



SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LYRICS ON BTS'S ALBUM *LOVE YOURSELF: ANSWER*

Naomi Lastiarma Lumbantoruan

Email: [naomi.lumbantoruan@student.uhn.ac.id](mailto:naomi.lumbantoruan@student.uhn.ac.id)  
Universitas HKBP Nommensen

Rony Arahta Sembiring

Email: [ronyarahta.sembiring@uhn.ac.id](mailto:ronyarahta.sembiring@uhn.ac.id)  
Universitas HKBP Nommensen

Rosdiana Rajagukguk

Email: [rajagukgukrosdiana63@gmail.com](mailto:rajagukgukrosdiana63@gmail.com)  
Universitas HKBP Nommensen

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna semiotik dalam lirik lagu BTS pada album *Love Yourself: Answer* menggunakan teori Roland Barthes yang meliputi denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data berupa lirik dari lima lagu yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling berdasarkan relevansi tema identitas, emosi, dan self-love. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi dengan sumber lirik daring, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan teknik coding berdasarkan kerangka semiotik Barthes. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lirik BTS mengandung makna berlapis yang mencerminkan pengalaman emosional serta konstruksi ideologi self-love sebagai bentuk penyembuhan dan resistensi terhadap tekanan sosial.

**Kata kunci:** semiotik, BTS, lirik lagu, self-love, ideologi

**Abstract**

This study aims to analyse the semiotic meanings in the lyrics of BTS songs from the album *Love Yourself: Answer* using Roland Barthes' theory, which encompasses denotation, connotation and myth. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The data consists of lyrics from five songs selected via purposive sampling based on their relevance to the themes of identity, emotion and self-love. Data collection was carried out through documentation using online lyric sources, whilst data analysis employed coding techniques based on Barthes's semiotic framework. The results indicate that BTS's lyrics contain layered meanings that reflect emotional experiences as well as the construction of the ideology of self-love as a form of healing and resistance against social pressure.

**Keywords:** semiotics, BTS, song lyrics, self-love, ideology

**PENDAHULUAN**

Popular music serves not only as entertainment, but also as a cultural text imbued with social and ideological significance. Song lyrics, as an integral part of music, constitute a linguistic form containing signs that can be analyzed to reveal deeper meanings, both emotional and cultural. Consequently, a semiotic approach is relevant for understanding how meaning is constructed and communicated within song lyrics.





BTS, as a global phenomenon, has attracted academic attention due to its consistent focus on themes of mental health, identity, and self-love. Through their work, BTS not only convey emotional messages but also construct a strong social discourse. This makes BTS's song lyrics a potential subject for semiotic analysis.

Previous research indicates that song lyrics can represent emotional and ideological meanings. Several studies have found that BTS's songs contain messages of motivation, self-acceptance, and identity conflict. Furthermore, semiotics has been used to analyze various cultural texts such as musical performances, digital media, public symbols, and traditional architecture. This demonstrates that semiotics is a flexible approach to examining meaning.

However, previous research has tended to focus on individual songs in isolation and has not yet examined the album as a unified narrative. Yet, the album *Love Yourself: Answer* possesses an integrated concept. Therefore, this study aims to (1) identify the semiotic meanings within BTS's song lyrics and (2) analyze the ideological messages constructed within the album.

## **METODE**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. The research data consist of song lyrics from five tracks on the album *Love Yourself: Answer*, namely "Euphoria," "Fake Love," "Trivia 轉: Seesaw," "Idol," and "Mic Drop (Steve Aoki Remix)." These five songs were selected using purposive sampling based on the alignment of their themes with the study's focus: self-love, identity, and emotional experiences. Data collection was conducted through documentation by downloading the English lyrics from [Genius.com](https://www.genius.com), which provides official lyrics and community translations. The data consist of words, phrases, and sentences containing semiotic signs. Data analysis employs Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, encompassing the three stages of denotation, connotation, and myth. The analysis process involved identifying signs, determining their denotative and connotative meanings, and tracing the underlying myths. This approach was used to uncover the layered meanings and ideological messages contained within the texts.

