

TEENAGERS' STRUGGLES IN TXT'S MUSIC VIDEOS FROM "THE CHAOS CHAPTER: FIGHT OR ESCAPE" ALBUM

Tiara Jas Putri¹, Jufrizal²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: tiarajasputri@gmail.com

Abstract

Due to the increasing cases of mental health in teenagers, TXT tries to represent the various problems and struggles faced by teenagers today in the music videos on one of their albums. This research was conducted to see the visual and verbal signs and denotative meanings, connotative meanings, and myths that represent the struggles of teenagers found in the TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album. This research analyzed scenes out of three music videos. Semiotic theory by Barthes (1967) was used in this study with qualitative approach. Visual signs found include family issues, hallucinations, act impulsively, desire to be freedom and so on. While verbal signs found are, feeling of isolation, hallucinations, have feelings of sorrow, and identity crisis. Meanwhile, the denotative meanings found include family issues, thinking friends are everything, giving up easily and so on. On the other hand, the connotative meanings found are often running away from problems, like to do things that hurt themselves, confused about their own life. While the myths found are, teenagers often run away from home to find a sense of security and comfort that they don't find at home and think that suicide is not wrong.

Key words: Meaning, Music Video, Myth, Semiotic, TXT

A. INTRODUCTION

Teenager is a developmental stage that falls between childhood and adulthood. This stage can be identified by changes in behavior, biology, cognition, psychology, and social interactions (Steinberg, 2014). It is a sensitive age because many teenagers experience various emotional problems that refer to depressive and anxiety symptoms including sadness, loneliness, worrying, feeling of worthlessness and anxiousness. This case got attention from the public, many people started to become aware and care about teenagers' problems. Researchers are starting to do a lot of research on the mentality of teenagers, such as research conducted by Cavioni et al. (2021) which discussed about teenagers' mental health and their positive interaction at school are mediated by life

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on June 2024

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



satisfaction. Besides, musicians are also making a lot of works with teenagers as their theme. One of them is TXT, it is an acronym for Tomorrow x Together, a boy group from South Korea that often raises teenage themes in their songs. This is because through music, musicians can convey their feelings to listeners because apart from being entertainment, music also has functions to provide information.

The ability of music to express or represent messages is one of its most enduring features (Cespedes Guevara and Eerola, 2018). So, music can be used as a media to convey messages, whether the message whose meaning can be directly understood or the meaning conveyed implicitly. Additionally, in order to represent the lyrics and meaning of the song, musicians usually release music videos of their songs. As Dasovich Wilson et al. (2022) state that music videos offer an opportunity to learn more about the relationship between music and visual information in a more ecologically valid environment, as well as how this relationship affects how music is perceived and enjoyed. Music videos are made with the intention of telling the whole story of the songs. Therefore, with the increasing cases of mental health in teenagers, TXT tries to represent the various problems and struggles faced by teenagers today in the music videos on one of their albums, namely, The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE.

Through this research, the author is interested in further researching how the emotional struggles experienced by teenagers are represented in the music videos on this album using semiotic analysis of Barthes (1967). This study aimed to find out visual and verbal signs found in the TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album. Then it also purposed to find out the denotative meanings, connotative meanings and myths found in the TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album.

Barthes (1967) employs a concept "order of signification". In the two orders of signification Barthes (1967) states that the first order known as denotation, and the second order known as connotation. Denotative refers to the actual meaning that is understood by the idea, how the item appears, and is unquestionable. Connotative is shaped by cultural interpretation and can only be understandable to those who belong to that culture. The picture below describes how sign produced through two orders of signification.

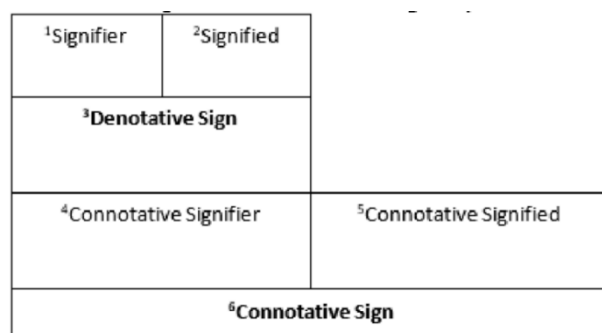


Figure 1. Concept of Semiotic by Barthes (Source: Cobley and Jansz, 1999)

Based on the picture above, it can be concluded that denotative sign (3) consists of signifier (1) and signified (2). However, at the same time denotative sign is also connotative signifier (4). Moreover, connotative signifier must produce connotative signified (5) to forming connotative sign (6).

