

Construction of The Meaning of “*Aku memaafkan*” in the Lyrics of the Song “*Jernih*” By Kunto Aji

Diva Rahmanto, Khaerudin Imawan*, Aghnia Dian Lestari

University of Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: khaerudin.imawan@ugj.ac.id

Abstract. Music plays an important role as a medium of communication in conveying reflective and emotional messages through lyrics that can be interpreted personally by listeners. This is in line with Kunto Aji's statement about the human tendency to often forget the importance of talking to oneself, and to simply enjoy songs without understanding their deeper meaning. This study aims to analyze the construction of meaning of “*Aku memaafkan*” in the lyrics of Kunto Aji's song “*Jernih*”. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, with Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic approach and through intrapersonal communication. Data were collected through lyric analysis and interviews with listeners. The results show that the phrase “*Aku memaafkan*” is constructed as a meaning of releasing inner wounds, freeing oneself from past trauma, and healing efforts to achieve inner peace. The repetition of the phrase “*Aku memaafkan*” serves as an affirmation that strengthens an individual's internal dialogue in dealing with emotional conflicts. Listeners' interpretations reveal that the meaning of “*Aku memaafkan*” is not only understood symbolically but also internalized as a form of self-reflection. This study concludes that a song not only functions as an artistic work but can also be an effective communication medium in assisting the process of forgiveness.

Keywords: Kunto Aji, Intrapersonal Communication, Music, Self Reflection, Semiotics.

1 Introduction

In today's digital age, where the pace of life is fast and social pressures are increasing, attention to mental health and psychological well-being is very important. However, people tend to prioritize physical health over mental health. Based on a report by Kompas.id written by [1] there has been an increase in mental health crises in the United States, which is also being experienced globally, including in Indonesia. According to the 2022 Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey cited by Nababan in Kompas.id, there are 15.5 million adolescents facing mental health problems and 2.45 million of them have mental disorders [2]. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain mental health through positive activities such as communication. The relationship between mental health and communication practices in this study is understood through the perspective that the management of emotions and internal conflicts is part of intrapersonal

communication. Individuals experiencing psychological stress tend to engage in internal dialogue to understand, manage, and respond to their emotional experiences. Thus, communication is understood not only as interpersonal interaction but also as an internal process that plays a role in maintaining mental well-being.

Effective communication plays an important role in helping individuals express their emotions, understand themselves, and interact with others. In a broader context, communication is not only verbal, but can also be expressed through art, including music. Music is a medium of communication that conveys messages and emotions through melody, rhythm, and lyrics [3]. In addition to serving as entertainment, music also becomes a means of self-reflection and conveying messages that are relevant to modern life [4]. One of the issues facing society today is the difficulty of forgiving oneself due to excessive self-criticism and past emotional wounds, which have a negative impact on psychological well-being [5].

Music plays an important role as a form of intrapersonal communication because it can calm the mind, help understand emotions, and encourage self-reflection [6]. Through lyrics, songwriters can communicate with listeners to express emotions and social realities [7]. Meanwhile, listeners can feel the meaning of the song personally [8]. The shift from a general discussion of mental health to an analysis of music in this study is theoretically justified, as music is understood as a form of intrapersonal communication that contributes to the process of self-reflection and emotional regulation in individuals. Thus, music serves as a means of emotional expression and communication that supports awareness and the ability to forgive.

One musician who uses music as a medium for emotional expression is Kunto Aji. Kunto Aji is an Indonesian singer and songwriter known for his poetic and profound lyrics. He holds a unique place in Indonesian popular music as an artist who consistently incorporates mental health issues into his work. One of his works, titled “Jernih,” from the album “Pengantar Purifikasi Pikir” released on September 14, 2023, features the reflective repetition of “Aku Memaafkan” as a form of intrapersonal communication in dealing with emotional wounds [9]. In the Indonesian sociocultural context, where mental health issues are still viewed through a collective lens, the song “Jernih” represents a psychological shift among Indonesians toward greater self-reflection and a more open understanding of mental health.

