Semiotic Analysis of Motivational Messages in the Lyrics of the Song I'm Fine by BTS

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	Abstract
Article History: Received: 20/12/2024 Accepted: 05/01/2025 Published: 13/01/2025	Music has the power to convey meaningful messages, including motivational messages. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, this research examines the motivational messages in the lyrics of the song <i>I'm</i> <i>Fine</i> by BTS. The primary focus of this research is on
Keywords: BTS, Motivational Messages, Semiotics, Song Lyrics.	how meaning is produced through the signifier and signified relationship. This research employs an interpretive qualitative approach to delve deep into the social phenomenon. The semiotic approach allows the researchers to explain how signs in song lyrics function in bringing motivational messages. Data were gathered from the lyrics of the song <i>I'm Fine</i> and analysed thoroughly by dissecting the relationship between signifier and signified. This research discovered the hidden messages the songwriter wanted to convey to the listeners. The results show that this song conveys the value of having courage when facing challenges, mental toughness when facing difficulties, and the ability to bounce back from them. This encourages listeners to be optimistic, not to give up, and instead keep trying despite the obstacles. This research proves that song lyrics in the song <i>I'm Fine</i> by BTS were not merely a musical work but also a medium for conveying powerful inspirational messages: one can achieve inner peace and emotional resilience by pushing through life's challenges with courage.
Kata Kunci:	Abstrak

BTS, Lirik Lagu, Pesan Motivasi, Semiotika

Musik memiliki kekuatan untuk menyampaikan pesan yang bermakna, termasuk pesan motivasi. Dengan menggunakan teori semiotika Ferdinand de Saussure, penelitian ini menganalisis pesan-pesan motivasi dalam lirik lagu *I'm Fine* karya BTS. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah bagaimana makna dihasilkan melalui hubungan antara penanda dan petanda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif

interpretatif untuk mendalami fenomena sosial tersebut. Pendekatan semiotika memungkinkan peneliti menjelaskan bagaimana tanda-tanda dalam lirik lagu berfungsi dalam menyampaikan pesan motivasi. Data diperoleh dari lirik lagu I'm Fine dan dianalisis secara mendalam dengan menguraikan hubungan antara penanda dan petanda. Penelitian ini mengungkap pesan-pesan tersembunyi yang ingin disampaikan oleh penulis lagu kepada para pendengarnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu ini menyampaikan nilai keberanian dalam menghadapi tantangan, ketangguhan mental dalam menghadapi kesulitan, serta kemampuan untuk bangkit kembali. Pesan ini mendorong pendengar untuk tetap optimis, tidak menyerah, dan terus berusaha meski menghadapi rintangan. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa lirik lagu I'm Fine karya BTS bukan sekadar karya musik, melainkan juga media untuk menyampaikan pesan-pesan inspiratif yang kuat: seseorang dapat mencapai kedamaian batin dan ketangguhan emosional dengan menghadapi tantangan hidup dengan keberanian.

INTRODUCTION

Human life and language are inextricably linked. Through language, we are able to express our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It is in line with Alek (2018:7) who describes language as a symbol representing a meaning, a concept, an idea, or a thought. On the other hand, Saussure in Berger (2017) states that language is a system of signs that expresses thoughts or ideas. While language allows us to express ideas, emotions, and thoughts through words, music is another medium to communicate those same elements, often more emotionally and universally. Song lyrics, for instance, blend language and music, where words are enhanced by melody and rhythm to convey deeper meaning and evoke a stronger emotional response.