Barthes' concept goes beyond mere denotative and connotative interpretation. Another idea that is crucial to his concept is that of myth. The concept of myth will be discussed below:

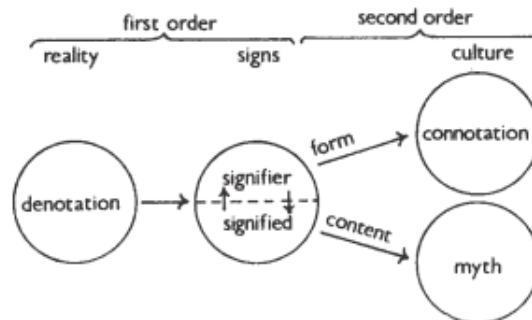


Figure 2. Barthes' Order of Signification (Source: Fiske, 1990)

The figure above describes the relationship between signifier and signified in an external reality sign and is referred as first order signification. Barthes claimed that denotation is a sign's real meaning. An indicator of second order meaning is called the connotation. This point demonstrated the interaction that happened when a sign coincided with readers' emotions or feelings and cultural values. Meanwhile, in the second order of signification, the arrow pointing to the content shows that the sign also works through myths. A myth is a narrative that a society uses to clarify or comprehend a certain facet of reality or the natural world (Fiske, 1990).

Some studies have examined the semiotic analysis in music video, such as semiotic analysis in music video of Jonas Blue by Kadiman (2019) to find the meaning of the signs found in this music video. Then, there is semiotic analysis in music video of Twenty One Pilots' by Qurratuain (2018) to find the signs, the meaning of the signs and what the meaning of the scenes related to mental disorder. The third study is semiotic analysis of the relationship between music video and signs in Ruel's song by Shanty (2022) to distinguish the meaning of denotative and connotative signs. The next study written by Latifah et al., (2023) about semiotic analysis of visual signs and meanings in Prince Ali's music video. There is also a study of Herman (2019) who investigated semiotic analysis of Wednesday Campanella's Music Video to identify signs and meanings.

However, some points are missing from the studies above. The studies focused more on the visual signs, denotative meanings, connotative meanings and message of the music video. Besides, the studies mentioned have not discussed about myth and how visual and verbal signs revealed the denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth. Therefore, the lack of study on semiotic analysis of music videos that used visual and verbal signs at the same time to reveal the denotative meanings, connotative meanings and myths

especially in representing the teenagers' struggles made it challenging to gain a comprehensive understanding about how the struggles of teenagers can be presented to ensure that the people who watch the music video understand the meaning of it. Through this research, by analyzing these semiotic elements in the music videos of TXT on the album, *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* is expected to make people realize and understand what struggles are faced by teenagers.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research conducted using a qualitative approach because the data utilized consist of pieces of scenes and lyrics extracted from the music videos of TXT and the analysis presented through visual representations and textual descriptions rather than numerical data using semiotic theory by Barthes (1967). The data of this research are pictures that are taken from pieces of scenes out of three music videos, which are “0X1=LOVESONG (I Know I Love You)”, “LO\$ER=LO♡ER” and “Frost”. These music videos taken from the YouTube channel, HYBE LABELS. The instruments of this research were, the researcher, laptop, and indicator table of signs and meanings. Document analysis used to collect the data. There are three steps in analyzing the data which involved, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The findings of this research are divided into two parts. Each of them used to answer the research questions. The first one is what are the visual and verbal signs that represent the struggles of teenagers found in the TXT's music videos from *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* album and the second is what are the denotative meanings, connotative meanings, and myths that represent the struggles of teenagers found in the TXT's music videos from *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* album.

A. Signs

There are 68 signs found from 3 music videos, divided into 39 visual signs 29 verbal signs. This indicates that the representation of teenagers' struggles in TXT's music videos from *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* album is more depicted through the scenes in the music video than the lyrics of the song.