## **HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN**

The results of this study indicate that the lyrics of BTS's songs in the album *Love Yourself: Answer* contain layered semiotic meanings comprising denotation, connotation, and myth. This analysis employs Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, which emphasizes that meaning is not merely literal but also ideological (Barthes, 1972); (Putri & Putri, 2025).

Table 1 presents examples of semiotic analysis of several key lyrics. At the denotative level, the meanings that emerge are literal and form the basis for understanding the text. For example, the phrase "take my hands now" directly refers to the physical act of holding hands (Barthes, 1972). At the connotative level, meaning evolves into symbols of emotional experiences such as trust, identity crises, and relational conflicts. This finding aligns with previous research stating that song lyrics often represent an individual's psychological and emotional states (Rais & Fadillah, 2025). Meanwhile, at the mythical level, meaning evolves into naturalized ideologies. In this context, love is understood not merely as an emotional relationship, but as a healing force or even as a form of competition. This supports the view that cultural texts contain hidden ideological constructions (Wulandari et al., 2023).





**Table 1. Semiotic Analysis of Selected Lyrics**

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
Take my hands now	Holdings hands	Trust and emotional support	Love as healing force
I don't know me	Loss of identity	Identity crisis	Self-loss in love
Repeated seesaw game	Up and down movements	Unstable relationships	Love as competition
You can't stop me loving myself	An expression of self-love	Self-confidence	Self-love as resistance
I got a feeling I'm shining	A sense of self-confidence	Succes	Self-made success

In addition to the lyric-by-lyric analysis, Table 2 summarizes the semiotic findings by song. Each song has a different dominant theme but remains connected within a larger narrative. The song “Euphoria” represents emotional dependence, while “Fake Love” highlights an identity crisis resulting from inauthentic relationships. These findings align with the results of (Jafar et al., 2021), who state that song lyrics can reflect the dynamics of emotion and identity.

**Table 2. Summary of Semiotic Findings**

<b>Song</b>	<b>Dominant Meaning</b>	<b>Ideological Message</b>
Euphoria	Emotional dependence	Romantic idealism
Fake Love	Identity crisis	Performative love
Trivia : Seesaw	Emotional conflict	Toxic relationship
Idol	Self-acceptance	Self-love as resistance
Mic Drop	Confidence	Success ideology

Furthermore, the song “Seesaw” depicts emotional conflict within an unstable relationship, which subsequently leads to the construction of a myth that the relationship is toxic. This finding is consistent with the research by (Pratiwi & Saragih, 2022), which shows that BTS’s lyrics often depict the complexities of interpersonal relationships.

In the song “Idol,” the dominant meaning shifts toward self-acceptance, which then evolves into the ideology of self-love as a form of resistance against social pressure. This supports the research by (Amara & Kusuma, 2022), which emphasizes that self-love is a central theme in BTS’s work. Meanwhile, the song “Mic Drop” represents self-confidence and success constructed as the result of individual effort (self-made success). In this context, success is understood not only as a personal achievement but also as part of the modern ideology of individualism.

From a mythological perspective, a deeper analysis of the lyric data reveals several contemporary myths naturalized through this album. For instance, in “Fake Love,” the myth of performative love emerges through lyrics depicting love as a performance demanding self-sacrifice. (Barthes, 1972) explains that myths operate by transforming cultural meanings into something that appears natural. In this context, the idea that true love must be proven through self-transformation becomes an unquestioned discourse. Similarly, “Euphoria” constructs the myth of the redeemer, where happiness and healing depend on an external figure. This myth is reinforced by the lyric ‘sunlight that rose again’, which constructs the savior figure as a source of new life.





Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the album *Love Yourself: Answer* constructs a systematic ideological narrative, ranging from emotional dependence, identity conflict, to self-acceptance. This reinforces the argument that song lyrics do not merely reflect social reality but also actively construct cultural meaning (Marbun et al., 2023); (Siahaan et al., 2025)). Compared to semiotic studies of other objects such as cultural symbols and visual media, it was found that ideology is always present in various forms of cultural texts. This indicates that semiotics is an effective approach for uncovering hidden meanings across various contexts (Dakhi et al., 2024); (Duma et al., 2025).

