CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

Music, a product of feelings, can be expressed through words and sounds. Abdullah & Yusuf (2021) explained that music is a creative form of organising auditory elements with signs and symbols. It acts as a semiotic system, conveying feelings, thoughts, and meanings that are often layered with symbols and metaphors. Music and particularly the form of the song, has long been recognised as a rich and complex semiotic system, a medium through which feelings, thoughts, and meanings are generated, communicated, and interpreted. Music follows us in every aspect of our lives, whether people actively listen to it or encounter it in public spaces (Hrustanović et al., 2021).

The messages in music are conveyed through carefully constructed words called lyrics. The music lyrics contain diverse meanings coming from various backgrounds and influences. Musicians can draw lyrical content from personal feelings, romantic narration, social and political critiques, and many other sources. Most songwriters use symbolic language to represent their thoughts and feelings instead of conveying the meanings directly. Symbolic meaning is a meaning of language beyond its actual meaning (Pratiwi et al., 2020). A study conducted by Abdullah & Yusuf (2021) focused on investigating the symbolic message in Paramore's song "Brick by Boring Brick" and found that the songwriter used a symbolic reference to a fairytale to convey the messages. This further proves that most songwriters use symbols and metaphors to share their thoughts and emotions, making the messages conveyed in it deeper to the listeners.

In addition to lyrics, the music genre is also important for songs. Throughout history, a wide variety of musical genres have emerged, including rock, blues, pop, hip-hop, jazz, and many others. Many people argue that rock is the most versatile genre of music as it can be mellow, aggressive and sometimes a combination of both. One of the most popular rock artists is The Eagles. The Eagles are an American rock band formed in Los Angeles in 1971. Some of their notable band members are Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Don Felder, Joe Walsh, Timothy B. Schmit, Deacon Frey, and Vince Gill. The Eagles were one of the most successful artists of the 70s and one of the world's best-selling music artists, with 200 million records sold worldwide. The band has released many rock songs, but the one that stands out the most is "Hotel California"

The song "Hotel California", released on February 22, 1977, is arguably the masterpiece of the band, Eagles, and classic rock music itself. At the time of its release, it went on to become a number-one hit in the United States and other countries (McIntyre, 2024). It is considered the greatest rock song of all time. The song has reached the number one position on the Billboard 100 and was included in the list of 500 Greatest The Rolling Stones (2003). The song is famous for the guitar solo notion at the climax of the song. This song is also famous for the the lyrics that conveys a deep meaning.

es behind the lyrics of "Hotel California" implies a very deep symbolic multiple interpretations of the message behind it. This makes ssage with a song come with challenges since people will come up retations of the song. A successful communication is when two

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parties come to a mutual understanding. This statement aligns with Robinson et al (2024), who stated "Effective communication is about understanding the emotion and intentions of the information rather than just exchanging information". In this case, successful communication between the singer and the listeners is when the listeners' understanding of a song aligns with the singer's intention for the messages. The various interpretations from listeners in one song are the reason behind the writer's interest in choosing "Hotel California" as an object of this research to uncover the messages of what the singer try to convey. To achieve that goal, the writer decided to implement the semiotic theory by Ferdinand De Saussure.

Since the researcher used semiotics as a tool to interpret meaning, the writer deemed it necessary to elaborate the definition of it. Semiotics, according to Eco (cited in Chandler, 2007), is a study involving anything that can be considered as a sign. A sign is then interpreted with the help of human creativity to make meaning (Nurfatwa et al., 2018). The co-founder of semiotics, Ferdinand De Saussure introduced a semiotic theory that can function as a tool to help the writer analyse the symbolic meaning behind a song lyric. Saussure (cited in Chandler, 2007) stated that a sign is made up of two parts; the signifier and the signified. Signifier is the form of a sign (word, behaviour, action, image) while signified is the mental concept of the signifier (denotational meaning or connotational meaning). This semiology theory is compatible with interpreting the symbolic meaning contained in a song.

The meanings conveyed through songs can vary significantly across different cultures. Music is deeply tied to the sociocultural context in which it is created, including the values and societal issues of its time (Barton, 2018). In simpler terms, songwriting often mirrors the cultural and social environment surrounding the artist. In this context, the iconic song "Hotel California" was written as an allegory of hedonism (Savage, 2016). Which means the song lyric comes in the form of a story where the characters and events symbolize a deeper meaning which in this context is hedonism. This heavy grounding in a specific cultural context has led to widespread misinterpretations in global audiences unfamiliar with the song's references to hedonism. Some listeners, for instance, might interpret the "hotel" metaphor as literal rather than symbolic. This gap is precisely why this topic demands deeper exploration.

Based upon the statements mentioned above, it is infered that, this research aims to analyze the meaning behind the lyrics of Eagles' song 'Hotel California'. With this approach, the writer offers a new contribution by analyzing the specific song (Hotel California) with the Semiology approach by Ferdinand De Saussure. Based on the previous explanations, the writer decided to take **"Exploring the Symbolic Message in the Song Lyric 'Hotel California' by Eagles: Semiology Approach"** as a title of this research.

