

**ROLAND BARTHES'S SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS: UNCOVERING HIDDEN  
MEANINGS IN REALITY CLUB'S MUSIC VIDEO**

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**2024**

## MOTTO

*“The greatest thing in life is to remain accountable for the choices you make.”*

-Nadya Hafizhah-



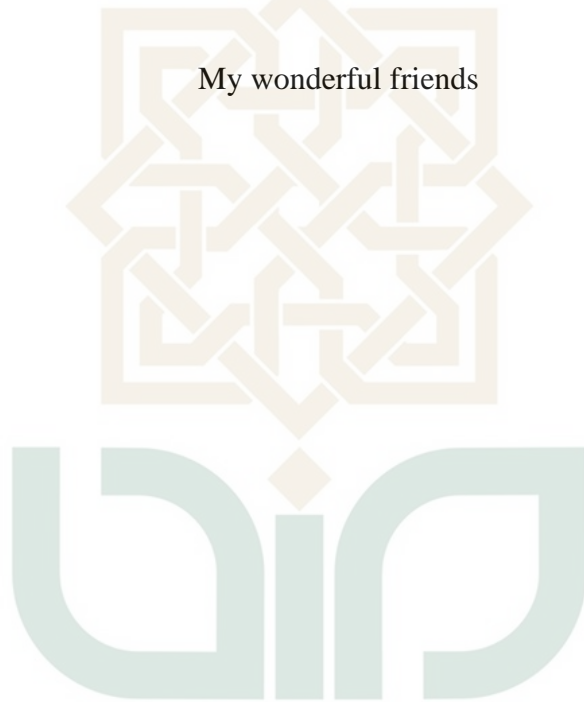
## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved parents

My siblings

My wonderful friends



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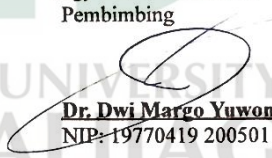
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Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb*

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Because of the lack of experience, the researcher acknowledges this work is far from perfect. To help this graduating paper improve and grow, the researcher respectfully allows all readers for their criticism and ideas.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

MV: Music Video

POV: Point of View



# **ROLAND BARTHES'S SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS: UNCOVERING HIDDEN MEANINGS IN REALITY CLUB'S MUSIC VIDEO**

By Nadya Hafizhah

## **ABSTRACT**

Every music video have signs to channel the songwriter information to the listener. To find out this information, an in-depth analysis is needed so that the songwriter information can be conveyed clearly to the listener so that there is no misinterpretation. The objects of this research are 4 Reality Club music video which include *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke*, and *Love Epiphany*. The four music video have many metaphors that are difficult to understand so they need to be studied so that the songwriter message can be revealed. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. While the data collection technique uses documentation. In this case, the lyric signs and images in the music video are analysed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory because the theory is considered suitable for revealing the hidden meaning of Reality Club music video. The results showed verbal and nonverbal elements can be related to each other to form a meaning called denotation meaning (literal meaning) and produce connotation meaning (hidden meaning) in Reality Club music video so that the author's research question can be answered.

**Keywords:** *Semiotic, music video, connotation, denotation*

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# ROLAND BARTHES'S SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS: UNCOVERING HIDDEN MEANINGS IN REALITY CLUB'S MUSIC VIDEO

Oleh: Nadya Hafizhah

## ABSTRAK

Setiap video musik memiliki tanda-tanda untuk menyalurkan informasi penulis lagu kepada pendengar. Untuk mengetahui informasi tersebut, maka diperlukan analisa mendalam agar informasi penulis lagu dapat tersampaikan dengan jelas kepada pendengar agar tidak terjadi misinterpretasi. Objek dari penelitian ini adalah 4 video musik Reality Club yang diantaranya adalah *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke*, and *Love Epiphany*. Keempat video musik tersebut memiliki banyak metafora yang sulit dimengerti maknanya oleh pendengar sehingga perlu dikaji agar pesan penulis lagu tidak disalah artikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Sedangkan teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan dokumentasi. Dalam hal ini, tanda lirik dan gambar dalam video musik dianalisa menggunakan teori semiotika Roland Barthes karena teori tersebut dianggap cocok untuk mengungkap makna tersembunyi dari lagu Reality Club. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan elemen tanda verbal dan nonverbal dapat berhubungan satu sama lain untuk membentuk sebuah makna yang disebut dengan makna denotasi (makna langsung) dan menghasilkan makna konotasi (makna tersembunyi) dalam video musik Reality Club sehingga pertanyaan penelitian peneliti dapat terjawab.