This song describes how forgiveness is not just an act but a long process that involves self-reflection, liberation from emotional wounds, and the achievement of inner peace. The choice of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” as the focus of this analysis is based on its frequency of occurrence within the lyrics of the song “Jernih” and its role as a central element shaping the overall meaning. The repetition of this phrase serves not merely as a poetic device, but also represents the intensity of affirmation in the process of self-reflection. However, in reality, many listeners only enjoy the song without understanding the deeper meaning contained in the lyrics, especially the meaning behind the phrase “Aku Memaafkan.” Therefore, this study will reveal how the meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” is constructed in the lyrics of the song “Jernih” as a reflection of intrapersonal communication through Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis.

This study is based on several previous studies, including the first study, conducted by [10] titled “All I Am Celebrated in the Lyrics of Nadin Amizah's Song,” this study

examines the relationship between signs and signifiers in song lyrics to reveal the meanings and messages contained therein. The results show that the song emphasizes the importance of appreciating every phase of life and accepting oneself as one is. The second study, by [11] with the title “Analysis of the Meaning of Fatherlessness in the Lyrics of Kunto Aji's Song Saudade” found that the song “Saudade” represents the emotions of loss and longing for an absent father figure, as well as describing an individual's struggle to fill an inner void. The third study, by [12] entitled “Semiotic Analysis of Spiritual Meaning in the Lyrics of the Song Jiwa yang Bersedih by Ghea Indrawari” shows that the song raises spiritual and religious themes such as loneliness, hope, the search for meaning in life, gratitude, and empathy.

Based on the above studies, there has been no research that specifically examines the construction of meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in the lyrics of Kunto Aji's song ‘Jernih’ using Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory, as well as specifically analyzing the expression “Aku Memaafkan” as a reflection of intrapersonal communication. This research is important because it is relevant to the issue of mental health, which is increasingly prevalent, where music plays a role as a medium for voicing and building understanding about the process of forgiving oneself. Through the analysis of signifiers and signifieds, this study aims to reveal the construction of meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in the lyrics of the song “Jernih” and interpret the meaning felt by listeners as a reflection of intrapersonal communication.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous Research

Several previous studies have examined the construction of meaning in song lyrics as a medium of emotional and reflective communication, demonstrating the ability of lyrics to convey profound messages through symbols and linguistic signs. The first study conducted by [10] emphasizes the importance of songs as a medium of communication capable of conveying deep emotional reflections related to self-acceptance, gratitude, and life's journey. The second study, by [11] shows that the song “Saudade” contains a deep depiction of longing, loss, and the inner struggle of someone who grew up without a father figure. The third study, conducted by [12] revealing spiritual and religious themes in song lyrics that encourage listeners to reflect on the meaning of life.

Previous studies have shown the function of song lyrics as a meaningful means of communication in conveying emotional and spiritual reflections, but have not highlighted intrapersonal communication in the process of forgiveness. Previous studies have tended to treat lyrics as objects of interpretation without specifically linking them to intrapersonal communication as a psychological mechanism of the listener. Furthermore, previous studies have not explored how key phrases in lyrics are repeated as a form of affirmation in self-reflection. Consequently, there remains a limitation in explaining that the meaning of lyrics is not only understood symbolically but also internalized within the process of intrapersonal communication. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the construction of meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in the

lyrics of the song “Jernih” by Kunto Aji through Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach and combining listener analysis through interviews to understand how this meaning is interpreted, internalized, and reflected by listeners. This study makes a theoretical contribution by integrating semiotics with intrapersonal communication, as well as a practical contribution to understanding the role of music as a medium of communication that facilitates the process of forgiveness.

2.2 Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is the process of communication within an individual involving thoughts, feelings, reflections, and internal dialogue that are not usually expressed verbally. This communication is often referred to as the “inner voice” or “self-talk.” [13]. Although not physically visible, this communication plays an important role in shaping a person's attitudes, decisions, and behavior. Turner in [14] explains that intrapersonal communication includes the ability to imagine, daydream, perceive, and solve problems internally.

According to [15] Intrapersonal communication is the process of processing information within an individual, including receiving, processing, storing, and retrieving information. These activities include praying, giving thanks, self-reflection, and creative imagination. The stages of intrapersonal communication are as follows :

- a. Sensation is the initial stage when individuals receive stimuli from the environment through the senses, such as hearing, seeing, or feeling.
- b. Perception is the attribution of meaning to stimuli based on experience and knowledge.
- c. Memory is a highly structured system that allows organisms to store and recall information about the world and use that knowledge as a guide for behavior.
- d. The final stage in intrapersonal communication is thinking. This stage involves deeper and more complex information processing, including cognitive activities such as analyzing, making decisions, and reflecting on messages or events experienced.

