect of connotation related to the value of both positive and negative tastes.

The denotative and connotative aspects of the song *"I would Like to Watch You Sleeping"* by Sal Priadi are constructed in its lyrics. The denotative meaning of the lyrics describes how the feelings of fear, loss, and deep love are expressed in simple moments. While the connotative meaning refers to deep emotions about love and the feeling of wanting to always be close, for example, the lyrics "want to stay behind your teeth" convey a closeness that wants to continue and even become part of someone's self.

Sal Priadi wants to convey through these symbols that love is eternal, sustainable, and profound. This song's lyrics cannot be interpreted directly, so research is needed to analyze their linguistic use. This research can reveal the true meaning of the song lyrics.

The previous research was the Exploration of the Meaning of Life in Linked Song Lyrics by Nadin Amizah (Oktorra et al., 2025). The results of the study show that this song is not only enjoyed musically but also lived as an act of introspection, especially regarding the relationship between mothers. Listeners enjoy the beauty of his lyrics and actively understand principles such as unconditional love, self-recognition, and life's struggles.

A review of previous research shows that two approaches generally dominate studies of song lyrics in Indonesia. The first approach is semiotics, using both Saussure's and Roland Barthes' models to examine the meanings of motivation and cultural values. The second approach is semantics or stylistics, which focuses on identifying various meanings and classifying language styles. Specific research on Sal Priadi has also existed, such as Wicaksono's (2024) study of his poetic

characteristics in general and Oktorra et al. (2025), which examines listeners' appreciation of meaning.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on one song, *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"*, which has never been studied and has a very symbolic language. In contrast to previous research that was general (Wicaksono) or focused on listener reception (Oktorra et al., 2025), this study fills this gap. This study decomposed meaning in depth at the micro level, namely, lyrics by lyrics. The goal is to unpack the layers of denotative and connotative meanings in order to reveal the "other meanings" that the author wants to convey implicitly.

The purpose of this research is to bridge the understanding of lyrics between writers and music connoisseurs, strengthen the inner bond of a song, and reveal the meaning in depth through the analysis of lyrics, linguistic characteristics, and their relationships. From the results of the presentation above, two formulations were found: 1. How is the representation of connotative and denotative meanings in the lyrics of the song *I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping*? 2. What is the unity of meaning that the writer wants to convey in the lyrics of the song *I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping*?

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in the article entitled "Analysis of Meaning in the Lyrics of the Song 'I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping' by Sal Priadi is a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on content analysis. According to Sugiyono (2019:18), the qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism, used to research objects in natural conditions, with the author as the key instrument (Sumja, 2020). This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to understand and interpret the meaning of the song's lyrics, which requires a focus on the quality of the data in the form of words and their context, rather than on quantitative measurements. The qualitative method is suitable for use in this study because it provides an opportunity for researchers to investigate the meaning in depth and systematically of the elements of the text that are considered important and meaningful, as well as to elaborate on the aesthetic and cultural values contained in the literary work of the lyrics of the song. The research method used is qualitative descriptive, which aims to collect descriptive data in the form of written words from the research object, then analyze them in detail to explain the meaning contained in the text. This research focuses on a systematic and clear presentation of the meanings of song lyrics under study, to provide an understanding of the literary

phenomena they embody, so that readers can capture the message and value the song creator intends to convey.

The data in this study is categorized into primary and secondary data to provide context and depth of detailed analysis. The primary data is a document containing the lyrics of the song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"* by Sal Priadi. The lyrics of this song are the primary focus because they are a direct source that conveys an artistic message and meaning to be analyzed. Meanwhile, secondary data complements and enriches the interpretation perspective. Secondary data included audio recordings of songs from official platforms, which allowed researchers to re-listen and capture musical elements and intonation that shape the nuances of meaning conveyed in the lyrics. In addition, secondary data includes articles, reviews, and other relevant studies about the song and helps provide cultural, social, or literary contexts related to the work, as well as for deepening understanding of the message conveyed by Sal Priadi.

The data collection method used in this study is literature or documentation studies, which collect information from written materials and recordings (Husnusyifa & Mujiyanto, 2024). This technique involves collecting song lyrics directly, along with relevant supporting sources, in both written and audio form. Then, a screening technique will be carried out, which involves deep, repeated listening to the audio recording of the song to understand the elements of intonation, vocal expression, and musical arrangements that give nuance to the delivery of the lyrics. This process is important because the meaning of a song is determined not only by the written text but also by how the text is conveyed through music to the listener. By combining literature studies and archiving techniques, the analysis can be conducted on a solid, thorough database. This study uses audiovisual media from the YouTube music video for the song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping."* This media presents audio with visual lyrics of the song.