## **PENUTUP**

### **Simpulan**

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the lyrics of BTS's songs in the album *Love Yourself: Answer* contain layered semiotic meanings encompassing denotation, connotation, and myth. At the denotative level, meaning is literal, whereas at the connotative level, it evolves into representations of emotional experiences such as identity crises and relationship conflicts. At the mythical level, it was found that self-love serves as the primary ideology constructed within the song lyrics. The ideology of self-love in this album is understood not only as a form of self-acceptance but also as a healing process and a form of resistance against social pressures and societal expectations. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that album-based analysis provides a more comprehensive and systematic understanding compared to analyses focused on a single song in isolation. Thus, song lyrics can be understood as a medium for the construction of cultural meaning and ideology in modern society.

### **Saran**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future research expand semiotic analysis not only to lyrical texts but also to visual aspects such as music videos, album concepts, and stage performances, which are also rich in visual signs. Additionally, future research could employ other semiotic theoretical approaches or combine them with critical discourse analysis to produce a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis. Research could also broaden the scope of study to include works by other musicians to examine comparisons of the construction of meaning and ideology in popular music.

## **DAFTAR RUJUKAN**

Amara, V. R., & Kusuma, R. S. (2022). *Semiotic Analysis of Mental Disorders in BTS Magic Shop Lyrics*. 661(Iccee 2021), 187–197.

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (First Engl). Hill and Wang.

Dakhi, K. N., Sinambela, E., & Sembiring, R. A. (2024). An Analysis of Semiotic of Traditional Houses of Nias. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 9(6), 123–137. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v9i6.561> ?Katarina

Duma, L., Hutauruk, L., Manik, S., & Sembiring, R. A. (2025). *Semiotic Analysis of The Logo*





*Semiotic Analysis Of The Lyrics On Bts's Album Love Yourself: Answer.. 276-280*  
Naomi Lastiarma Lumbantoruan, Rony Arahta Sembiring, Rosdiana Rajagukguk

*and Sign Posts as Found in PT KAI Medan 2024. 3(2), 24–28.*

- Jafar, A., Aso, L., & Amstrong, N. (2021). *The Meaning of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth used in Ariana Grande's God is A Woman Song Lyrics Ahmad. 6(1), 12–21.*
- Marbun, L., Pasaribu, A. N., & Sembiring, R. A. (2023). *The Semiotic Analysis of Sam Smith's Performance Of "Unholy's Song" At the Grammy Award 2023. 11(2), 1583–1589.* <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v11i2.4301>
- Pratiwi, D. A., & Saragih, M. Y. R. (2022). *Semiotic Analysis of the Meaning of Mental Health Motivation in the Lyrics of 00:00 Zero O'Clock by BTS. 7(14), 304–314.*
- Putri, A., & Putri, D. W. (2025). *Barthesian Semiotics in Jungkook's "Somebody": Love and Heartbreak. 11(2), 81–93.* <https://doi.org/https://doi.org.10.33373/chypen.v11i2.7566>
- Rais, F. M., & Fadillah, D. (2025). *Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on the Lyrics of "HOPE" by XXXTENTACION. 6(1), 1–10.* <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18196/jas.v6i1.459>
- Siahaan, L. E., Sembiring, R. A., & Sihite, J. (2025). *Analysis Of The Pon 2024 Logos: A Semiotics Study Lidya Elisca Siahaan 1 , Rony Arahta Sembiring 2 , Jubilezer Sihite 3 . 6(4), 787–798.*
- Wulandari, L., Fadiyah, L., Budianto, S., & Pasopati, R. U. (2023). *Semiotic Analysis of the Meaning of Love in "Last Night on Earth" by Green Day. 1(01), 248–255.* <https://doi.org/https://e-journal.naurendigiton.com/index.php/mj>

