

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a brief discussion of the literature related to this study. All relevant issues in this study are discussed based on these theories.

#### **A. Analysis Semiotics**

Semiotics (or semiology) is a discipline that fundamentally studies signs, sign systems, and the process of meaning (semiosis). It focuses on how a sign functions, is produced, interpreted, and its relationship with other signs in a system. According to Mudjiyanto & Nur, "Semiotics is the study of the system of signs and symbols that form a meaning in society" (Mudjiyanto & Nur, 2013). In the context of this research, semiotics is specifically used as an analytical knife to uncover the connotative meaning behind the choice of diction and narrative sequences in the lyrics of the song composed by Adele.

#### **B. Figurative Language**

Figurative language is a mode of signification in which words operate beyond their literal meaning to produce symbolic and interpretative effects. It functions not merely as ornamentation, but as a mechanism of semantic expansion. Abrams and Harpham (2015) define figurative language as language "in which words are used in a sense that departs from their literal meaning in order to achieve special meaning or effect (Pedagogiki, n.d.)." This departure from literal reference enables abstract experiences to be expressed in concrete linguistic forms.

From a semiotic perspective, figurative language generates layered meaning. It activates denotative meaning while simultaneously producing connotative associations shaped by culture and ideology. According to Roland Barthes, "myth is a type of speech" ("*le mythe est une parole*"), meaning that cultural ideology is constructed through systems of signs (B.Zh. Zhussupova \*, 2025). In this framework,

figurative expressions operate within the second order of signification, where repeated connotations may become naturalized as myth.

Therefore, figurative language is not simply aesthetic expression, but a discursive structure through which emotional reality and cultural ideology are represented and legitimized within literary texts, including song lyrics.

## 1. Types of Figurative Language

In this study, the researcher focuses on several types of figurative language found in the selected songs from the album *30* by Adele. *The types analyzed are as follows:*

### a. Metaphor

Metaphor is a direct comparison between two different things without using the words “like” or “as.” It is used to express abstract ideas such as love, pain, regret, and growth through symbolic images. In this research, metaphor is the most dominant type of figurative language.

### b. Simile

Simile is a comparison that uses “like” or “as” to show similarity between two things. It helps make descriptions clearer and more expressive.

### c. Personification

Personification gives human characteristics to non-human objects or abstract ideas. It is used to make emotional experiences feel more alive and dramatic.

### d. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration used to emphasize strong feelings. It strengthens emotional intensity in the lyrics.

e. Repetition (Anaphora)

Repetition is the repeated use of words or phrases to emphasize meaning. Anaphora refers to repetition at the beginning of lines or sentences. This type is also dominant in the data and functions to highlight emotional sincerity and vulnerability.

f. Paradox

Paradox is a statement that appears contradictory but contains deeper meaning. It reflects emotional conflict and identity struggle.

g. Symbolism

Symbolism is the use of objects, images, or elements to represent deeper meanings beyond their literal sense. Natural elements such as river, storm, and daylight function as symbols in expressing emotional conditions.

### C. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Roland Barthes develops semiotics as a framework for analyzing how meaning is constructed through signs (Barthes, 2022). He introduces the concept of **two orders of signification**: denotation, which refers to the literal meaning of a sign, and connotation, which refers to its cultural and associative meaning. Barthes further argues that connotation may develop into myth, which he defines as “a type of speech,” meaning that ideology is communicated and naturalized through systems of signs.

Thus, Barthes' semiotic theory is used in this study to analyze how song lyrics produce denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and ideological or mythic meaning.

#### **D. Biographers of Adele**

Adele Laurie Blue Adkins, known professionally as Adele, was born on May 5, 1988, in London, England. She is a British singer-songwriter recognized for her distinctive contralto voice and emotionally expressive lyrical style. Adele gained international recognition through her albums *19*, *21*, *25*, and *30*, which predominantly explore themes of love, loss, identity, and personal growth.

Her songwriting is characterized by the use of emotional expression and figurative language, making her works relevant for linguistic and semiotic analysis (Kayla & Simatupang, 2025). Due to the depth of meaning and symbolic elements embedded in her lyrics, Adele's songs serve as appropriate objects for examining the construction of denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings within popular music discourse.

#### **E. Review of Previous Research**

In this research, the researcher cited two previous studies conducted by (Shalaika et al., 2025), entitled "*Analysis of the Use of Meaning of Diction in the Lyrics of the Song Malam Tak Berjudul*" by Monica Christiana". This research focuses on the semiotic analysis and meaning of diction in the lyrics of the song "Malam Tak Berjudul" by Monica Christiana. The purpose of the research is to understand how word choice (diction) is used to shape the meaning, atmosphere, and emotional message in the song. This research highlights that every word in the lyrics has a double meaning both denotatively (actual meaning) and connotatively (figurative or symbolic meaning).

The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which analyzes signs and meanings on two levels: denotation and

connotation, as well as looking at the cultural values of the song. forming the myth behind the signs. A hermeneutic approach is also used to interpret the deeper meaning of the word choice based on the emotional context and intention of the songwriter. The results show that Monica Christiana uses a lot of poetic and symbolic diction to describe the atmosphere of loneliness, self-introspection, inner wounds, and hope. For example, the word "night" is interpreted as a symbol of solitude and inner reflection, "untitled" describes a feeling of directionlessness or identity, and "moon" symbolizes hope in the midst of darkness

The second previous research conducted by (Sutrisno et al., 2025). Entitled *Analysis of Moral Messages in Song Lyrics "Bertahta di Atas Tanah Mereka" Karya Lukanegara in Roland Barthes Semiotics Study*". This research discusses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of the lyrics of the song "Bertahta di Atas Tanah Mereka" by Lukanegara, focusing on the moral messages contained therein. The purpose of this research is to identify (1) the type of moral message contained in the song lyrics, (2) the meaning of the moral message conveyed, and (3) the moral context behind it. The research uses a qualitative approach and Barthes' semiotic analysis method, which distinguishes between denotative meaning (literal meaning) and connotative meaning (symbolic or emotional meaning). The object of study is the text of song lyrics, which is analyzed through an in-depth reading of the linguistic signs and symbols used by the songwriter.

Based on these two previous studies, this research has strong relevance, especially in the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and descriptive qualitative approach. Research conducted by Shalaika et al. (2025) and Sutrisno et al. (2025) showed that semiotic analysis can be used effectively to interpret signs, meanings, and moral and emotional messages in song lyrics. These similarities form the methodological basis for this study, as both attempt to uncover the deep meaning contained in musical works through the analysis of signs, symbols and language. However, this research has a broader focus, which is not only analyzing messages and meanings, but also

themes and the use of diction in the lyrics of the song composed by Adele.

In addition, the main difference of this research lies in the object and cultural context studied. The two previous studies analyzed Indonesian-language songs with the typical social and moral context of Indonesian society, while this study focuses on English-language songs that represent social and existential unrest in the 1990s. Through semiotic analysis, this research seeks to explore life themes, social messages, and diction choices used by Adele in delivering criticism and reflection on the reality of human life(*No Title*, 2023). Thus, this research is expected to expand the scope of semiotic studies in the realm of international music as well as contribute to the development of literary and linguistic studies, especially in understanding the relationship between language, meaning, and social messages in musical works (Ratnadhita et al., 2025).