**Kata Kunci:** *Semiotic, music video, connotation, denotation*

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Language is a tool to communicate with fellow humans. Language as a communication tool has a significant role in human life because with it, humans can interact and talk about anything (Mailani et al., 2022, p. 4). Language is a medium of conveying ideas, desires, feelings, and experiences to others. Through language, a human can also put their ideas into a literary work that can be enjoyed by their audience.

One form of literary work that has long served as a medium for language and continues to be appreciated by many is the song. A Song is often seen as expressions of both the illusions and realities of the creator, conveyed through beautiful language and wrapped in melody. But in this modern era, song is also closely related to visual elements in the form of MV. MV is a short movie or video that accompanies a song. Modern music videos act as a marketing tool to promote a record album (Wahyuningratna & Baskara Putri, 2023, p. 306). In addition to functioning as a marketing tool, the visual element in the form of a MV can serve to strengthen the lyrical message hidden by various styles of language.

According to Effendy (2003), the message conveyed by a songwriter certainly does not come from outside the songwriter, in the sense that the meaning

of the message from his mindset as well as from the frame of reference and field of experience formed from the results of the surrounding social environment (Fazira, n.d., p. 2). In the songs of the Reality Club's band, Fathia Izzati and Faiz Novascotia pour a lot of hidden meaning that may be difficult for listeners to understand the meaning of their songs. This is in line with Blakemore's statement (1989):

*“Shoulders the communicator the responsibility of the occurrence of misunderstanding suggesting that the choice of the message on the part of the communicator has a role in the occurrence of misunderstanding. The more implicit the message, the more likely the misunderstanding”.*

Misunderstandings of lyrics from listeners still often occur which causes misinterpretation of the intent that the author wants to convey. Therefore, listeners need to understand the meaning of the song thoroughly to be able to understand the message of the song. This misperception or misinterpretation can occur due to differences in perception, language, cultural background, or even the listener's limited knowledge of metaphor theory, semiotic theory, music theory, and other related theories. Of the many possibilities that someone can be wrong in interpreting a song lyric is that they do not understand metaphor theory. Stemming from this, the author will reveal the hidden meanings in Reality Club's MV using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory by linking visual signs from the MV and verbal signs from the lyrics of Reality Club's MV. The author uses semiotic theory because it is considered more directly applicable to anyone who does not even understand academic theories without exception.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the connotation and denotation meanings contained in Reality Club's MV?
2. How is the relationship between visual and verbal signs can form connotation meaning in Reality Club's MV?

## 1.3 Objective of Study

1. To know the interpretation of the hidden meaning of Reality Club's MV.
2. To understand how the visual sign (image) and the verbal sign (lyrics) of the MV can contribute to conveying the hidden meaning of Reality Club's MV.

## 1.4 Scope of Study

In this research, the author focuses on the top four with the most popular songs from Reality Club's MV on YouTube, including *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke*, and *Love Epiphany*. Researchers will focus on three points. The first is looking for verbal and visual signs. The second is to analyze the denotation and connotation meanings by correlating the visual and verbal signs discovered. The third is to identify the overall connotation meaning of each MV.

## 1.5 Significance of Study

This research presents some benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits

- a) This research can be used as an additional source and reference for researchers who want to investigate semiotic signs in a MV.
- b) This research can be used to provide information about the signs found in interpreting MV.

## 2. Practical Benefits

- a) This research can be used as discussion material for the English Literature Program, especially for linguistics program students.
- b) This research can be used by other researchers as a reference to conduct further research on semiotic studies.
- c) This research can be used as a reference for Reality Club song lovers to explore and improve their understanding of meaning through semiotic studies.
- d) This research can add information for general readers about connotation signs through semiotic studies in song interpretation.

### 1.6 Literature Review

First, a thesis conducted by Djibran (2022). In his research, Djibran (2022) used same method of qualitative descriptive but different theory lexical relations based on Saeed's theories, such as homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. While the object analyzed uses the same object, namely the Reality Club Song. The result of this study is that the researcher found polysemy as a lexical relation often used in Reality Club selected song lyrics in as many as 53 cases out of a total of 112 cases.