It can be interpreted that intrapersonal communication is an individual's active internal participation in conveying symbolic messages, where the individual acts as both the sender and receiver of messages, providing feedback to themselves [16]. This process forms the basis for determining an individual's responses, actions, and meaning-making processes. This internal process determines how a person processes information, builds self-awareness, and generates meaning and decisions in everyday life.

In this study, intrapersonal communication is conceptualized as an individual's internal dialogue that encompasses self-reflection, emotion regulation, and the attribution of meaning to personal experiences. Unlike interpersonal communication, which involves interactions between individuals, and mass communication which is one-to-many in nature and occurs through the media intrapersonal communication takes place within the inner self and focuses on the internalization of messages. Although songs are disseminated through mass media, the process of interpreting them by listeners is intrapersonal. Song lyrics are not merely received as external messages but are processed through experience, emotion, and memory, thereby giving rise to internal dialogue. Therefore, music is positioned not merely as a product of mass communication but as

a stimulus that triggers intrapersonal communication, particularly in self-reflection and the process of forgiveness.

2.3 Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and how they form meaning. The word "semiotics" comes from the Greek word "semeion," which means sign, based on the assumption that human understanding of reality can only be achieved through signs and codes. The purpose of semiotics is to analyze how signs work, the process of message construction, and the mechanisms of meaning transmission and reception in society [17]. In the context of communication studies, semiotics examines how signs are used to convey and interpret meaning.

Ferdinand de Saussure, an important figure in the field of semiotics with a focus on linguistics, argued that language is a system of signs. Each sign consists of two elements, namely the signifier and the signified [17]. Signifiers are physical forms such as sounds, images, or writings that have meaning. Thus, signifiers are material elements in language that include spoken forms, heard sounds, and written texts. Meanwhile, signifieds are mental images, thoughts, or concepts. Thus, signifieds are mental aspects of language that refer to concepts or meanings produced by signifiers.

In this study, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics, particularly the concepts of the signifier and the signified, are used as the primary framework for analyzing song lyrics. The signifier is understood as the linguistic form appearing in the text, such as a word, phrase, or sentence, while the signified refers to the conceptual meaning or mental image evoked by the signifier. This framework is applied by identifying units of analysis in the form of lyric fragments, then grouping them into signifiers and signifieds. Subsequently, the relationship between the two is analyzed contextually to uncover the meaning constructed within the overall structure of the lyrics. Thus, the analysis does not merely stop at the identification of signs but also emphasizes the relationship between the signifier and the signified in forming the meaning "Aku memaafkan" as a form of self-reflection.

According to Saussure, linguistic signs consist of two main elements, namely the signifier as the sound image and the signified as the meaning it represents. The relationship between the signifier and the signified in Saussure's view is arbitrary, meaning that there is no natural connection between the form of a word and its meaning, but rather it is formed through agreement within society. The two form an inseparable unity. Like music, language must be understood synchronically as a complete and interrelated system of sound and meaning. The relationship between the signifier and the signified allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning contained within, including in music, which influences the mindset, behavior, and emotions of its listeners and serves to reflect the surrounding environment [18]. In the context of this study, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory can help analyze the construction of meaning of "Aku Memaafkan" in the lyrics of the song "Jernih" by Kunto Aji through linguistic signs (signifiers and signifieds) that appear in the lyrics.

2.4 Music and Lyrics as a Medium of Communication

This research is grounded in communication studies that view popular music in Indonesia not only as entertainment, but also as a medium for the construction of meaning related to the social and emotional experiences of the community. Music as a medium of communication serves as a means of conveying messages, expressions, and meanings between communicators and communicants [19]. The important components of music are not limited to melody and theme, but also include lyrics, which contribute significantly to the aesthetics of a song [20]. Song lyrics are a form of verbal communication that contain implied meanings and messages [21]. Song lyrics can evoke emotions, trigger powerful memories, and connect listeners to their personal experiences [22].