Based on visual signs, the scenes in TXT's music videos describe many teenagers' struggles such as family issues, including parents' arguing which causes a feeling of isolation of the teenager and arguing between parents and their child when the teenager is just doing what he likes. Then hallucinations that teenagers have, such as seeing fish flying in the air and hallucinations of being chased by their own shadows. Besides they are rebellious and often act impulsively without thinking about the consequences of their actions such as run away from home using car with friends, jump off from the cliff, burning car, and taking money that does not belong to him. Teenagers also have feelings of sadness and abandonment. Besides, there is a teenager who is alone and has no one to lean on, even after

running away from home, he ends up in an unknown place because he doesn't know where to go. Moreover, there are also teenagers who want freedom from the things that have been torturing them. In addition, there is confusion showed by a group of teenagers so they meet someone to talk about their fate by giving each of them a card. Moreover, teenagers have a lot of fears that sometimes they have the courage to fight all the difficulties they face as their maturation process.

Meanwhile verbal sign depicts the difficulties of teenagers from the side of teenagers who are lonely. They have feelings of sorrow or being trapped in a bad situation so they think friends are everything that they can rely on. They are easy to consider themselves as a loser and unworthy once they failed. They are also often feeling hopeless and gave up on their own lives such as giving up on failing to do something he likes, hopeless because he feels alone and doesn't know where to go and what to do, hopeless because he has gone through many challenges. In addition, there are teenagers who are desperate to escape to seek freedom from the things that make them suffer. They confused with their own life to the point they acted in a very irrational or unpredictable way until they have desire to find solutions or make sense of their situation. There are also teenagers who are having an identity crisis. They have a lot of problems in their life. They also hallucinate by hearing voices, which are not real. They often running away from their problems.

Therefore, findings of what teenagers' struggles represented through visual and verbal signs can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 Finding of Signs

No	Visual Sign	Verbal Sign
1	Family issue, such as parents' arguing which causes a feeling of isolation of the teenager and arguing between parents and their child when the teenager is just doing what he likes	Feeling of isolation
2	Hallucination such as seeing fish flying in the air and hallucinations of being chased by their own shadows	They also hallucinate by hearing voices, which are not real
3	Rebellious and act impulsively such as run away from home using car with friends, jump off from the cliff, burning car, and taking money that does not belong to him	They have a lot of problems in their life

4	Teenagers also have feelings of sadness and abandonment	They have feelings of sorrow or being trapped in a bad situation so they think friends are everything that they can rely on.
5	Teenager who is alone and has no one to lean on, even after running away from home, he ends up in an unknown place because he doesn't know where to go.	Loneliness often running away from their problems.
6	Teenagers who want freedom from the things that have been torturing them	Teenagers who are desperate to escape to seek freedom from the things that make them suffer
7	Confused with their own life	Teenagers who are having an identity crisis and they confused with their own life to the point they acted in a very irrational or unpredictable way until they have desire to find solutions or make sense of their situation
8	Easy to lose hope once they failed and have a lot of fears	They are easy to consider themselves as a loser and unworthy once they failed. They are also often feeling hopeless and gave up on their own lives

B. Meanings

There are 32 meanings of the scenes in struggles in TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album, which are divided into 16 denotative meanings and 16 connotative meanings. The denotative meanings are, family issues, such as parents who are arguing in front of their children, so that the child runs away from home. They consider friends as everything because they feel that friends are there when they need them. Besides, they act impulsively and do things that are bad for themselves. Moreover, they also easily despair whenever they lose something. These problems can also be caused by parents who are harsh to their children. Then, the hallucinations they have can be a result of their fear and confusion about their own lives.

On the other hand, the connotative meaning of these scenes represents those teenagers often run away from their problems such as not being able to stand seeing their parents who continue to arguing, running away after taking money that does not belong to them, and running away after trying to attack men who scold his coworker. They also do not hesitate to do things that harm themselves such as burning cars and jumping off cliffs. They confused with their own life to the point they meet someone to tell their fate. Sometimes they have to try to fight the fear

within himself. They also hallucinate which indicates that their mental state is unstable. Besides that, teenage problems can also be caused by parents who do not care and do not support their children's desires.

The myth that develops in society regarding these problems is that the arguing of parents may occur due to financial problems, not mentally prepared to get married and have children, where they do not think about the impact that their children will feel in the future for seeing their parents arguing frequently. As a result, since child no longer feel safe at home, they run away to seek safety and comfort outside. They can also cause trouble out there due to the lack of attention from their parents without thinking about what they are doing right or wrong. In addition, the sensitive mental state of teenagers makes them often hallucinate, where the hallucinations may be a projection of their fears or desires that are not realized in real life. In fact, suicide is no longer a rare thing for teenagers, when they do not find a solution to their problems, the final solution they find is death. Moreover, the number of parents who impose their will without supporting their children's wishes is also a problem for teenagers. So, it can be stated that teenagers are a sensitive period, so it is necessary to have a guidance and attention from parents to prevent teenagers from feeling alone which can eventually do things that are disadvantageous to themselves.

