

**The Meaning of Love in the Lyrics of Tiara Andini's Song *Kupu-Kupu*: A Semiotic Analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure**

**Mike Indarsih**

[mike.mih@bsi.ac.id](mailto:mike.mih@bsi.ac.id)

**Horidatul Bakiyah**

[horidatul.hbk@bsi.ac.id](mailto:horidatul.hbk@bsi.ac.id)

**Fajar Diah Astuti**

[fajar.fja@bsi.ac.id](mailto:fajar.fja@bsi.ac.id)

**Faikoh Umairoh**

[Faikoh.fuh@bsi.ac.id](mailto:Faikoh.fuh@bsi.ac.id)

**Nabila Tri Rahmawati**

[44190771@bsi.ac.id](mailto:44190771@bsi.ac.id)

**Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika**

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the meaning of love in the lyrics of Tiara Andini's song *Kupu-Kupu* using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. The research method used is qualitative descriptive with a semiotic approach. Data were obtained from the lyrics of the song *Kupu-Kupu* by Tiara Andini, which was released in 2023. The analysis is focused on identifying the relationship between the signifier and the signified in the song lyrics to uncover the denotative and connotative meanings contained within the expressions of love. The results of the study show that the lyrics of the song represent love as a complex emotional journey filled with hope, uncertainty, and transformation. The butterfly (*kupu-kupu*) is used as a symbol of beauty and change, which reflects the emotional development of someone who is experiencing love. Through its poetic language, the song conveys emotional nuances that align with Saussure's semiotic elements. This study concludes that *Kupu-Kupu* portrays love not only as a feeling but also as a process of personal growth and self-discovery.

**Keywords:** Love Symbolism; Semiotic Analysis; Song Lyrics Interpretation

**INTRODUCTION**

Language is a medium of communication used by humans to express thoughts, feelings, and desires. Through language, humans are able to convey experiences and emotions, one of which is the feeling of love. Love is a universal theme that has long been expressed in various literary and artistic forms, including song lyrics. Songs are not only entertainment but also serve as a medium of communication that contains messages, emotions, and meanings that reflect human life. One of the

songs that expresses the theme of love is *Kupu-Kupu* by Tiara Andini. This song carries poetic and symbolic lyrics, depicting the emotional journey of a person experiencing love. The butterfly (*kupu-kupu*) in the song symbolizes transformation, freedom, and beauty—representing the emotional changes and developments a person undergoes when falling in love.

To analyze the meaning contained in the song, this study uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. According to Saussure, language consists of signs composed of two elements: the signifier (the form of the word or expression) and the signified (the concept or meaning behind it). The relationship between the signifier and the signified forms a sign that can be interpreted to reveal deeper meaning. This research aims to identify and interpret the signs contained in the lyrics of *Kupu-Kupu* by Tiara Andini. By applying a semiotic approach, the study seeks to uncover how language in the form of song lyrics can symbolize complex feelings such as love, and how these symbols can be understood by the listener

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Semiotics and Saussure's Theory of Signs**

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior. Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the founding figures of modern linguistics, introduced a structuralist approach to semiotics, viewing language as a system of signs. According to Saussure (1916), a sign is composed of two inseparable parts: the signifier (the form or sound pattern) and the signified (the concept or meaning). This relationship is arbitrary and shaped by cultural and social conventions. In the context of song lyrics, Saussure's theory is useful for decoding both literal and symbolic meanings contained in the words, allowing researchers to interpret how emotional themes such as love are constructed linguistically.

### **Love in Literary and Cultural Studies**

Love has long been a central theme in literature, music, and art. In cultural studies, love is not merely treated as an emotional experience but as a complex concept shaped by social, historical, and personal factors. According to Griffith (2017), the portrayal of love in popular culture often reflects deeper narratives of identity, transformation, and vulnerability. In songs, lyrics serve as emotional narratives that articulate the speaker's inner world, making them a rich source for analyzing how love is experienced, communicated, and symbolized.

### **Song Lyrics as Textual Data for Semiotic Analysis**

Song lyrics, as a form of contemporary literature, function as meaningful texts that combine language, rhythm, and emotion. They are often symbolic and metaphorical, using figures of speech to convey deeper meanings. According to Holmes (1992), language in music often carries cultural and emotional weight that

extends beyond literal interpretation. In semiotic studies, lyrics are seen as structured systems of signs that can be broken down and analyzed to uncover how meaning is constructed and communicated. Researchers like Peterson (2021) and Vander Lei (2008) have shown that popular songs, especially in the genre of romantic ballads, are fertile ground for exploring how language represents emotional and psychological states.