⋯ of problems

⋯ter decided to address and identify the potential problems to the
⋯ 'Hotel California', which is as follows:
⋯ 'Hotel California" is an allegory, which is a form of story where
⋯ nd events symbolize deeper meaning, leading to a wide range of
⋯ pretations and may cause misinterpretation.

1.2.2   The song and the band's country of origin may have resulted in a lack of knowledge of the song's context for the listeners due to the sociocultural differences between countries.

1.2.3   The song may resonate differently across different age groups, leading to a generational gap in the song's interpretation

1.2.4   Multiple fan theories online may confuse the listeners in understanding the meaning of the song due to the wide range of interpretations.

1.3   Scope of the problems

This research examined the symbolic meanings behind the lyrics of the Eagles' 'Hotel California.' Many symbolic elements within the lyrics remain widely misunderstood, due to the heavy use of allegory in the song. This gap can cause uncertainty about the song's meaning and lead to misinterpretations. To systematically decode these signs, the study employs Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic framework, analysing signifier-signified relationships within the lyrics to uncover their contextual meanings.

1.4   Research questions

By considering the research background and problem identification, this research aims to answer the following questions:

1.4.1   What are the signifier and signified conveyed in the song lyrics of *Hotel California*?

1.4.2   What is the whole meaning of the symbolic messages in the *Hotel California* song lyrics?

1.5   Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.5.1   To explore the signifier and the signified conveyed in the song lyrics of *Hotel California*.

1.5.2   To uncover the whole meaning of the symbolic messages in the *Hotel California* song lyrics.

1.6   Significances of the research

In this research regarding the signifier and signified of *Hotel California* using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, the writer promises theoretical and practical benefits which are as follows:

Advantages

idea of the signifier and signified to study the lyrics of "Hotel
arch helps the readers and other researchers to understand how
es to music and cultural works. This approach can serve as a model
elping to analyse how themes and messages are represented in

other popular media like movies, ads, or books by exploring the links between the words or symbols used and the meanings they aim to express. It shows how symbols can express complex ideas. By combining semiotics, literary analysis, and cultural studies, the study takes an interdisciplinary approach to exploring song lyrics, emphasising their cultural meaning and deepening our understanding of how art communicates through symbols.

1.6.2   Practical Advantages

To improve how people understand song lyrics, a structured semiotic analysis offers a clear way to uncover deeper meanings and social messages, especially in songs that tackle complex human experiences and societal issues. This research can help general public to understand the complex meaning behind the song *Hotel California* and serves as a reference to interpret the song's message.

1.7   Previous Studies

Recognizing the previous studies regarding the application of semiotic approach in varieties of objects, the writer opted to choose five papers in order to provide assistance to analyze the study.

First, Fauzan et al (2023) conducted a study on "Signifier and Signified Meaning in *The Spongebob Squarepants Movie*: A Study of Semiotics Approach". The study aimed to find scenes from the movie that can be analyzed semiotically using the Saussure Semiotics Method and also due to the important signs and messages related to life contained in the movie. The writers decided to apply the Saussure Semiotics theory, which is the Dyadic model (Signifier and Signified). The researcher used a descriptive qualitative method as a research methodology in which the author used a documentation method to collect the visual data from the movie itself. The writers' data collection method involved collecting sources from journal articles, books, and papers from Google to assist the researcher in analyzing Saussure's theory in the film. The study reveals that seven scenes can be represented semiotically using Saussure's Semiotics theory.

The second research was written by Ramdani and Sakinah (2023) titled "Exploring The Signified and Signifier in Song Lyrics through A Saussurean Semiotics Lens". The study was conducted to observe the signified and signifier in song lyrics, with the object of research being Taylor Swift's "Red" song. The writers applied Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to analyze the implied meaning of the song. For this study. Ramdani and Sakinah used a qualitative descriptive as a research method, with the data provided in a table sheet that contains song lyrics as a signifier, and the interpretation of the writers as signified. The study found that the implied meaning of the song "Red" by Taylor Swift is about how a variety of sensations such as loneliness, confusion, and ____ ____ ____enced by a person who is falling in love. The writer then concluded ____ ____ that involves feelings which results in various emotional activities. ____ ____earch was carried out by Larasati et al., (2022) with the title of ____ ____ the Love Myself Message in the BTS Song Lyrics 'Epiphany'". The ____ ____ to investigate the existence of four self-love criteria, namely self-____ ____, self-esteem, and self-care in the song itself. The writers opted to

use a qualitative descriptive approach with Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic as a theoretical application. Considering the lyrics of the song are in Korean, the writers took the English translation of the song as data for the study. Larasatri & Daniar then determine the signifier and signified of the song lyrics. The study found that the song Epiphany by BTS covers the 4 aspects of self-love mentioned earlier.

Another research was also conducted by Wijayanto & Iswari (2021) with the title "Semiotics Analysis of Roland Barthes' Theory on Pocari Sweat's "Sweat for Dream" Advertisement". This study was conducted to reveal the message or myth conveyed in the Pocari Sweat advertisement. The writers decided to apply Barthes' mythical semiotics, which is the continuation of Saussure's semiotic theory and opted to use a qualitative descriptive approach as the research method. The study found that Pocari Sweat's advertisement contains a message that with our high physical activities, we lose a lot of body fluid, which can be replaced by drinking Pocari Sweat. This creates a popular myth in the community that Pocari Sweat can make everyone feel fresh and energized after high physical activities.