In the process of analyzing data, a content analysis technique is applied, a qualitative method that systematically and objectively observes and understands the content of the text. The initial step of analysis will begin with the introduction of data, where the selection and recording of the parts of the lyrics that are considered relevant, be it words, phrases, or sentences that have a specific meaning, symbolic, or connotation. The pieces are analyzed to identify messages or values that are not only immediate but also hidden, expressed through metaphors or other forms of symbolism. The next stage is data interpretation, where further

exploration of the meaning of the text as a whole, not just its surface, will be carried out.

This study examines the validity of interpretation using a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis, which allows exploration of the meanings, symbols, and messages contained in literary texts, including song lyrics, in depth and structure. The main focus of the analysis is primary data in the form of song lyrics, supported by secondary data such as voice recordings, articles, reviews, and relevant studies that provide social, cultural, and literary-critical contexts, enriching the interpretation process. The use of these two sources also shows triangulation efforts to strengthen the thematic foundation. The analysis process begins with the introduction of the data, followed by the selection of relevant sections, then interprets the denotative and connotative meanings, and ends with the writing of a conclusion that includes the overall meaning, along with the work's aesthetic value and emotional message.

However, some weaknesses may undermine the validity of the interpretation, such as the lack of detail regarding the credibility of the secondary sources used, which casts doubt on the quality of the context for this interpretation. In addition, the part of the discussion that should be at the heart of the analysis—which delves into how specific phrases, such as "want to stay behind your teeth," relate to connotative meanings like everlasting love—is not conveyed in sufficient depth. The absence of this discussion raises questions about objectivity and the systematicity of the methods used to obtain findings. Overall, although the methodological structure constructed is valid and neat, the validity of interpretive findings still requires detail in the discussion of textual evidence, an explanation of the reliability of secondary sources, and reflection on how the researcher maintains objectivity during the interpretation process so that claims to denotative and connotative meanings can be accounted for in a scientific context.

To improve validity from a practical point of view, it is necessary to add direct quotes from the relevant lyrics along with an analysis that explicitly links them to the proposed interpretation, complemented by an evaluation of the reliability of the secondary sources used, as well as a reflexivity section explaining the researcher's position and measures to reduce bias. With this step, the argument regarding the denotative and connotative meanings in the lyrics of this song can be assessed more clearly and more scientifically.

Interpretation is carried out by paying attention to the denotative meaning and connotative meaning contained in each element of

the text, so that the analysis can describe the double meaning or layers of meaning in the lyrics of the song. Finally, systematic arrangements are also made to present the results of the analysis and interpretation carried out, which will later be summarized in a conclusion that describes the overall meaning of the lyrics of the song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"*. This conclusion encompasses not only the literal meaning of the lyrics but also the aesthetic values and emotional messages that Sal Priadi seeks to convey through his musical works. Thus, this method allows the researcher to gain a deep, rich understanding of the meaning contained in the song's lyrics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The song that became the focus of the research was the lyrics of the song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"*, which was included in Sal Priadi's second studio album titled *"Markers and Such a Flashdisks"*. As previously explained, the songs on this album convey a message: love, togetherness, and loss. However, there is one song that has a meaning that can influence its listeners: *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"*. The researcher plans to analyze the lyrics of this song using Saussure's semiotic theory.

Analysis of Signifiers and Signifieds in Key Lyrics

Ferdinand de Saussure through the dichotomy of the sign system: signs and markers (Pranata & Deni, 2024). This concept sees meaning emerge when there is an associative relationship, or in absentia, between 'signs' and 'markers'. Markers are the material aspects of language, i.e., what is said, heard, written, and read. A sign is a mental image, thought, idea, or concept (Erlangga et al., 2021).

The lyrics "our bodies evaporate into the expected grain of rain. In signifiers, "body evaporates" and "becomes a grain of rain" are not literal meanings, but rather a marker of the process of change, release, and union with nature. The signified can be interpreted as a symbol of a transformation of love or longing so deep that it merges with the universe. "Rain grains" symbolize hope and sustainability. Overall, the signs in these lyrics create an emotional and spiritual meaning: love not only lives between two human beings but also revolves in the cycle of nature, something constantly expected and felt. The use of natural metaphors enriches aesthetics and deepens emotional meaning (Helmi et al., 2021).

In Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic view, the lyrics "Live on, there will always be like the card characters on television" consist of two elements:

the signifier and the signified. Markers refer to "cartoon characters on television", which are represented as representations that can be understood directly. Meanwhile, the sign conveys its meaning, namely, the hope that the existence or relationship will remain eternal and continue to live on, like a cartoon character that always exists. Using cartoon character symbols, these lyrics express a desire for a joyful, eternal life, thereby conveying an emotional and symbolic meaning of eternity and happiness.