Therefore, findings of what teenagers' struggles represented through denotative meanings, connotative meanings, and myths can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 Finding of Meanings

No	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth
1	Family issues which caused teenager runs away from home.	Teenagers often run away from their problems.	Arguing of parents may occur due to financial problems, not mentally prepared to get married and have children, where they do not think about the impact that their children will feel in the future for seeing their parents arguing frequently
2	Teenagers consider friends as everything for them.	Teenager also do not hesitate to do things that harm themselves.	Teenagers run away from home to seek safety and comfort outside because they no longer feel safe at home
3	Teenagers act impulsively and do things that are bad for themselves.	They also hallucinate which indicates that their mental state is unstable	Teenagers can cause trouble out there due to the lack of attention from their parents without thinking about what they are doing right or wrong

4	Teenager also easily despair whenever they lose something.	Parents who do not care and do not teenager's desires.	The sensitive mental state of teenagers makes them often hallucinate, where the hallucinations may be a projection of their fears or desires that are not realized in real life.
5	Parents who are overly harsh on teenagers.	They confused with their own life to the point they meet someone to tell their fate.	Suicide is no longer a rare thing for teenagers, when they do not find a solution to their problems, the final solution they find is death
6	Hallucinations as a result of teenagers' fear and confusion about their own lives.	Sometimes they have to try to fight the fear within himself.	Many parents who impose their will without supporting teenagers' wishes.

2. Discussion

The findings show that there are 68 signs which are divided into 39 visual signs and 29 verbal signs. This indicates that the representation of teenage struggle in the TXT music video from the album *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* is more depicted through the scenes in the music video than the lyrics of the song. Then, there are 32 meanings of the scenes found in the music video, which are divided into 16 denotative meanings and 16 connotative meanings. In addition, there are 16 myths found in those music videos.

Barthes (1967) employs the concept of "order of signification" to show that in the reality, the same thing might convey different meaning to individual in various circumstance. The first order called denotation and the second order known as connotation. Apparently, this concept goes beyond denotation and connotation, signs also work through myths that occur when a sign coincides with the reader's emotions or feelings and cultural values. This research analyzed teenagers' struggles found in TXT's music videos from *The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE* album, the researcher analyzed the denotative meanings, connotative meanings and myths through visual and verbal signs to get a profound understanding of how scenes in those music videos can construct and convey meaning about representation of struggles are faced by teenagers today as they get older. Denotative and connotative elements within the videos combine to create myths surrounding the experiences of teenagers, allowing people to engage with and interpret these texts on multiple levels. It turns out that the struggles are including, family issues, frustration, hallucinations, hopelessness, loneliness, and so on.

This study found the struggles that faced by teenagers through the representation of the story in the scenes of these music videos by analyzing signs and meanings. Music videos are released by singers with the intention of conveying the contents and stories of their songs to those who watch the music video. This is

in line with Qurratuain (2018) who stated that many singers release music videos as nicely as possible to make the message contained in their songs conveyed through music videos can be better understood by the viewers. They often slip the signs to represent something to support the delivery of the meaning and message of the song.

This study used visual and verbal signs to reveal the denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth to make it easier for the researcher to analyze the data in order to get a profound understanding of teenagers' struggles found in TXT's Music video. This is different from Kadiman (2019) who only analyzed the meaning of signs, which are denotative and connotative meanings and research from Latifah et al., (2023) who only analyzed visual signs and their interpretations. However, those previous studies did not use myth and verbal signs in analyzing music videos, which this current research did.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was conducted to see what are the visual and verbal signs that represent the struggles of teenagers found in the TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album and what are the denotative meanings, connotative meanings, and myths that represent the struggles of teenagers found in the TXT's music videos from The Chaos Chapter: FIGHT OR ESCAPE album. Based on the 3 music videos and 16 tables of data analysis, 68 signs found which are divided into 39 visual signs and 29 verbal signs with 32 which are divided into 16 meanings of denotative and connotative. There also found 16 myths in those music videos.