Song lyrics are words that are carefully arranged and contain messages that come from the experiences, observations, and emotions of the writer (Menza & Hariyanto, 2024). A songwriter can spread positive messages and empower their listeners through song lyrics. It means that music has the power to influence human feelings, thoughts, and behavior through messages conveyed in lyrics,

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melody, and rhythm. Just as language serves as a system of symbols that represent meaning, music uses a system of sound patterns to influence and communicate with listeners on a cognitive and emotional level (Peretz, 2003). Listening to music has also been shown to increase motivation, as many motivational songs contain positive messages that can lift our spirit Humaidi (2021) states that Motivation is a basic drive that influences a person's behavior, prompting them to achieve certain goals. Motivation is also believed to be able to change negative attitudes into positive ones, increase work efficiency, and help achieve goals by giving one's best effort.

BTS is one of the biggest K-pop boybands in the world. The world focuses on BTS because of their socially conscious lyrics (Miftahurrezki & Anshori, 2021). Not only performing upbeat music, BTS frequently addresses socially relevant themes in their songs including self-motivation, mental health, selfacceptance, self-love, and global issues. The band consists of 7 members, namely RM, Jungkook Suga, J-hope, Jin, Jimin, and V. They have been known for writing and producing their own music. The songs they have released are the result of the efforts of the members who contribute directly to all kinds of creative processes related to song production and writing lyrics. In this way, BTS continues to inspire millions of fans around the world through their meaningful music and powerful messages, further solidifying their position not only as global music icons but also as advocates for important social issues.

The song titled *I'm Fine* is one of the songs from the *Love Yourself 'Answer'* album released by BTS in 2018. *I'm Fine* is fascinating to analyze because the meaning of the lyrics makes you curious about the motivational message BTS wants to convey to their fans and listeners in general. Quoted from an article released by *IDN TIMES* (09/03/20) *I'm Fine* will remind fans of the song *Save Me* released by BTS in 2016. *Save Me* tells about someone's struggle to get out of the abyss of fear and needs a loved one to pull them out of that fear. While *I'm Fine* tells about someone who tries to be strong to face everything alone. In general, *I'm Fine* encourages its listeners to stay strong and learn to let go. From this

background, researchers are interested in exploring the motivational message in the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine*.

Several studies have explored the meaning of messages in songs using semiotic analysis. For example a study by Betanissam (2022) titled "Analisis Makna Motivasi Dalam Lirik Lagu "Dreamers" Karya Jungkook dan Fahad Al Kubaisi". This study analyzes the meaning of motivation in the lyrics of the song Dreamers sung by Jungkook and Fahad Al Kubaisi. Then, the study by Kaesari & Sakinah (2023) "Signified and Signifier on Morality Meaning in "Membasuh" Song Lyrics by Hindia ft. Rara Sekar" analyzed the morality meaning in the song Membasuh. Lastly, the study by Amara & Kusuma (2022) titled "Semiotic Analysis of Mental Disorders in BTS Magic Shop Lyrics". This study analyzes the theme of mental health in the lyrics of BTS' song Magic Shop. The similarity with other studies lies in the focus on interpreting the song's lyrics. However, the difference lies in the approach using Barthes' semiotics which analyze the lyrics denotatively, connotatively, and mythologically. In addition, these studies did not analyze the motivational aspect of the song's lyrics.

Despite the deep significance and broad popularity of BTS's song *I'm Fine*, no research has specifically highlighted the motivating themes in its lyrics. Given the song's capacity to motivate listeners with a compelling story, this suggests a research gap. This study intends to close this gap by analyzing the motivating messages found in the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* using Saussure's semiotic theory. Thus, this study aims to answer two main questions: (1) How is the relationship between the signifier and the signified in building meaning in the song lyrics? and (2) What motivational messages are contained in the song lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* by BTS? By bridging this gap, this research is expected to provide deeper insight into the motivational aspects of the song.

Saussure's Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach has developed the foundations of general linguistic theory. The particularity of his theory rests on reality. He considered language as a system of signs. According to Saussure in Budiman (1999: 38) signs, especially linguistic signs, have at least two primordial

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characteristics, which are linear and arbitrary. The most important thing in the main discussion on Saussure's theory is the principle that language is a sign system, and every sign is composed of two parts: signifier and signified. According to Saussure, language is a system of signs. Signs in Saussure's approach are concrete manifestations of sound images and are often identified with sound images as signifiers. So the signifier and signified are mentalistic elements. In other words, Masinambow in Sobur (2002) stated that the sign reveals the sound image or concept as two inseparable components. In other words, the presence of one means the presence of the other like two sides of paper. The sign reveals the sound image or concept as two inseparable components.