### **Previous Studies on Semiotics and Song Lyrics**

Several studies have applied semiotic theory to song analysis. For example, Irwanto and Djundjung (2013) analyzed Francine Rivers' *Redeeming Love* to explore themes of redemption and emotional growth using semiotic tools. Similarly, Iqbal (2018) studied Japanese communication patterns using semiotic and cultural frameworks. These studies demonstrate the flexibility and relevance of semiotic analysis in interpreting diverse forms of texts, including novels, advertisements, films, and songs. However, few studies have focused specifically on Indonesian pop songs using Saussure's model. This gap underscores the importance of this research in analyzing Tiara Andini's *Kupu-Kupu*, which combines poetic expression with symbolic imagery to portray love and emotional change.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a semiotic approach to analyze the meaning of love in the lyrics of Tiara Andini's song *Kupu-Kupu*. The qualitative method is appropriate for interpreting symbolic elements within texts, particularly song lyrics that contain layered meanings. The data source is the official lyrics of *Kupu-Kupu*, released in 2023, which were selected purposively for their rich use of figurative language and symbolism. The song was chosen because it not only thematizes love but also uses symbolic imagery (e.g., the butterfly) that is well-suited to semiotic analysis.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

The primary instrument in this research is the researcher, who acts as the interpreter of signs found in the text. The lyrics were collected from Tiara Andini's official music platforms and lyric-sharing websites to ensure accuracy. The researcher conducted repeated close readings of the lyrics to identify relevant units of meaning. These were then segmented into individual phrases or lines that potentially carry both denotative and connotative meanings. Saussure's theoretical framework guided the data sorting process, specifically focusing on identifying the signifiers (the words or phrases used) and their signifieds (the underlying concepts or ideas of love they represent).

## Data Analysis

The data analysis involved a multi-step process. First, each line of the song was examined to identify figurative language, metaphors, or emotionally loaded phrases. These expressions were then categorized according to Saussure's semiotic model, distinguishing between signifier and signified. Next, the researcher interpreted the signs in relation to broader cultural and emotional themes, particularly focusing on how the concept of love is linguistically constructed. The analysis also considered how the butterfly metaphor functions as a central symbol, reflecting transformation, beauty, and emotional growth. Findings were presented by linking lyric excerpts to their interpreted meanings, offering insight into the deeper emotional and symbolic content of the song.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that Tiara Andini's *Kupu-Kupu* contains a rich layering of denotative and connotative meanings that represent the journey of love. Through Saussure's semiotic lens, each lyric line acts as a sign made up of a signifier (the actual word or phrase used) and a signified (the meaning or concept it represents). The analysis of the song's stanzas uncovers how simple words can carry deep emotional and symbolic resonance in conveying romantic experiences.

In the first stanza, the denotative meaning in the line "*Betapa mudahnya kau buat pipi merona*" reflects a visible emotional reaction—blushing—caused by the presence of a loved one. The following line, "*Jantungku terpompa setiap kita berjumpa*," also presents a literal reference to the physiological response of a racing heart when encountering someone significant. However, the connotative interpretation suggests that the loved one has a powerful emotional effect, evoking nervous excitement and romantic tension. These expressions symbolize the early stages of falling in love, where even the smallest gestures create strong emotional reactions.

The second stanza contains the line "*Tak pernah ku rasa tak berdaya tanpa bual kata-kata*," which denotatively asserts the speaker's emotional strength and the sincerity of their bond one that requires no excessive words or flattery. The phrase "*Hatiku terbaca, hatimulah yang ku puja*" suggests that the speaker's emotions are transparent and directed fully toward the beloved. Connotatively, this stanza reveals the emotional intimacy and mutual understanding within a relationship where feelings are so deeply aligned that verbal communication becomes secondary.

The third stanza, beginning with "*Wahai cinta beri pertanda*," portrays love as an active, personified force being called upon for clarity. While denotatively it is a request for a "sign," connotatively it expresses longing for emotional certainty and direction in a confusing romantic situation. The metaphor "*Dengar kupu-kupu yang bicara*" blends the surreal with the poetic, using the butterfly an elegant, quiet

creature as a symbol of gentle emotional communication. The expression "*Bisingkan dada*" captures the inner turbulence of falling in love, while "*Melantunkan nada asmara*" frames love as a song an experience both heard and felt, beautiful yet unspoken.

In the fourth stanza, the phrase "*Andai cinta setangkai bunga*" draws on the denotative image of a flower to signify beauty and fragility. The connotative meaning suggests that love, like a flower, needs care and attention to flourish. The next line, "*Takkan buat kau layu dan kecewa*," functions as a promise: that the speaker's love will not lead to heartbreak. "*Kan ku jaga binar hatinya*" expresses a commitment to protect the beloved's happiness, where the "sparkle" of the heart signifies joy, light, and emotional vitality. This entire stanza portrays love as something beautiful, living, and worth safeguarding.

The fifth stanza introduces more vulnerable imagery. In "*Betapa murahnya kau buat hati merana*," the denotative meaning reflects how easily the beloved can cause sadness. The connotative layer reveals emotional dependency the speaker's joy or sorrow hinges entirely on the presence or absence of the beloved. The line "*Sesaat tak jumpa jantungku hilang irama*" implies that even the briefest separation throws the speaker's emotional balance into chaos, metaphorically disrupting the rhythm of their heart.