The teenagers' struggles represented through visual signs are family issues, including parents' arguing and arguing between parents and their child. Then hallucinations that teenagers have, such as seeing fish flying in the air and hallucinations of being chased by their own shadows. Besides they are rebellious and often act impulsively without thinking about the consequences of their actions. Teenagers also have feelings of sadness and abandonment. Besides, there is a teenager who is alone and has no one to lean on. Moreover, there are also teenagers who want freedom from the things that have been torturing them. In addition, there is confusion showed by a group of teenagers so they meet someone to talk about their fate by giving each of them a card. Furthermore, teenagers have a lot of fears that sometimes they have the courage to fight all the difficulties they face as their maturation process. Meanwhile verbal sign depicts the difficulties of teenagers from the side of teenagers who are lonely. They have feelings of sorrow or being trapped in a bad situation so they think friends are everything that they can rely on. They are easy to consider themselves as a loser and unworthy once they failed. They are also often feeling hopeless and gave up on their own lives. In addition, there are teenagers who are desperate to escape to seek freedom from the things that make them suffer. They confused with their own life to the point they acted in a very irrational or unpredictable way until they have desire to find solutions or make sense of their situation. There are also teenagers who are having an identity crisis. They

have a lot of problems in their life. They also hallucinate by hearing voices, which are not real. They often running away from their problems.

On the other hand, the denotative meaning of the scene that represents teenagers' struggles is a teenager who witnesses his parents arguing, then runs away with his friends because he feels that his friends are everything to him. In addition, teenagers don't think about the things they will do that could be bad for them. Moreover, teenagers' problems can also be caused by arguing with their parents. They also often feel hopeless. While the connotative meaning is that teenagers often run away from problems, they also often do things that can be harmful to themselves, then they also often hallucinate. In addition, there are problems between parents and children, where parents do not support the teenager. The myth is that parents' readiness to marry and have children must be perfect, so that this does not have a negative impact on children in the future. The role of parents is very important in protecting and paying attention to teenagers because their emotions are still unstable so that they do not do things that harm themselves.

The researcher suggests for future research, since TXT frequently discusses teenagers' problems, it is possible that future research can discuss teenagers' struggles using a compilation of songs or music videos from other albums of TXT to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the representation of teenagers' struggles. the future research could conduct a comparative study about teenagers' struggles represented by TXT with songs or music videos from other K-pop groups even with music from other cultures to explore how different cultural contexts influence the representation of teenagers' struggles. The future research could also combine semiotic analysis with other areas of study such as cultural studies, sociology, or psychology to gain a more nuanced understanding of the representation of teenagers' struggles in K-pop songs or music videos

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barthes, R. (1967). *Elements of Semiology*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Cavioni, V., Grazzani, I., Ornaghi, V., Agliati, A., & Pepe, A. (2021). Adolescents' Mental Health at School: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.720628>
- Cespedes Guevara, J., & Eerola, T. (2018). Music Communicates Affects, Not Basic Emotions - A Constructionist Account of Attribution of Emotional Meanings to Music. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00215>
- Cobley, P., & Jansz, L. (1999). *Introduction to Semiotics*. Cambridge: Icon Books.
- Fiske, J. (1990). *Introduction to Communication Studies* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

- Dasovich Wilson, J. N., Thompson, M., & Saarikallio, S. (2022). Exploring Music Video Experiences and Their Influence on Music Perception. *Music & Science*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043221117651>
- Herman, F. Y. (2019). *Signs and Meanings of Wednesday Campanella's Music Video "Yaku no Jitsugetsushushi" Semiotic Approach*. Buddhi Dharma University, Tangerang.
- Kadiman, D. S. (2019). *Semiotics Analysis of Jonas Blue's Music Video Rise through Roland Barthes' Theory*. Buddhi Dharma University, Tangerang
- Latifah, A., Dewanto, D., & Astutik, A. (2023). A Semiotic Analysis of Visual Signs and Meanings on Prince Ali Soundtrack Music Video from Aladdin Movie 2019. *EL2J (English Language and Literature Journal)*, 2(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.38156/el2j.v2i1.14>
- Qurratuain, H. (2018). *Semiotic Analysis on Twenty One Pilots' Music Video "Heavydirtysoul."* Universitas Brawijaya, Malang.
- Shanty, F. L. (2022). *Sign and Relation between Music Video and Song Lyrics on Ruel's Song: A semiotics Analysis*. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Surabaya.
- Steinberg, L. D. (2014). *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.