Music

Music is more capable and expressive of expressing feelings than spoken or written language (Susantina 2004). It can be concluded from the above statement that music can express feelings more than human language. There are other opinions from Bernstein & Picker (1972) Music is described as sound organized over time, possessing artistic value and serving as a medium to convey the author's ideas and emotions to the listener. In other words, music is a sound that is used to express human feelings

According to Rouget (1985), music itself includes not only instruments but also vocals. This means that when someone knows how to play music, they cannot be said to be a musician if they do not understand vocal techniques. Music is also a human creative work using the medium of sound to enjoy it. Music comes in the form of a unity of rhythm, melody, harmony, and dynamic (Sarbunan, 2020). From the definitions, it can be concluded that music is a sound that can be arranged into a pattern that is arranged so that the music forms a sound that can please the human ear.

One of the most important aspects of music is the song and in the song there are also lyrics. According to Waluyo (2002), song lyrics are a form of language that is condensed, rhythmic, and enhanced with cohesive sounds and imaginative, figurative word choices. From the statement, it can be concluded song lyrics play

an essential role as a means of communication between the songwriter and the listener.

Motivation

Motivation is a desire or drive that forms from an individual to do something. There are two types of motivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. According to Deci et al (1991), intrinsic motivation is a motivation that comes from within the individual and is driven by an individual's interest, satisfaction, and achievement. While extrinsic is the opposite, namely motivation that comes from outside the individual. In addition, motivation also has various functions in any aspect. Whether it is education, work, and in the scope of society. According to Robbins et al (2013), motivation contributes to an individual's success in achieving something, increasing focus, and maintaining a commitment to the task.

METHOD

This research method is interpretive qualitative research. The qualitative method means a process of understanding based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and problems in humans. It is in line with Cresswell (2017) that defines qualitative method as research that aims to study or understand social problems. Interpretive methods are also used because they are considered comprehensive due to their dynamic, complex, meaningful, inseparable, and the relationship between symptoms is reciprocal (Raharjo in Oktaviani, 2020). Thus, this interpretive qualitative research enables researchers to understand social phenomena in depth, by paying attention to the reciprocal relationships between various phenomena that occur in human life.

This research uses a semiotic method, which is a method that analyzes signs. According to Zoest (1993), semiotics deals with the study of signs and everything related to signs, such as sign systems and processes that apply to signs. The semiotic method that will be used in this research is derived from Saussure's work. Saussure differentiates signs in the context of human communication by distinguishing between what is called the signifier and the signified. A signifier is

something that is written or read and that is captured by our minds, whereas the meaning or message that we associate with something we capture is known as the signified (Saussure in Wibawa & Natalia, 2021).

To reduce subjectivity in research, the researcher uses Triangulation. According to Santos et al (2020) triangulation is a data validation method by comparing information from various sources. There are three categories of triangulation, which are triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). In this case, the researcher uses source triangulation by checking various text sources and literature documents from multiple sources that reinforce the motivational message in the song I'm Fine.

The instrument in this study is the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* by BTS. In analyzing the data, the methods used include compiling data, translating it, selecting the most important things, and separating the less important ones. Then the song lyrics' text fragments were analyzed using Saussure's semiotic approach to find the motivational meaning that the songwriter wants to convey to his listeners by determining the meaning of the signifier and signified contained in the lyrics. Conclusions are drawn regarding motivational messages that are concluded based on the social situations and conditions that occur in society

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the semiotic analysis of the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* by BTS will be presented along with its discussion. This analysis uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to reveal the signifier and signified meaning of the signs in the song lyrics. Furthermore, the results will show the motivational messages conveyed. Here is the analysis of signifier and signified in the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* by BTS, broken down by stanza.