The meaning in songs often reflects the mindset and personal experiences of their creators, and has a positive influence as entertainment, motivation, or a means of reflection for listeners [23]. Thus, music and lyrics not only function in social communication, but also as a medium of personal communication that supports the process of self-reflection and psychological well-being.

3 Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method that aims to understand the phenomenon comprehensively through the behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions of the subjects in a descriptive manner in the form of words and language [24]. Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach is used in this study to analyze the construction of meaning in the phrase “Aku memaafkan” in the lyrics of the song “Jernih” by Kunto Aji. Saussure explains that a sign is a relationship between the signifier, which is the physical form, and the signified, which is the concept or meaning represented by the signifier.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data was obtained from the lyrics of the song “Jernih” by Kunto Aji in the album *Pengantar Purifikasi Pikiran*, which was taken from Kunto Aji's official YouTube channel and interviews with listeners. Secondary data came from several supporting references such as articles and books related to the research. Observation was carried out by directly observing the lyrics to identify signs, symbols, and meanings in the lyrics. Interviews were conducted with informants who were purposively selected from among Kunto Aji's listeners to explore their perceptions, interpretations, and personal experiences of the meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” as a form of self-reflection.

The validity of the data in this study was achieved through source triangulation techniques that compared the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure accuracy and reduce bias [24]. In this study, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of the song lyric analysis with data from listener interviews, so that the meanings derived were not solely based on the researcher's interpretation but were also supported by the informants' experiences and perceptions. Through triangulation, the data produced becomes more valid, thus providing an objective picture

of the construction of meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in the lyrics of the song “Jernih” by Kunto Aji.

The data analysis process is conducted in a step-by-step and systematic manner. The first step is to divide the song lyrics into units of analysis, such as verses or phrases relevant to the research focus. The units of analysis in this study were determined in stages, namely at the word, phrase, and stanza levels. However, the primary focus of the analysis is on phrases as units of meaning, particularly the phrase “Aku memaafkan” which is analyzed within the context of the entire stanza. The next step is to identify linguistic signs, consisting of the signifier as the linguistic form and the signified as the conceptual meaning it conveys. The final step involves examining the relationship between signifier and signified collectively and structurally to establish the meaning of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” in the song lyrics and interpreting that meaning as a form of self-reflection through intrapersonal communication. This clear and structured analytical process is designed to enhance transparency and minimize subjective bias in data interpretation.

4 Results and Discussion

Kunto Aji is known as a singer and songwriter whose works are meaningful and reflective for his listeners. In 2023, Kunto Aji released his third album, “Pengantar Purifikasi Pikir”, which tells the story of a person's maturation and growth. One of the songs on the album is “Jernih”. This study focuses on the song as an expressive medium that depicts a deep emotional experience of the process of forgiveness. Based on Kunto Aji's statement in Live Session by USS Feed, for Kunto Aji, “Jernih” is the song he listens to most often because it helps him in the process of forgiveness to find peace within himself [25]. Observations of the lyrics of Kunto Aji's song “Jernih” reveal that the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” not only serves as poetic emphasis, but also has reflective, persuasive, and therapeutic functions. The analysis of each stanza is conducted consistently using the signifier-signified framework, so that every interpreted meaning always refers to the relationship between these two elements within the system of signs, as described by Saussure. In this study, the phrase “Aku memaafkan” will be examined in terms of its meaning construction through signs and signifiers in each part of the lyrics using Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic analysis tool.

Table 1. Analysis of Stanza 1

Signifier	Signified
Aku berserah semakin malam Semakin lirih suara terdengar Mengapa dunia tak adil	Describes someone who has reached their limit in enduring pain and begins to surrender to circumstances that can no longer be fought against. Meanwhile, “Mengapa dunia tak adil” shows the emotional burden that remains unresolved due to the injustice of the world.

Based on stanza 1, it builds an image of an individual who is in the early stages of facing an inner conflict, namely contemplation. From a Saussurean semiotic perspective, the word “night” functions as a signifier that, in linguistic convention, is associated with a quiet, silent, and reflective atmosphere. Through the relationship between signifier and signified, “night” in the context of the lyrics is interpreted as a space for individuals to engage in honest dialogue with themselves. This is in line with the view that [26] which explains that nighttime is often the main time for individuals to engage in contemplation and reflection.