Lastly, the fifth research was written by Abdullah & Yusuf (2021) with the title "Investigating Symbols and Messages in The Song and Music Video Of Paramore's 'Brick By Boring Brick'" Using Peirce's Triadic Analysis". This study was conducted to interpret the symbols contained in the lyrics and music video of "Brick by Boring Brick" by Paramore. The writers decided to apply Peirce's semiotics theory, which is the triadic model of signs and chose to use the descriptive qualitative method. The study found that in the song and music video, Paramore tried to convey a message using symbols with many fairy tale references. At least 16 signs were used in the song and video, with 13 of them having direct or indirect connections to various fairy tales.

Having analyzed some previous studies about the messages in popular media with a semiotic approach, this proposed research on "*Exploring the Symbolic Message in the Song Lyric 'Hotel California' by Eagles: Semiology Approach*" could offer a fresh perspective by focusing on a different artist and song ("Hotel California" by Eagles). Unlike the first study that used Saussure's semiotics in analysing messages in Spongebob Squarepants movie, this study applied Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory specifically to analyze the deep symbolic messages of *Hotel California*. The aforementioned second and third research might apply Saussure's theory in analyzing song lyrics. However, both studies focused on the emotional and psychological message in a song, rather than the social commentary that this research aims to explore in the song *Hotel California*. The fourth research used a different theory and advertisement as the object of research, but still within the scope of semiotics. Therefore, Addressing these gaps in this research regarding the symbolic message in the Song Lyric 'Hotel California' by Eagles with the application of Saussure's semiotics theory would contribute new insights to the existing literature on semiotic analysis in music.

1.8 Theoretical Background

This section explores theoretical perspective relevant to this study.

1.8.1 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of how meaning is created and communicated through signs, symbols, and systems. It explores the ways humans use words, images, gestures, sounds, and even objects to encode ideas, share knowledge, and navigate social realities. By analysing patterns in everyday life, semiotics reveals how cultures assign shared significance to these "signs" and how individuals interpret them in daily interactions. One of the definitions of semiotics is by Eco (cited in Chandler, 2007), who stated, "semiotics involves everything that can be taken as a sign". A sign can refer to what we use in everyday communication. This is aligned with Sebeok (2001), who further stated that those signs can involve body gestures to symbolic structures such as words. Those signs then function as a medium of communication between species. However, signs can also be anything which stands for something else (Berger, 2014). This means other than body gesture and words, signs can also take the form of images, symbols, sounds, and objects. However, for signs to work, people need a shared understanding of their meanings, as Miguel and Popadiuk (2019) stated in their study that groups within a shared environment develop and exchange knowledge by relying on established signs, whose meanings are mutually understood through collective interaction. In other words, shared concepts are collectively shaped by their social environment. Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that semiotics examines how signs represent meanings beyond themselves, and that interpreting these signs requires a shared understanding shaped by cultural or social contexts.

The semiotics field originated from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Saussure and Peirce are regarded as the co-founders of semiotics. Chandler (2007) stated in his book that Peirce refers to the field of sign as "semiotics" and that the field is closely related to logic. From Peirce's perspective, anything can function as a sign as long as an individual interprets it as representing something else (Yakin & Totu, 2014). In other words: Something only becomes a sign when someone sees it as meaning something else. Meanwhile, Saussure refers to the field of sign as "semiology" and further stated that semiology studies the role of signs as part of society. In contrast to Peirce's point of view, Saussure stated that not everything can be a sign, and it is limited to a social convention, which is something mutually agreed upon by a community. In other words, signs depend entirely on collective agreement, which means meaning only gains stability when a community shares fixed associations between forms and concepts, established through mutual understanding.

e Saussure created the term "semiology" and developed a gns. He described a sign as having two connected parts which is a fied', 'signifier' being the sound-image and 'signified' is the mental arts cannot be separated. Saussure's main idea is that language is t many other sign systems also exist. He believed language is the system because it plays a key role in shaping how to understand n language's underlying structure (langue) more than its actual use

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in speaking (parole). Saussure (Yakin & Totu, 2014) also explained that a sign results from human thought shared through language between people in the same communication process. From this, it can be understood that something only becomes a sign when people treat it as one. How signs are understood depends on shared agreement within a society. In conclusion, Saussure's semiology defines signs as inseparable pairings of form and meaning (signifier/signified), grounded in social agreement, with language being the most vital system for shaping reality.

Meanwhile, Charles Sanders Peirce proposed the term "semiotic" to describe the study of signs. Contrary to Saussure's concept, Peirce proposed a three-dimensional system of signs consisting of *representamen, interpretant,* and *object*. The *representamen* is the sign itself, *object* is what the sign represents, and *interpretant* is the meaning or interpretation of the sign. Peirce also offers three category of signs: (1) Icon is a sign that has a physical imitation of the thing being represented. An example of this is a photograph, as it resembles what it depicts. (2) Index is a sign that shows evidence of the thing being represented. Footprint on the ground is a good example of this because a footprint shows that someone has walked that path. Another example is smoke, which shows evidence that a fire is nearby. (3) Symbol is a sign that does not resemble to the thing being represented, but rather the connection between the sign and what is represented is culturally learned or conventional. One of the examples are religious symbols. A star and crescent symbol that represents Islam, a cross that represents Christianity, and a Star of David that represents Judaism are culturally learned and do not have a direct connection. Peirce's philosophical background drove him to explore how humans think, specifically, how human use common sense and reason. In his perspective, people use signs to think, allowing them to communicate and assign meaning to things in their world.