The final stanza, "*Jangan hentikan kepak sayapmu, sintas hinggapi permai hatiku*," merges the metaphor of flight with emotional endurance. The denotative reading encourages the beloved to keep moving forward and to "land" in the speaker's peaceful heart. Connotatively, this symbolizes a desire for the continuation and presence of love despite challenges. The following line, "*Jaga bara, kau jadi apiku*," transforms the relationship into a source of warmth and life, where the beloved is the "fire" and the speaker urges them to preserve the spark. The closing line, "*Sinyal menyala di radar hatiku*," uses modern imagery to represent heightened emotional awareness and sensitivity. The metaphorical "radar" detects emotional signals, suggesting that the speaker is attuned to even subtle expressions of love.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the song *Kupu-Kupu* utilizes layered linguistic signs to express love as a multidimensional experience ranging from infatuation and vulnerability to emotional commitment and longing. Each stanza combines denotative clarity with rich connotative depth, allowing listeners to emotionally engage with the song's symbolic portrayal of love's transformative power.

This study contributes to the growing body of research that examines the symbolic representation of love in contemporary song lyrics using a semiotic lens. By applying Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of signs, this research highlights how language in music operates on multiple levels both literal and symbolic to convey complex emotional narratives. Saussure's model emphasizes the arbitrary nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified, yet it is through this very

arbitrariness that emotional meaning is constructed, especially in creative texts like songs.

In comparison to previous studies, this research aligns with findings by Irwanto and Djundjung (2013), who used semiotic analysis to examine emotional development in literature. Their study, while focused on a novel, similarly found that figurative language and symbolic references serve to deepen emotional engagement. Likewise, Peterson (2021) examined spiritual and emotional messages in Christian fiction and observed that readers respond more strongly to symbolic representations than to direct expressions. This mirrors the emotional strategy in *Kupu-Kupu*, where the use of metaphors like “butterfly” or “fluttering wings” evokes feeling without overt declaration.

What distinguishes this study from prior semiotic research, however, is its focus on an Indonesian pop song—a genre that remains underexplored in academic literature, especially through Saussurean analysis. While previous research by Iqbal (2018) focused on Japanese cultural communication using semiotic theory, and Fajri et al. (2023) explored feminism in *Cantik itu Luka* through textual symbolism, studies that explore Indonesian music lyrics—particularly love songs—through a linguistic-semiotic framework are still limited. This gap highlights the significance of analyzing *Kupu-Kupu* as a cultural text that reflects local language use, emotional codes, and artistic expression.

Furthermore, the song shows how Indonesian popular music is not merely entertainment but a site of meaning-making. The lyrics do not rely on complex vocabulary or academic language, yet they are rich with emotional symbols that listeners intuitively relate to. This supports Holmes’ (1992) argument that everyday language in popular media often carries more cultural and emotional weight than formal discourse. Music becomes a mirror through which listeners reflect on their own relationships, desires, and emotional struggles.

Additionally, this study demonstrates how popular lyrics serve as collective emotional texts, enabling the audience to co-create meaning based on shared cultural codes. In the case of *Kupu-Kupu*, the metaphors of nature (butterflies, flowers, fire) are familiar within Indonesian cultural and literary traditions, making the song emotionally accessible while allowing space for individual interpretation. This affirms Barthes’ (1977) notion that texts—especially artistic ones—invite readers or listeners to participate in meaning construction, making semiotic analysis not just about decoding intent but about exploring possibilities of interpretation. In summary, this study builds upon and extends previous semiotic analyses by applying Saussurean theory to a local Indonesian pop text. It highlights the importance of viewing popular song lyrics as meaningful cultural artifacts and demonstrates how love, as a universal yet deeply personal experience, is shaped, framed, and communicated through signs embedded in poetic language. This provides a platform for further study into how emotional themes in local music resonate with broader cultural identities and values.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Tiara Andini's song *Kupu-Kupu* presents love not merely as a romantic feeling but as a rich, symbolic experience conveyed through poetic and emotionally layered language. By applying Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, the research demonstrates that the relationship between the signifier (the language used in the lyrics) and the signified (the emotional or conceptual meaning) reveals both denotative and connotative interpretations of love. The denotative meanings in the song portray physical and emotional responses such as blushing, heartbeats, or longing as literal signs of affection. Meanwhile, the connotative meanings reveal deeper emotional messages, including vulnerability, transformation, hope, and commitment. The recurring metaphors of butterflies, wings, fire, and flowers function as universal symbols that resonate with listeners and reinforce the cultural and emotional power of the lyrics.

This research also affirms that song lyrics especially in contemporary Indonesian pop music serve as meaningful texts that reflect personal emotions while echoing broader cultural values. The findings support the idea that semiotic analysis can uncover the implicit messages embedded in everyday artistic expressions and offer insight into how language shapes emotional experience. Ultimately, *Kupu-Kupu* represents love as a journey: fragile yet powerful, intuitive yet expressive. This study not only enriches the understanding of linguistic symbolism in music but also contributes to broader discussions of how popular culture communicates emotional meaning through signs. Future research may explore other Indonesian songs or genres using similar frameworks to further examine how emotional themes are constructed and received in musical texts.

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