The lyrics “Mengapa dunia tak adil” (Why is the world unfair) are a sign that reflects the inability of individuals to understand the reasons for the conflicts they experience. Referring to Saussure's theory, signifiers never stand alone, but are always integrated with signifieds as a single unit of meaning. Thus, the sound or written form “Mengapa dunia tak adil” and mental concepts such as unresolved emotional burdens due to the unfairness of the world are one and the same reality that cannot be separated. The meaning of injustice does not occur naturally, but is formed by the signifier and signified based on the context of the song lyrics. This stanza is the starting point of the conflict that will be unraveled in the following stanzas and becomes the emotional basis for the process of forgiveness.

Table 2. Analysis of Stanza 2

Signifier	Signified
Luka yang basah masih terasa Tak ada maaf sempat terucap Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai	“Luka yang basah masih terasa” describes a wound or trauma that has not been resolved and still leaves a strong mark. “Tak ada maaf sempat terucap” shows an inability to say the difficult words of apology. This causes the wound to remain “festered,” requiring a process of forgiveness as a solution. “Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai” is interpreted as a desire to find inner peace as a way out of suffering.

Based on stanza 2, it shows the individual's awareness of the source of pain, namely wounds that have not been forgiven. In Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic framework, the phrase “luka yang basah masih terasa” functions as a signifier that not only describes physical wounds, but also evokes a signified in the form of emotional pain or unresolved trauma. In line with Saussure's view that signs are psychological in nature, the metaphor “wet” in this context does not refer to physical reality but reflects the mental concept that the wound is still fresh, leaving a mark that is still felt, and the difficulty of forgetting painful experiences or events in life. Meanwhile, amidst the wound, there is a desire to feel peace, which becomes a strong driving force behind the decision to forgive. The lyrics “Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai” become a sign that points to a signifier in the form of a desire for inner tranquility. Therefore, this stanza

becomes the reason why the process of forgiveness is important and shows that forgiveness is the solution to ending conflict.

Table 3. Analysis of Stanza 3

Signifier	Signified
Jiwa yang tertawan Aku memaafkan Hati yang berlubang Aku memaafkan	“Jiwa yang tertawan” refers to a state of mind that is still trapped by past experiences, mistakes, or trauma. “Hati yang berlubang” describes an emotional state of damage or feelings of loss due to painful conflict. Meanwhile, “Aku Memaafkan” indicates an internal process of freeing oneself from any wounds.

Based on stanza 3, it describes the transition phase from conflict to resolution, marked by the first appearance of the affirmative phrase “Aku memaafkan.” This stanza shows the process of freeing oneself from long-held wounds and emptying the heart. There are two metaphors, such as “Jiwa yang tertawan” and “hati yang berlubang,” which refer to the psychological condition of individuals who are imprisoned or bound by trauma and suffering that leave deep scars. This is in line with Saussure's perspective that signifiers and signifieds cannot be separated. Interviews with informants mention that the use of these metaphors directly evokes a mental image of individuals trapped by painful events that have not been resolved [27].

According to Saussure, the meaning of a sign is determined by its relationship with other signs in the language system. The signifier “Aku memaafkan” first appears as a solution to the emotional wounds created by the signifier in the previous lyric. The phrase “Aku memaafkan” becomes the initial symbol of the healing process, indicating that forgiveness is the primary means of freeing oneself from emotional wounds. The choice of the word “I” as the subject and “forgive” as the action are combined into a single sign whose signifier is the conscious decision to escape suffering. Forgiveness not only represents an act of compassion towards others, but also an effort at self-healing to close open wounds and free oneself from the bonds of the past.

Table 4. Analysis of Stanza 4

Signifier	Signified
Agar yang keruh terurai luruh Agar hatiku semakin teduh Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai	Describing the purpose of forgiveness, which is to slowly release emotional burdens like murky water returning to clarity, and restoring peace of mind.