Based on this exploration, it can be concluded that semiotics fundamentally examines how humans use signs to make sense of the world and communicate meaning. While Ferdinand de Saussure focused on the structured pairing of form (signifier) and concept (signified) within social conventions, Charles Sanders Peirce emphasised the dynamic three-part relationship between the sign itself (representamen), what it points to (object), and the meaning it generates in the mind (interpretant), categorizing signs as icons, indexes, or symbols. Despite their different approaches, both foundational thinkers agreed that signs rely on interpretation and shared understanding within a community or context. Ultimately, semiotics provides essential tools for understanding how meaning is created, shared, and shaped through the signs that exist in our daily lives and cultural systems.

1.8.2 Ferdinand De Saussure's Semiology

The concept of semiotics can be found in our everyday life. There are a lot of definitions ... ever, the term can be simply described as *the study of signs*. In this ... thing that "stands for" something else (Chandler, 2007). Signs can ... ds, logos, symbols, colours, gestures, objects, and even loudness. ... al role in human life as they help to understand patterns, guides for ... stand the meaning, etc (Sebeok, 2001).

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One of the pioneers of Semiotics is Ferdinand De Saussure. Ferdinand De Saussure (1857 - 1913) was a Swiss linguist and semiotician who is regarded as the founder of semiotics. In one of his works, *Course in General Linguistics* (1959), he coined the term "semiology" taken from the Greek word *semeion* which means "sign". He later defined it as "*a science that studies the life of sign within society*" and also stated that semiology helps us understand what makes something a sign and the rules that control how signs work. In other words, it examines how signs function and communicate meaning in our social lives and the rules that guide them.

Saussure's semiotics concept introduces the idea that a sign consists of two structures: concept and sound-image, which he later rephrased as signified and signifier. Signifier (sound-image) according to Saussure is the psychological imprint of the sound. In other words, a signifier is what our sensory body part receives. Signified (concept) refers to a mental concept carried by the signifier. These two structures are inseparable in sign formation since a signifier must have meaning, and a signified must have some form to be expressed (Chandler, 2007). For example, depending on the context, the word "blue" can refer to a colour or a concept of sadness and sorrow.

The concept of signifier and signified is not the only thing Saussure stated in his work, *Course in General Linguistics.* He also reveals the principles of sign: arbitrary and linear. The arbitrariness of signs means there is no direct relation between the signifier and the signified. Taking the example of the object "cat", there is no intrinsic link between the word "cat" (signifier) and the actual furry animal (signified). The linearity of sign means that language (spoken or written) happens in sequence. In other words, the formation of spoken or written sign happens step by step (When we write, letters and words are placed in order, like a straight line).

In his book, Course of General Linguistics, Saussure also introduced the four main dichotomy concepts: langue and parole, synchronic and diachronic, syntagmatic and associative, signifier and signified.

1.8.2.1 *Langue* and *Parole*

Langue is a language system, conventions, and rules that are agreed upon by a language community and become a guide in language practice in a society (Dayu & Syadli, 2023). In other words, *Langue* is a communal system of language that governs how a certain language community communicate. *langue* is an abstract concept, and it includes grammar, vocabulary, and other language rules that exist within a language. The characteristics of *langue* are as follows:

- The whole system of *langue* exists inside everyone's mind and is not controlled by individual speakers
- *Langue* is a social product of a language community and also a whole convention system decided upon a social group.

concrete system and rules that are obeyed and practiced by a mmunity and cannot be modified.

time, *parole* is an individual manifestation of *langue* in using a rite, or communicate. In other words, *parole* is a product of language system. Unlike *langue, parole* is entirely controlled by individual ain repetition, mistakes, and simplification in the process of *parole*

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(Dayu & Syadli, 2023). Parole can also be affected by emotion, situation, and the purpose of communication. The characteristics of *parole* are as follows:

- *Parole* is individual, variative, changeable, and may contain new things.
- *Parole* is unique depending on individual's choice
- Unlike *langue, parole* is not collective but rather temporary and heterogeneous. It can be different based on an individual's behaviour.

Langue is the guide used by society in using language. The manifested *langue* then becomes *parole*. Each individual's *parole* may differ. The relationship between *langue* (the language system) and *parole* (individual speech) can be compared to the game of chess. Chess has concrete rules that govern how the game works, just as language has rules for how words are used. For example, the movements of each piece (Queen can move diagonally, horizontally, and vertically while the king can only move one square in any direction), rules of play (checkmate ends the game, pawn promote upon reaching the other far side), and conventions (white moves first). These rules exist independently of any single game, and they are the shared knowledge that all players must follow. However, chess players make countless unique choices, such as which opening to play, how to respond to the opponent's moves, and also creative or unexpected moves. Similarly, while *langue* provides the structure of a language (grammar and vocabulary), *parole* allows for personal choices in how to speak or write within that framework. In short, if we compare the concept of *langue* and *parole* with the chess analogy, *langue* is the fixed rules (shared chess rules) while parole is the individual choices within those rules (playing styles).