Signifier	Signified		
 (1) Open your eyes under the cold blue sky (2) The pouring sunshine makes me dizzy (3) My breath is quickening, my heart is racing (4) I can feel it so easily that I'm alive 	In the first line of this stanza, the coldness of the blue sky symbolizes the feeling of loneliness or challenges. Opening the eyes shows the readiness to face reality with courage. This describes the attitude of getting back up and seeing the world with a new perspective after going through difficult times. In the second line, Sunshine usually symbolizes hope, happiness, or new opportunities, however in this context, the abundance of light is actually dizzying, which can mean that someone can feel overwhelmed even in situations that seem bright or positive. In the third line, the rapid breathing and pounding heart depict feelings of tension, panic, or fear. But in this context, the rapid heartbeat and breathing represent intense spirit when someone is trying to overcome a challenge or feeling of discomfort. In the fourth line, BTS shows us that someone is still alive and feels their existence clearly, even after going through hard times. This sign also describes gratitude or happiness for still being able to feel alive, even though they have faced many challenges.		

Table 1. Data 1

The motivational message of this stanza is the awareness of existence or life. According to Chaplin (2000), existence is a view of human existence, the situation in the world, the freedom to choose the purpose of life and try to understand the meaning of life itself. The first to third lines are a reflection of a sad and difficult life, while the fourth line is a reflection of existence. BTS makes us realize that the sadness and hardship we have been feeling make us exist.

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Signifier	Signified		
1) Even if sadness erases me	The first line of this stanza signified a		
2) Even if there are dark clouds	feeling of sadness that was so deep that		
3) Even if I'm in an endless dream	it seemed to erase someone's identity or		
4) Even if I'm endlessly crumpled	existence.		
5) Even if my wings are torn	In the second line of this stanza, dark		
6) Even if someday I'm not me anymore	clouds signify obstacles or difficulties. This shows that life is full of		
7) It's alright, only I am my own salvation	challenges, but they must be faced. In the third line of this stanza, an		
	endless dream signified someone is		
	feeling trapped in a situation or problem		
	that seems to never end, perhaps		
	depicting depression or confusion in living life.		
	The fourth line of this stanza signified		
	someone who often feels broken or tired		
	repeatedly. This lyric describes the		
	mental or physical condition of		
	someone who feels depressed or is		
	going through hard times.		
	Torn wings on the fifth line signified		
	someone's hopes or abilities have been		
	lost or damaged, implying that failure		
	or loss does not mean the end of the		
	journey.		
	The sixth line of this stanza signified		
	the fear of losing one's identity, or of a		
	major change that might make one feel		
	like one is no longer oneself.		
	The seventh line of this stanza signified		
	that only from within one's self could		
	true "salvation" or happiness be found,		
	not from others. This lyric essentially		
	means that a person can save himself.		
	The lyrics reflect that it is a belief of the person that his healing and personal		
	growth process is his own		
	responsibility, and only with strength		
	from within one's self may he face life's		
	challenges.		
	chanonges.		

In this stanza BTS indicates that the greatest motivation comes from itself, it is a form of intrinsic motivation, According to Sardiman (2011) Intrinsic motivation is a drive that operates and functions without requiring external stimulation, as every individual inherently possesses an internal desire to take action. In this stanza, intrinsic motivation makes an individual resilient, selfaccepting, and able to live life even though challenges and difficulties continue to come their way.