Based on stanza 4, it shows the individual's hope that the process of forgiveness will bring peace. The lyrics “agar yang keruh terurai luruh” serve as a sign that builds a symbol of slowly cleansing unclear emotions or thoughts. “Yang keruh” symbolizes inner conflict, trauma, or negative emotions. The phrase “Terurai luruh” describes a

gradual cleansing process by unraveling and dissolving all forms of inner turmoil step by step towards clarity through the act of forgiveness. Meanwhile, the signifier “agar hatiku semakin teduh” forms a signifier regarding the purpose of forgiveness, which is to create a calm and peaceful inner atmosphere.

The choice of the word “semakin” indicates the progressive nature of this process, that healing does not occur instantly but gradually. This is in line with the view that [28] which states that forgiveness is a long-term process that requires consistency and patience. Therefore, this stanza reinforces the repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” that will appear in the next stanza, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of an individual's relationship with themselves and achieving self-well-being.

Table 5. Analysis of Stanza 5

Signifier	Signified
Jiwa yang tertawan Aku memaafkan Hati yang berlubang Aku memaafkan Aku memaafkan Aku memaafkan	The repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” reinforces the intensity of the meaning that the process of forgiveness requires greater effort to overcome deep trauma or inner conflict. “Aku memaafkan” is not just a word, but reflects that the process of forgiveness requires repeated affirmation to counter self-criticism.

Based on stanza 5, there are four repetitions of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan,” which serves as a marker indicating that the intensity of its meaning is stronger than in the previous stanzas, especially in stanza 3, where the phrase is only repeated twice. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the repetition of markers is not only aesthetic, but also forms a signifier that represents that the process of self-healing requires consistent affirmation with a greater level of intensity than in the previous stanzas.

The phrase “Aku Memaafkan” first appears in stanza 3 as an initial statement, while in stanza 5 the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” appears as a reflective and repetitive intrapersonal communication mechanism to overcome self-doubt in the decision to forgive. In the official lyric video for “Jernih,” a comment from a user named @liberifatali6975 states: “Repeating the mantra ‘Aku Memaafkan’ feels draining to me, thank you for inviting me to forgive.” This repetition indicates a continuous internal dialogue, where individuals need to convince themselves to strengthen their commitment to turning self-criticism into positive affirmations, so that individuals can achieve inner peace.

Table 6. Analysis of Stanza 6

Signifier	Signified
Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai	The ultimate goal of the entire process of forgiveness is to achieve personal well-being. This stanza shows that there is a higher need within individuals than

simply being free from pain, namely to feel peace within themselves. “Damai” symbolizes tranquility and calmness that individuals want to achieve as a way out of suffering.

Based on stanza 6, there is only one sentence, “Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai,” which previously appeared in stanzas 2 and 4. In Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotics, the repetition of the same signifier in different structural contexts forms a signifier whose meaning is further emphasized. The separation of the lyrics “Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai,” which are placed separately, reinforces the meaning and increases salience, as this element becomes the dominant visual focus [29]. This is in line with Saussure's view that the meaning of a sign is influenced by its position in the system.

This stanza reaffirms that the ultimate goal of forgiveness is to achieve peace. Kunto Aji states in the description of the official lyric video for the song “Jernih” that revenge does not always have to be fulfilled, because peace will come naturally when someone chooses to forgive [30]. The word “hanya” as part of the signifier forms a sign of humility or a simple request that contrasts with the complexity of conflict, and emphasizes “Damai” as the highest value, regardless of how many times forgiveness is needed to achieve it. In line with this, in the official lyric video for “Jernih,” a user named @yuniristya5293 commented: “Peace comes when you are able to forgive yourself.” Therefore, this stanza reinforces the repeated phrase “Aku Memaafkan” because of a strong desire to feel peace, but it requires going through a long and painful process of forgiveness.

Table 7. Analysis of Stanza 7

Signifier	Signified
Jiwa yang tertawan	The repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” describes the final phase of emotional transformation, where individuals have strong conviction and no doubts about forgiveness. “Aku Memaafkan” becomes an affirmation to oneself in healing inner wounds and freeing the soul that was previously imprisoned.
Aku memaafkan	
Hati yang berlubang	
Aku memaafkan	
Aku memaafkan	
Aku memaafkan	
Aku memaafkan	

Based on stanza 7, there is a sixfold increase in the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” from the previous stanza. This shows an increasing frequency of repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” starting from stanza 3 with 2 repetitions, stanza 5 with 4 repetitions, and stanza 7 with 6 repetitions. This change in the structure of repetition represents that forgiveness is a gradual process that requires an increasingly high intensity of affirmation to release emotional burdens. According to Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic perspective, the repeated use of the same signifier within a sign system serves to strengthen the relationship between the signifier “Aku memaafkan” and its

signified, which is the process of internalizing the meaning of forgiveness as a way to free oneself from inner wounds.