Overall, *langue* is the complete, fixed system of language rules (like grammar and vocabulary) shared and followed by a whole community. It exists as a guide in everyone's mind within that community and cannot be changed by individuals. *Parole*, on the other hand, is how individual people actually use language when speaking or writing. It's the real-life application of the *langue* system, but it varies greatly depending on the person, their choices, feelings, the situation, and their purpose. Parole can include mistakes, repetitions, or simplifications and is temporary and unique to each speaker, unlike the stable *langue* system that guides it.

1.8.2.2 Synchronic and Diachronic

The Synchronic and Diachronic of Ferdinand De Saussure is a temporal concept. In his book Course in General Linguistics*,* Synchronic lingustics is a study of language at a specific time and only determines the structure of the language at that moment. An example of a synchronic study is the study of Old English structure and the study of slang in modern English. Synchronic linguistics focuses on describing how different elements of a language (grammar, sounds, and word order) interact and operate within the language's current structure. Synchronic studies look at what associates with what (how

given time. This approach helps us understand why "I ain't going" e dialects even if it's not "proper" English, or why we say "big red g ball." The focus is always on how the language works as a system .

iachronic is a study of language through periods of time. It studies es through history. A diachronic study looks at a language over a

period of time to make comparisons and would be used to study the development of a language. This approach shows how languages constantly adapt and why old words disappear (like "thou"), new words appear (like "selfie"), and meanings shift (like "mouse" now means a computer device). Diachronic linguistics is commonly applied in historical linguistics and research on language evolution. However, to actually spot meaningful transformations, it is necessary to look at language across long enough time periods (Huang & Yao, 2015).

The synchronic and diachronic study can be explained by using a "smartphone" analogy. The synchronic view can be compared to studying the user manual of our current phone. It can be either figuring out how the operating system works, how to use some unique features on the phone, and how to maximise the interface. This is similar to studying language synchronically, where our focus is on the structure and features of a language at a specific moment (how a language's grammar, syntax and slang work today). In other words, it is not necessary to understand the history of smartphones to learn how to use our current phone, just like we don't need to learn Old English to understand Modern English. In contrast, a Diachronic study can be compared to studying the history of the mobile phone. it focuses on how phones developed from brick to touchscreen, technological advances, and the innovations of phones through the years. This is similar to studying language diachronically, where our focus is on how a language develops over time. For example, analyzing how the word "*thou*' can shift to "*you*". Therefore, based on the explanation of synchronic and diachronic with a smartphone analogy, synchronic study can be compared to studying how to operate the current device, and diachronic study can be compared to studying the history of how we got to the smartphone.

In summary, Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of synchronic and diachronic linguistics help us understand language in different ways. Synchronic linguistics examines how a language works at a specific moment, focusing on its structure and rules at that time. Diachronic linguistics, on the other hand, studies how a language changes over time, tracking shifts in words, grammar, and usage. Together, these approaches give a complete picture of language, showing both its current system and its historical evolution.

1.8.2.3 Syntagmatic and Associative

Another dichotomy concept mentioned in Saussure's "Course of General Linguistics" is Syntagmatic and Associative. The concept of syntagmatic and associative relations is essentially a concept of the relationship between a structure in language and its meaning. Syntagmatic relation is the connection between every element within the same language structure (Chiu & Lu, 2016). In other words, it's a combination of related signifiers that form a meaningful text. Syntagmatic relation is a linear relation, meaning the elements in

are arranged in order. syntagmatic relations help analyze how
meaning through linear arrangement, essentially in semiotics. An
itic relation is the sentence "The lion chased the deer." The power
idual words, but in their order across the sentence: lion first, then
hat order locks in who does what. Flip the sequence "The deer
the whole meaning changes. The words haven't changed, but their

path has, and with it, the story. It's not about grammar rules, it's about how meaning builds step by step, link by link. In other words, we can not scramble the sequence without scrambling the meaning.

Meanwhile, associative relation or paradigmatic relation is the connection between every element that can be replaced by another element that falls into the same category (Chiu & Lu, 2016). Saussure stated in his book that "words obtain relations of a different kind, mainly ones that have something in common". The term "something in common" refers to the sound, form, and meaning of an element in a language structure. One example of an associative relation is in the sentence "The dog sat on the chair". The word "dog" has a relation with "cat", "man", or "baby" as an entity that can sit on a chair. However, it is not possible to change the word "dog" to "fish" since fish cannot sit on a chair. The word "chair" can also be substituted with "mat", "sofa", "bench", or "stool" as a thing that can be sat on. We cannot replace the word "chair" with "air conditioner" since it is not a place to sit. Another example is the sentence "I studied in campus". The word "I" can be replaced with "he" or "she" as an entity that can study in campus, but we cannot substitute the "I" with "cat" since a cat does not fall into the same category. The word "campus" can be changed to "school" or "classroom" since they share something in common as a learning place. We cannot substitute the word "campus" with "bathroom" since it is not a place to study.