Second, a thesis conducted by Sanjaya (2020), In his research, Sanjaya (2020) used a same qualitative-descriptive method but different theory namely metaphor theory. While the object analyzed also is the Reality Club Song. The results of this study show that there are 11 metaphors found in five selected songs from the albums "Never Get Better" and "What Do You Really Know?" by Reality Club.

Furthermore, the third is a thesis conducted by Persada (2020). In his research, Persada (2020) also used a descriptive analysis but different method by using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory while the object is Lathi MV by Weird Genius that also different from this research. The results of the analysis in the study are that the *Lathi's MV* by Weird Genius is a good MV because the director can translate the meaning of the song into a visual that represents, where the visual can describe the meaning and purpose of the MV.

### **1.7 Theoretical Approach**

In this section, the author will use Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory. Specifically, the author will analyze the use of denotation and connotation in the Reality Club's MV. The first reference used in this theory refers to the book the basic semiotics written by Daniel Candler (2007). The second reference refers to the book Elements of Semiology (1965) by Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes stated that semiotics involves the study not only of what we call 'signs' in everyday language, but also of anything that 'represents' something else. In the semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images,

sounds, gestures, and objects. As Roland Barthes thought, a sign, according to Eco (1976), is a term, a word, an idea, a sound, and also a visible image that accomplishes the mission of a sign. Signs symbolize objects, in reality, therefore, substituting something into another object is the primary function of a sign (Chandler, 2007). Thus, can be said that anything that can explain an abstractness is a semiotic sign. Vice versa, anything that cannot explain something is not a semiotic sign.

In semiology, the signifier is always one of these materials: sounds, objects, images (Chandler, 2007, p. 2). It is necessary for analysis to collect all the typical signs as they are born; among which are the verbal, graphic, gestural, and iconic signs. Precisely, signification is the process of connecting the signifier to the signified to produce the sign. The concept of meaning is formed through diversity between signifiers and signified. The signifier is a picture that symbolizes something or a graphic exemplification of words, letters, and something outside context. On the other hand, the signified is the rational aspect of the idea and something that can either be real or imaginary. So, the signified does not necessarily be treated as concrete.

Barthes' theory focuses on the idea of 2-stage signification, namely denotation and connotation. Roland Barthes famously stated that a photo-graphic image is a message without a code (Barthes 1961, 17). In semiotics, denotation and connotation are terms that describe the relationship between a signifier and its sign, and an analytic distinction is made between two types of significations:



denotative signification and connotative signification. Meaning includes both denotation and connotation. Barthes argues that in photography, connotation can be (analytically) distinguished from denotation. As John Fiske stated that denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how it is photographed (Fiske 1982, 91). Based on all the assumptions of this theory, the author can reveal the meanings contained in the analyzed signs.

The researcher used Roland Barthes' Semiotic model to analyze the meaning.

Connotation	Sr : rhetoric		Sd = ideology	
Denotation : Metalanguage		Sd		

Barthes (1964: 93) explains that denotation is a level of sign that explains the relationship between signifier and signified, and produces direct meaning according to dictionary language. Then the sign element is also interpreted by social agreement. In contrast, connotation means indirect and uncertain depending on people's interpretation or point of view, in other words, denotation makes another meaning or second meaning, which is formed when associated with various aspects of experience, feelings and beliefs.

Thus, researchers used the above form of analysis to answer all questions in this study with the concept of 2 interpretations, namely from the results of denotation and connotation meanings.



## **1.8 Research Method**

### **1.8.1 Type of Research**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method approach. Qualitative research offers a representation of the world that is primarily linguistic (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999, p. 246). Researchers will conduct qualitative research because the data to be obtained in this study are visual data in the form of images on video clips and verbal data in the form of lyrics that cannot be analyzed by quantitative analysis..