In stanza 7, the phrase “Aku memaafkan” transforms into a stable sign in individual consciousness, and is no longer just an initial statement or an attempt at affirmation. The phrase becomes a powerful affirmation as Self-Talk Therapy. The process of self-talk therapy involves internal dialogue with oneself as a means of transforming negative thoughts into positive ones [31]. This is in line with the purpose of forgiveness in stanza 4, which is to clear the “cloudy” mind so that it becomes ‘clear’ again and can feel peace. Therefore, this stanza describes the process of healing oneself from emotional wounds through the affirmation “Aku Memaafkan,” which appears repeatedly as a form of internalizing the meaning of forgiveness to find peace within oneself.

4.1 Listeners’ Interpretation of the Meaning of “Aku memaafkan”

Based on Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic approach, the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” in the lyrics of Kunto Aji's song “Jernih” is constructed through the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which represents the inner dynamics of individuals in responding to and overcoming emotional wounds. However, this meaning does not stand alone in a linguistic framework but opens up the possibility of various interpretations when captured by the listener. A sign does not essentially stop at being part of the text; a sign truly “comes alive” and functions when there is a subject who reads, understands, and interprets it [32]. Song lyrics as a text not only contain linguistic meaning, but also function as a medium of communication that facilitates internal dialogue within a person [33].

This is in line with Kunto Aji's explanation that people often forget the importance of talking to themselves as a form of intrapersonal communication [25], and the song “Jernih” is here to help the process through reflective lyrics, especially in the phrase “Aku memaafkan.” In addition, Kunto Aji explains in the video “Pengantar Jernih” that the song “Jernih” is a form of his responsibility as a musician because many of his listeners say that music can save a person's life [34]. Therefore, it is important to understand the listener's interpretation in order to comprehend how the meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in the lyrics of “Jernih” is further processed through the intrapersonal communication experienced by the listener.

Intrapersonal communication according to [15] is a communication process that occurs within individuals through the stages of sensation, perception, memory, and thinking. When a person receives stimuli through the senses before giving a particular assessment or meaning to the message they receive, this is called sensation, which is the initial stage of intrapersonal communication. In this study, sensation occurs when informants capture the sounds and lyrics of the song “Jernih,” which functions as a signifier. Based on the results of interviews with informants, it is known that the phrase that attracts the most attention in the song ‘Jernih’ is the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan.” This phrase becomes a stimulus that facilitates intrapersonal communication. Informants stated that the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” helps in the process of self-reflection [35]. This shows the initial stage of intrapersonal communication, namely sensation, where the phrase “Aku memaafkan” becomes a stimulus

captured by the five senses. In addition, the song arrangement and vocals by Kunto Aji made the informants feel calm, receive positive affirmation, and change their mood for the better. Informants revealed that the phrase “Aku memaafkan” has a suggestive effect, as if the sentence flows and calms the mind.

The next stage is perception, when individuals begin to understand and give meaning to the stimuli, they receive based on their personal understanding and experience. The signifier in the form of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” that was previously captured by the senses begins to be perceived as a specific concept in the listener's mind. The signified that is formed is diverse and depends on interpretations that are influenced by the listener's emotional and social experiences [17]. The interview results show that the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” is interpreted as a representation of acceptance, letting go of hurt, and an effort to make peace with the past and oneself. Informants associated the phrase with personal experiences such as internal conflict, disappointment, or the process of letting go of painful events. This shows that the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” has a more personal and reflective meaning.