We can understand syntagmatic and associative relations by comparing them to making a sandwich. First, the syntagmatic relation is like the order of layers in a sandwich. A proper sandwich follows a sequence which is bread, spread, meat, cheese, vegetables, and bread again. If we scramble this order (like putting cheese directly on top of bare bread and adding the spread last), the sandwich becomes messy, unbalanced, or even unappetizing. The same goes for language. Take the sentence "The man played the guitar." If we jumble the order like "The guitar played the man", the meaning flips completely, just like a poorly stacked sandwich. Meanwhile, the associative relation is like the options for each layer. For the bread, we can choose sourdough, rye, or plain white toast. For the spread, we might pick mayonnaise, ketchup, or mustard. The meat could be chicken, beef, turkey, or ham. Each choice changes the sandwich's flavor, but the basic structure stays the same. Similarly, in language, we can swap words with related meanings. "The man played the guitar" could become "The musician strummed the instrument" or "The guy played the drum" The words change, but the grammatical structure remains intact, just like how switching from turkey to ham gives you a different sandwich, but it's still a sandwich.

Overall, Saussure's syntagmatic and associative relations show how language creates meaning in two ways. Syntagmatic relations deal with word order, where changing the sequence of words changes the meaning of the sentence, like how "The _____ " means something completely different from "The deer chased the _____ ations involve replacing words with others that have something in _____ bstituting "dog" with "cat" or "chair" with "sofa" because they share _____ functions. Both types of relations work together to help language _____ er of words matters for meaning, and the words we choose must fit _____ ions. This explains how we understand language through both the _____ s and the connections between words that can replace each other.

1.8.2.4 Signifier and Signified

Saussure stated that language is a sign system consisting of two elements, namely signifier and signified. The relation between the signifier and the signified cannot be separated like two sides of a coin. It is not possible to have one without the other (Chandler, 2007). The signifier could be anything we can perceive. The signified is the concept or idea that the form represents in our minds. These two parts are completely interdependent. A signifier without meaning is just empty noise or random marks. Likewise, a signified without any form to express it can't be communicated at all. Examples of how this works is the word "dog" makes us think of a furry, barking animal. This pairing system is what lets us turn thoughts into meaningful messages, whether through language, images, or other signs.

The signifier is a physical element of a sound. It is what our sensory body parts receive (Saussure, 1959). In other words, the signifier is the physical part of a sign that we can perceive and that enters our minds through our senses. The signifier can be in the form of written sentences, spoken words, body language, or an image. For instance, in the English word "house", the sequence of letters that forms the word (H-O-U-S-E) and the sound of each letter combined is a signifier. The signifier acts as a carrier to carry the real meaning of a sign, which Saussure identified as the signified.

Meanwhile, the signified is a mental concept carried by the signifier. the idea or mental image that forms in our minds when encountering a linguistic sign. It is not the physical object itself, but rather our understanding of what that signifier represents. For instance, the word "house" triggers our mind to form a mental idea of a house, which is a building with a triangular roof where people usually live. Saussure stated that the signified is an abstract concept and not to be identified with a physical referent (Chandler, 2007).
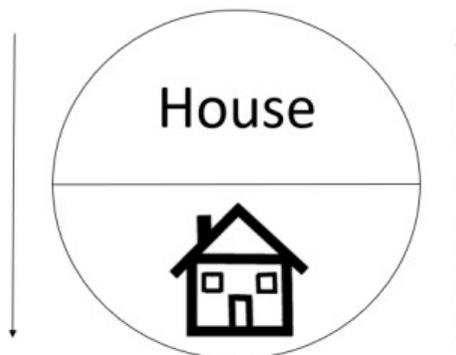

Figure 1. 1 Sound and Mental Concept

In Course of General Linguistics, Saussure further emphasize that the relation between signifier and signified are inseparable and each element complements the other. He also represented the relation by this drawing:
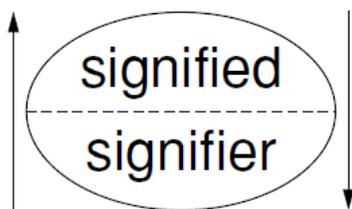

Figure 1. 2 Saussure's Model Of Sign
Source: (Chandler, 2007)

Furthermore, Saussure stated in Course of General Linguistics regarding the two basic natures of sign, namely arbitrary and linear. The arbitrary nature of signs means that the connection between a sign's form (signifier) and its meaning (signified) is conventional rather than natural. There are no logical bond between how a word sounds and the concept it represents. For example, the word "cat" has no direct connection to the actual furry animal. This word was chosen to represent the furry animal because English speakers collectively agreed upon it. Spanish speakers use the word "*gato*" and Indonesian speakers use the word "*kucing*" to refer to the same concept of the furry animal, which further confirms the arbitrariness.

Meanwhile, the linear nature of signs means that language works in a straight line, one word after another, never all at once. When speaking, words come out one by one in time. When writing, words appear one after another on the page. For example, the sentence "Cats eat mice" only makes sense because the words come in that exact order. If we mix them up to "Mice eat cats", the meaning changes completely. We can not say or write all three words simultaneously; rather, they have to follow each other. This orderly nature makes language different from pictures, where we see everything together. It's why we can understand stories and conversations, because words follow a clear sequence. The order is not random; it is what gives language its structure and makes communication possible.