### **1.8.2 Data Sources**

The research data source is the subject from which data can be obtained (Arikunto, 2010, p. 129). Researchers used MV as a primary data source in this study. This data is obtained from Reality Club MV on YouTube. The data is collected manually from the music playlist on Reality Club's YouTube channel created in 2016 which can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/@REALITYCLUB/playlists>

### **1.8.3 Data Collection Technique**

The data collection techniques used in this research are observation and documentation techniques. This technique is done by listening to Reality Club songs such as *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke* and *Love Epiphany*. Observation is conducting research directly to the object of research to closely observe the activities carried out. The compiled format

contains elements about events or behaviors that will occur (Arikunto, 1997, p. 204). To collect data, researcher used several steps. The first step is observation techniques by watching Reality Club MV. This first step aims to understand the storyline and signs contained in the video clip. The second step is documentation technique by categorize the scenes in the music video by capturing screenshots of symbols related to the lyrics and helping the analysis, especially in terms of denotation and connotation meanings. This step aims to make the data easier to analyze. After completing the data analysis, the researcher can start the research to solve the problems mentioned in the paper.

#### **1.8.4 Data Analysis Technique**

To analyze the data, referring to Sudaryanto's statement (1993, p. 14-18), the method used in this research is equivalent method. In the equivalent method, "equivalent" means using determinant tools that are decisive (Syaifullah, 2020, p. 14). The first step in this equivalent method is to identify all visual signs, such as images, and verbal signs, such as lyrics, within the MV. Second, the researcher will apply Barthes' theory to describe the denotative meaning related to the visual and verbal signs within the MV and analyze each scene contained in it. Third, describe how visual signs are represented to form connotative meanings in the four MV by Reality Club. Finally, the researcher will draw conclusions based on the analysis conducted using Roland Barthes' semiotic model.

### **1.9 Paper Organization**

This research consists of four main sections. The initial part is the opening chapter, which consists of several sub-sections, including research background, research questions, research objectives, literature review, theoretical approach, research methodology, and paper organization. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework, which covers all aspects of the theory used by the researcher. The third chapter contains the presentation and discussion of the findings, which displays the data obtained from the language analysis of the denotation and connotation meanings of the attributed verbal and visual data. Finally, the concluding chapter includes a summary of the significant points obtained from the entire analysis, along with recommendations drawn from the analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

Based on the analysis that has been studied in this final project, the author can conclude that verbal and nonverbal elements can be related to each other to form a meaning called denotation meaning (literal meaning) and produce connotation meaning (hidden meaning) which includes:

First, the connotation of the MV *Anything You Want*: implies a verse of the song *anything you want* from a band called Arctic Monkeys entitled Cornerstone, which is a favorite song of Fathia and her husband (Randa). This can be concluded on the basis of the relationship between the verbal sign of the song entitled Anything You Want and the visual sign in the form of a scene of Fathia and Randa listening to music repeatedly in the toilet.

Second, the connotation of the MV *Telenovia*: implies a man in a telenovela drama character named Sergio who maintains his toxic relationship despite being cheated on by Marimar. This can be concluded on the basis of verbal evidence in the form of the song title, Telenovia, and visual images in the form of a background that shows the location in Spain so that if the two are linked, it will show a Spanish telenovela drama story.

Third, the connotation of the MV *I Wish I Was Your Joke*: implies a man named Bill who is a fool for Aly that he is even willing to be treated as a second choice or last choice. This can be concluded from the link between the verbal title, Joke, and the visuals contained in the mv in the form of a picture of a man who is obsessed with women with descriptions of the names Aly and Bill.

Fourth, the connotation of the MV *Love Epiphany*: implies an uncle who is confiding in his nephew about his anxiety about the uncertainty of love. This can be concluded on the basis of verbal evidence in the form of lyrics and visuals in the form of images showing the dialog between the nephew and his uncle on Valentine's Day, which when linked will show the meaning and intention that is not visible in the form of a child's voice in the lyrics.

According on the four connotation meanings that have been described by using Roland Barthes Theory of denotation and connotation, this research can be said to have successfully answered the first research question and the second research question regarding the hidden meanings contained in the four Reality Club's MV, including *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke* and *Love Epiphany*.

## 4.2 Suggestion

This research focuses on the denotation and connotation meanings contained in the MV lyrics of Reality Club songs which include *Anything You Want*, *Telenovia*, *I Wish I Was Your Joke* and *Love Epiphany*. Researchers used Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as a reference to solve the problem. However, there is still Roland Barthes' semiotic theory apart from denotation and connotation, namely myth. So, for future researchers who are interested in the same field or study can use a more complete theory by using myth or can use other semiotic theories such as Semiotics by Ferdinand de Saussure or Pierce with different concepts such as signs, signifiers, and signifieds.

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