Signifier	Signified
(1) I won't ever die in this walk	The first line of this stanza signifies
(2) <u>How you doin? I'm fine</u> , my sky is	strong determinations for survival
clear	because they still had a long way to go.
(3) All pain, say goodbye, goodbye	It reminds us that even if there are great
	difficulties, we should not give up but
	instead keep fighting.
	Optimism is reflected in the second line
	of this stanza. A clear sky now was a
	sign that the present situation was
	getting better, just like when it rained,
	one could be sure of the sky clearing up
	afterwards. The weight they put on was
	that everything would be fine.
	Lastly, the third line of the stanza
	signified the process of letting go of
	pain and suffering; saying goodbye was
	a sign of acceptance, recovering from
	tough times.

Table 3. Data 3

The lyrics in this stanza have a strong motivational message. The first line is about the determination not to give up and keep fighting against a bad situation, despite all the obstacles to survival-very strong. This is a perseverant attitude According to Damayanti (2012), A perseverant attitude is an attitude that is not easily discouraged in the face of various obstacles, always works hard to realize goals, and considers obstacles/obstacles always exist in every activity that must be faced. The second line signifies optimism, by using the symbol of a clear sky, after the storm passes, things will get better, thus encouraging us to look to the future more positively. In line with Boniwell (2012) Optimism is a sense of confidence regarding the future, which characterizes that the results that will be

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achieved in the future are more positive. The last line signifies Acceptance. In the concept proposed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in Corr (2022) with the five-stage grief model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance). Acceptance is a situation when a person begins to accept reality, let go of emotional attachments, and focus on the future. In this line BTS describes the process of healing from pain and suffering as a sign of acceptance to become whole and recover from the storm.

Signifier	Signified
(1) The darkness of the night	The first line of this stanza describes a
(2) Shakes awake my sleeping dreams	difficult situation, fear, or sadness that
(3) But I'm not afraid, I'm fine, I'm	a person often faces. Darkness here
fine	signified difficult times in life.
	In the second stanza, referred to
	sleeping dream; it means dream was
	being buried or forgotten and
	afterwards woke up again. It means that
	this struggle and hardship may remind
	the dreams that they want to achieve.
	Third line of this stanza signifies
	courage, self-confidence to face
	difficulties. A person feels fine, is not
	afraid even when some difficult
	situation occurs, which means having
	mental strength to head into life's
	challenges.

Table 4. Data 4

The motivational message of this stanza is to have the courage to face the challenges that exist in life. According to Irons (2003), courage is the act of striving for something because it is considered important and being able to face an obstacle with belief in its truth. BTS conveys the motivational message of courage to not let fear or difficulties stop us. In fact, these challenges can remind us of dreams that were buried or forgotten. This courage makes someone unafraid and feels all right which shows mental toughness to go further, even under unfavourable situations.

Signifier	Signified
(1) I don't want to be sad anymore	This first line of the stanza signified the
(2) I could see the sunshine, shine,	desire to get out of the feeling of
shine	sadness and not want to remain in
(3) 'Cause I'm just fine, just fine	sadness anymore. They express
	resolution that they will not live on
	with negative feelings and just live in
	happiness or inner peace.
	The second line of this stanza shows
	newfound optimism and hope.
	Sunshine signified happiness, hope, and
	light that replaces darkness or hard
	times.
	The third line of this stanza shows that
	the character is fine with whatever life
	presented, and it has to be said, the
	repeating of the phrase I'm fine actually
	gives the sense that they found their
	peace after passing through the
	emotional setbacks.

Table 5. Data 5

This stanza contains a motivational message. The first line shows positive thinking. As stated by Yolanda et al (2022), positive thinking is an effort that can be used to overcome defeat and gain trust by creating a favorable atmosphere for the development of positive results. In this line, BTS invites listeners to think positively by not being overwhelmed with sadness, not getting caught up in negative emotions, and continuing to fight against feelings of sadness. In the second line the word "sunshine" signifies hope. According to Carr (2013), hope is the capacity to devise a strategy to overcome challenges in pursuing goals, using motivation as a means to achieve them. BTS invites listeners to see a good hope after suffering sadness. The third line signifies peace and self-acceptanc. After going through an emotional struggle, someone can find inner peace and be okay with their current state.