In the lyrics "Find a way how we can play in the clouds," as noted in the previous analysis, Ferdinand de Saussure states that a sign is composed of two main components: a signifier and a signified. Markers refer to the physical form of the mark, such as the words in a sentence. At the same time, a sign is the meaning conveyed by the marker itself (Rahmasari & Adiyanto, 2023). In this phrase, "playing in the clouds" serves as a marker with symbolic meaning that varies across social and cultural contexts. Then, semiotic theory generally emphasizes that song lyrics are a series of signs that convey symbolic and emotional messages to the listener. In this context, the phrase "playing in the clouds" is not just a literal statement but a sign that conveys the image of the freedom or emotional closeness desired in the song.

The lyrical fragment "your name is all capitalized" reflects a sign that consists of markers and markers. "Your name" as a marker symbolizes a crucial identity, while capital letters emphasize the individual's uniqueness and special status. These capital letters not only convey meaning in text, but also contain meaning.

Love as Silent Observation and Admiration.

More often gaping. The word "gap" has a definition as an act of opening the mouth wide, this is a form of admiration that can no longer be expressed using words has the meaning that the writer is very amazed and amazed by his partner, this is also a form of love that looks innocent as it is but significantly depicts deep admiration, the choice of the word gaping also presents a simple closeness. The word "more often" in the context of "gaping" indicates that admiring this couple occurs repeatedly rather than just once (Wicaksono, 2024). The admiration depicted in the silence of words, and immortalized in gestures, suggests that the love conveyed is deeper. The word "gaping" is not only a spontaneous response but also a description of emotional openness when one is dissolved in the beauty of a loved one; this moment is actually more honest in expressing love than words.

The Metaphor of Eternity and the Desire to Be an Inseparable Part

The lyrics "Live on, there will always be like the cartoon characters on television" contain a metaphor for eternity and the writer's deep desire that the figure he loves not disappear or change, but continue to live like a cartoon character that always exists. Sal Priadi often uses unique meaning relationships to maintain his beloved objects in memory (Nabilah, 2023). Semiotically the use of cartoon character symbols in this lyric expresses the desire to live a joyful life in emotional eternity, showing the hope that the presence of a loved one will not be eroded by time, this desire not only depicts deep love but also recognition and anxiety that the real world is full of risk of loss and nothing is eternal in this world so the choice of "favorite cartoon character" represents an ideal world that the mind can control. Indirectly, the whole lyric encourages capturing moments, feelings, and people in something timeless.

The Search for Happiness and Freedom in the Space of Imagination

The phrase can be understood as a metaphor for a sense of light, pleasant freedom, imagination, or inner happiness. Therefore, the meaning contained in the lyrics of the song is not singular and needs to be seen through the relationship of the sign with other elements in the existing lyric language system. Song lyrics have connotative meanings that provide listeners with vast interpretive space (Siti & Ramdan, 2022).

Find a way for us to play in the cloud. There is a phrase, "find a way to do it," followed by "we can play around," which can be interpreted as a way to express finding happiness with a lover. The writer will do everything to play and spend time with his lover. This is further reinforced by the word "cloud" afterwards. Clouds fill the spatial arrangement of the sky. The breadth is infinite. That is, the writer can be free to express himself with his lover.

Synthesis of Meaning: The Overall Message of the Song

The song *"I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping"* can be interpreted as a whole as a code for contemplative love. Through a series of markers ranging from "gaping mouth", "capital letters", "cartoon characters", to "clouds", Sal Priadi compiles a message that love is a combination of simple admiration and grand hope for eternity. This song is not just about seeing someone sleep, but about the desire to keep that moment of peace forever, beyond time and reality, towards imaginative eternity.

CONCLUSION

The research on the lyrics of the song "I'd Like to Watch You Sleeping" uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis, employing a series of unique and absurd signifiers to convey a signified of complex, deep love emotions. Metaphors such as "more often gaping" indicate sincere, honest, and deep admiration. In contrast, symbols such as "cartoon figures" and "bodies evaporate into raindrops" indicate hope for eternal connection, transformation, and self-union with the universe. Additionally, the use of visual symbols such as "capital letters" in the lover's name affirms a special status and deep reverence, suggesting that these lyrics go beyond their denotative meaning to express tender possessive feelings and fear of loss.

Overall, the song can be considered a code for contemplative love, in which Sal Priadi blends simple thinking with the hope that that moment of peace will last beyond the limits of time and the world. According to the dissection of meaning, the study found that the work was not just a story about someone seeing someone asleep; it is a manifestation of the desire to maintain emotional closeness and happiness in a free space of imagination, such as playing in the clouds. This aesthetic and symbolic message helps the author and the listener understand each other, turning simple things into symbols of eternal, inseparable love.

It can be affirmed that song lyrics are a medium of verbal communication that convey a message of affection and a deep meaning of love (Metamorphosa et al., 2021).

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