For the informant, the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” serves as an affirmation to oneself: “I forgive as an affirmation to ourselves. The more we say this sentence, the more the darkness in our hearts will fade away.” [27]. This statement is in line with the phrase “So that what is murky may be cleared away” in stanza 4, which describes the purpose of forgiveness as slowly releasing emotional burdens and unclear thoughts. The listener's perception of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” is also influenced by other lyrics such as “Jiwa yang tertawan” “Hati yang berlubang,” and “Aku hanya ingin merasakan damai” This series of markers forms a unity that reinforces the signifier of a wounded inner state and the need to release emotional pressure. Therefore, the resulting perception does not come from a single word but from the relationship between the signs located within the structure of the song lyrics.

The memory stage, which is the process whereby individuals store, recall, and connect stimuli received with past events. The phrase “Aku memaafkan” triggers emotional memories in listeners, such as memories of conflict, loss and disappointment, or the process of making peace with oneself. This is in line with findings [22] which states that song lyrics serve as powerful memory triggers, connecting emotions to past events. In other words, the linguistic signs found in song lyrics do not stand alone, but rather connect listeners to past experiences stored in their memories.

The interview results show that the informants associate the phrase “Aku memaafkan” with certain events in their lives, such as toxic relationships, family conflicts, or personal mistakes that have not been fully accepted. One informant said that the phrase “Aku memaafkan” in the song “Jernih” seems to reflect an emotional journey that they had experienced before. The lyrics reopen memories of painful experiences and how difficult it is to let go of the guilt that has been holding them back [36]. The repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” in the lyrics helps informants strengthen their memory process. This is consistent with the results of the study [37] who found that the repetition of markers can semiotically improve memory of the message conveyed and reinforce its meaning. For informants, the repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” helped to internalize the message of forgiveness as part of an emotional experience that is always remembered and reflected upon.

The final stage of intrapersonal communication is thinking. At this stage, individuals process information involving reflection and deeper interpretation of the message received. The meaning of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” has evolved from a mere linguistic symbol to a concept that is understood emotionally and rationally by the listener. This thinking process marks the stage when the phrase “Aku memaafkan” has been fully internalized in the listener's consciousness.

The interview results show that listeners began to think about the meaning of “Aku Memaafkan” in their lives. According to the informants, the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” represents a thought process, because the repetition shows that forgiveness requires a gradual process that allows individuals to recall painful wounds, realize their trapped souls, and lead to the ultimate goal of finding peace within themselves. Therefore, repeating the phrase “Aku memaafkan” is necessary as a form of self-affirmation so that individuals can fully forgive.

The informant revealed that the song “Jernih” delves into the importance of opening up past memories in order to better understand oneself and be able to forgive [38]. Another informant also said that the phrase “Aku memaafkan” is a positive affirmation for themselves and deepens their perspective that forgiveness is a long and difficult process, requiring repeated affirmations of “Aku memaafkan” to aid the process [39]. This shows that the meaning formed by the signifier and signified in the song lyrics is transformed into a process of self-reflection. Thus, the repetition of the phrase “Aku Memaafkan” is part of the process of self-healing and serves as an affirmation that encourages listeners to continue to reflect on and strengthen their attitude of forgiveness.

The findings of this study are not limited to a semiotic interpretation of song lyrics, but also reveal a meaningful connection to the issues of self-forgiveness and psychological well-being. This connection is reinforced by the results of listener interviews, which indicate that the repetition of the phrase “Aku memaafkan” serves as an affirmation in the process of self-reflection, so that the meaning of the lyrics is not abstract but connected to individual experiences such as conflict, regret, and the process of making peace with oneself.

5 Conclusion

This study found that the phrase “Aku memaafkan” in the lyrics of Kunto Aji's song “Jernih” is constructed as a meaning of releasing inner wounds and an effort to achieve inner peace. This meaning is constructed through signs and symbols in each stanza that describe how forgiveness is a repetitive, reflective internal process focused on freeing oneself from inner wounds. The phrase “Aku memaafkan” is interpreted by listeners through intrapersonal communication, which becomes a form of positive affirmation to release inner wounds in an effort to make peace with oneself. These findings support the idea that listeners can effectively accept and interpret the message contained in the song. Listeners not only understand the phrase “Aku memaafkan” as a symbolic meaning, but also internalize it as a process of self-reflection. Thus, this study confirms that the song “Jernih” can be a medium of communication that helps individuals dialogue

with themselves in the process of forgiveness as a form of healing, a space for reflection, and finding inner peace.

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