Signifier	Signified
(1) All of the sadness and scars	The first line of this stanza shows the
(2) Became an old memory now	sadness and scars experienced by
(3) So let's smile and let go, we so fine	someone, either physical or emotional
	scars, these scars symbolize the pain or
	difficulties that have been faced in the
	past.
	In the second line, the sadness or scars
	are just a part of the past. This means
	that the bitter experience has passed and
	only remains as a memory, not
	something that is still painful or
	burdensome.
	The third line is an encouragement to
	let go of all the pain and sadness choose
	to be happy and move on with a smile.

Table 6. Data 6

Overall, this stanza signifies recovery, letting go of the past, and moving forward with optimism and calm. This part of the song encourages listeners to acknowledge the pain and challenges they have faced in the past. However, it emphasizes that these hardships are now only memories and no longer have the power to affect the present. This stanza calls for the need to leave the past behind, smile, and forge ahead with an optimistic mind while reminding listeners that they are now "fine" and, thus, ready for whatever life may present them (songtell, 2024).

Table 7. Data 7		
Signifier	Signified	
(1) Our future will only	The first line of this stanza expresses hope for a bright	
have happiness	and positive future. BTS wants to convey a message	
(2) So put away your	of optimism and confidence that the future will only	
fear	be filled with happiness.	
(3) Enjoy it, you	The phrase in the second line of this stanza signified	
worked hard, we so	courage and liberation from fear. BTS invites listeners	
fine	to put aside their worries or fears and focus on life	
	with more courage and confidence.	
	The third line in this stanza shows a sense of	
	accomplishment and appreciation for the efforts put	
	in. BTS gives a reminder to enjoy the results of hard	
	work and a journey of life full of struggles. "We so	
	fine" is a statement that despite going through various	
	difficulties, they feel fine now, showing resilience.	

Table 7. Data 7

This stanza conveys a motivational message about optimism and selfesteem. According to Seligman in Milona (2020), optimism is the perspective of individuals who always have good hopes in everything and the tendency to expect pleasant results, which is reflected in the lyrics "Our future will only have happiness". Coopersmith (1968) emphasized the importance of self-appreciation as an evaluation that individuals make about themselves, which shows the extent to which individuals believe that they are capable, meaningful, successful, and valuable. In the lyrics "Enjoy it, you worked hard, we are so fine" BTS invites listeners to appreciate the hard work and enjoy the reward of the struggle.

Table	8.	Data	8	
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This stanza contains motivational messages. Firstly, it is about self-affirmation. According to Prihastuti (2018,) someone who has self-affirmation can focus on their strengths, and self-confidence to see themselves positively. It is reflected in the first to third line of this stanza. Reivich & Shatté (2002) defines Resilience as the ability to respond effectively and positively to adversity or trauma, playing a crucial role in managing the challenges of daily life. As shown in the lyrics "Even if I fall down again, I'm fine". This line emphasizes that failure is not the end, but part of the process, and the most important thing is the ability to survive and get back up.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the lyrics of the song *I'm Fine* by BTS reflect a strong motivational message in terms of self-strength, resilience, and emotional healing. Based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach, this research underlines the connection between the signifier and the signified in the song's lyrics to show deep motivation. Linguistic features such as song lyrics (signifiers) play a significant role in constructing a motivational message (signified). For example, the phrase "Even if sadness erases me" indicates a deep emotional struggle that challenges a person, but the subsequent response, "Only I am my own salvation," emphasizes self-reliance and personal strength as a means to overcome such challenges. Through these linguistic features, the lyrics depict a journey from despair to emotional recovery, inspiring courage, optimism, and perseverance in the face of difficult times. Ultimately, *I'm Fine* by BTS offers a powerful message of hope and self-empowerment, encouraging listeners to embrace their vulnerabilities and find strength within themselves to navigate life's challenges.

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