In conclusion, Saussure's theory of signs shows that language works through the connection between signifiers and signifieds, which cannot exist without each other like two sides of a coin. The signifier is the physical part we can see or hear, such as the letters and sounds in the word "house," while the signified is the mental concept or idea that forms in our minds when we encounter that word. These signs have two important characteristics that make language work. First, signs are arbitrary, meaning there is no ___ tween how a word sounds and what it means, which is why different ___nt words for the same concept. Second, signs are linear, meaning ___ after another in a specific order to create meaning, and changing ___ entire message. Together, these elements show that language is ___ where physical forms carry mental concepts through agreed-upon ___red sequences.

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Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotics theory will be the tool for the researcher to conduct an analysis of the "Hotel California" song lyrics by Eagles. The research will be focused on using the concept of the Signifier and the Signified. The researcher hope that the use of signifier and signified concept can uncover the meaning behind the song lyric.

1.8.3 Song Lyrics

Song lyrics are the written words in a song that carry meaning and emotion. They are carefully arranged to fit the music while expressing the songwriter's message. Most song lyrics follow a standard structure: Intro - Verse - Pre-Chorus - Chorus - Bridge - Break - Outro. This framework helps organise the flow of ideas while allowing room for creativity. The verses usually tell a story or develop a theme, while the chorus repeats the main idea to make it memorable. Lyrics often use poetic techniques like metaphor, rhyme, and wordplay to add depth and connect with listeners. Because lyrics rely on language, their meaning can be interpreted in different ways depending on the listener's perspective and experiences. This makes lyrics not just part of a song, but a powerful tool for communication and artistic expression.

As a communication tool, song lyrics function as a powerful medium for songwriters to communicate their emotional feelings about love, anger, sadness, happiness, betrayal, etc. Research by Alfiyani (2021) on figurative language in Niki's songs shows this communicative power through an analysis of "Lose," which expresses the pain of unrequited affection. The artist's use of hyperbole improved the emotional impact, which transforms personal experience into something relatable. This demonstrates how song lyrics can move from entertainment to become meaningful forms of emotional expression. When songwriters articulate their feelings through lyrical composition, they create connections with listeners who may recognise similar emotions in themselves.

Besides serving as a medium to communicate emotional feelings, song lyrics also serve as a powerful medium for social commentary that allows artists to be aware of various aspects of society, such as politics, economics, and environmental issues. A study by Rahmadhanti et al., (2022) examining Alan Walker's "Different World" demonstrates this function through analysis of the song's metaphorical language. The researchers found that the lyrics describe the state of environmental degradation, portraying an ageing Earth suffering from the consequences of global warming, pollution, and waste accumulation. By transforming complex societal issues into relatable lyrical narratives, songwriters not only document contemporary challenges but also engage listeners in meaningful reflection.

In addition to emotional expression and social commentary, song lyrics can also function as an effective persuasive tool that often encourages listeners to adopt positive attitudes or behaviours. Research has shown that when artists include motivational [...] tive messages in their lyrics, they can influence audiences' [...] ons in meaningful ways. A study by Pristianingrum and Damayanti [...] e song "Jangan Menyerah" by D'Masiv provides clear evidence of [...] ion. Their analysis revealed how the lyrics communicate powerful [...] ges about human imperfection, overcoming life's challenges, [...] ance, and not giving up on life's challenges. This demonstrates how

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carefully crafted lyrics can serve as more than entertainment and become a medium for inspiration and personal growth.

In summary, song lyrics function as a versatile communication channel and can be used to express emotions, address the state of society, and persuade listeners. Studies demonstrate how lyrics use literary devices to transform personal experiences into shared messages. This ability to connect with diverse audiences makes lyrics a powerful artistic medium that turns from entertainment to influence thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. The researches highlight music's unique capacity to communicate complex ideas while serving emotional resonance with listeners.

1.8.4   The Eagles' Songs

The Eagles are an American rock band formed in Los Angeles in 1971. The original lineup consisted of Don Henley (vocals, drums), Glenn Frey (vocals, guitar), Bernie Leadon (guitar), and Randy Meisner (bass). Initially assembled as Linda Ronstadt's backing band, they soon decided to form their own band. Their self-titled debut album, "Eagles", featuring hits like "Take It Easy" and "Witchy Woman," established their signature blend of rock, country, and folk. Their success continued with "*Desperado*" album, an Old West outlaws-themed album. The band's third album, On the Border (1974), produced their first No. 1 single, "Best of My Love," which topped the Billboard Hot 100 in 1975. Around this time, guitarist Don Felder joined, expanding their musical dynamics. However, internal tensions led to Bernie Leadon's departure in 1975, with Joe Walsh stepping in as his replacement.

Walsh made his debut with the Eagles on Hotel California (1976), where his powerful guitar work alongside Felder helped shape the album into the band's most iconic and commercially successful release. The album features standout tracks like "New Kid in Town," "Hotel California," and "Life in the Fast Lane." At the 1978 Grammy Awards, it earned five nominations and won two: "Record of the Year" for "Hotel California" and "Best Arrangement for Voices" for "New Kid in Town." Additional nominations included "Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Group," "Album of the Year," and "Producer of the Year." To date, Hotel California has sold 31.8 million copies worldwide, securing its place among the top 10 best-selling albums of all time.
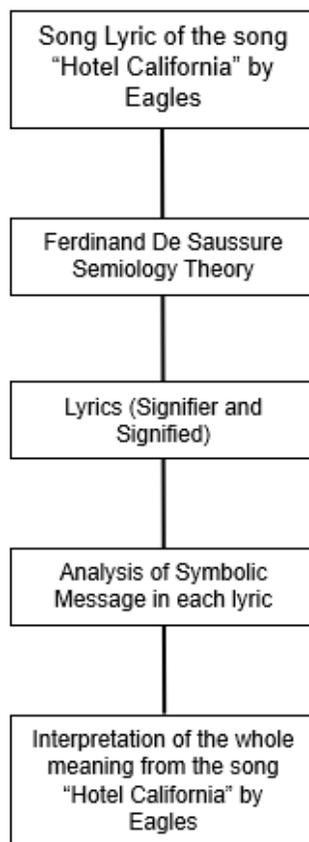

Figure 1. 3 Eagles "Hotel California" Poster
(Source: Rolling Stones)

"Hotel California" stands as the Eagles' signature track and most commercially successful song. Defined by Henley's eerie, scene-setting vocals and the ferocious, climactic guitar duel between Walsh and Felder, it has earned legendary status across music rankings. Rolling Stone magazine (2004) placed it at number 49 on "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time," while its iconic twin-guitar solo was named "Best Solo of All Time" by Guitarist magazine readers in 1998. The song's cultural impact was further cemented when it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2003. This widespread acclaim solidifies "Hotel California" as one of rock history's most influential recordings.

1.9   Conceptual Framework

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Song Lyric of the song │
│   "Hotel California" by │
│         Eagles          │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Ferdinand De Saussure  │
│     Semiology Theory    │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Lyrics (Signifier and │
│         Signified)      │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Analysis of Symbolic  │
│   Message in each lyric │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Interpretation of the whole │
│   meaning from the song │
│   "Hotel California" by │
│         Eagles          │
└─────────────────────────┘
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CHAPTER II
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1   Research Design

This research was conducted to explore the signifier and signified in the lyrics of "Hotel California" by the Eagles using a qualitative descriptive approach. This method allowed the analysis of textual information without numerical data, focusing instead on interpreting meanings through written explanations. By examining how specific words and phrases in the lyrics conveyed hidden messages and emotions, the study systematically uncovered the song's deeper meanings. The descriptive approach helped the researcher interpret and assign significance to these lyrical elements, translating raw data into meaningful insights about how language communicates ideas. Results were presented as written descriptions that explain the symbolic messages of the song.

This research did not involve direct interviews with the songwriter. Instead, it will be analyzed based on the researcher's interpretations. This study involved collecting data from multiple sources, including the song's lyric and relevant online information that can support the interpretations. This research used purposive sampling, which is the technique where researchers examine specific data with certain criteria. This was chosen to avoid analysing repetitive lyrics in the song. After gathering these selected samples, the researcher applied Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic model to analyse the relationship between signifiers and their signified meanings. This approach systematically uncovered how symbolic messages were embedded in the lyrics through intentional language choices.

2.2   Sources of Data

The data for this research was taken from the song 'Hotel California' by the Eagles, released on 22nd February, 1977. The song is the second track on the album of the same name, 'Hotel California', with a duration of six minutes and thirty-one seconds. The lyrical transcript, which will be the primary data for this research, was taken from the Genius website (https://genius.com/Eagles-hotel-california-lyrics). The secondary data, which includes the audio and external resources obtained from the artist's official YouTube Channel (@EaglesBand) and several online resources such as journals, web articles, and other relevant information to support the findings and discussion.

2.3   Methods and Techniques of Data Collection

The data collection process began by obtaining the audio recording of "Hotel California" from the Eagles' official YouTube channel. The researcher first listened repeatedly to the song to grasp its tone, pacing, and emotional nuances. Next, the official lyrics transcript was sourced from a reputable music website to ensure originality and accuracy. g materials, such as relevant online information and fan gathered from reputable online platforms. These resources rengthen the analysis and discussion of the lyrics' hidden meanings.

ata Analysis

cess employed qualitative methods, relying on written explanations al data. The analysis began by reducing the data to remove

unnecessary repetitive lyrical stanzas. Next, the data is displayed by dividing the song lyrics into stanzas and organized them into tables structured into two columns based on Saussure's analytical framework: signifier (the lyrics' words) and signified (their implied meanings). Each table is labelled sequentially as Data 1, Data 2, and so forth to maintain systematic organisation. The meanings of each stanza were then explored by analyzing the relationship between signifiers and signifieds, supported by contextual details. After that, the researcher found the whole meaning of the song by connecting the relation of symbolic meanings between stanzas. Finally, a discussion and conclusion were developed to provide insights into how these signs collectively expressed the song's messages.