WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN SHEILA ON 7 SONG LYRICS: A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

Ririn Susetyaningsih¹, Wiwik Retno Handayani²

¹Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta
²Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada
¹ririn_s@uny.ac.id, ²wiwikretno@ugm.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to reveal the terms depicting women and how they are represented in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics. The data in this qualitative study were in the form of song lyrics by Sheila on 7 associated with women, collected using a document study, and analyzed using the descriptive interpretative method and semiotic approach by referring to three aspects of meaning by Roland Barthes: denotation meaning, connotation meaning, and myth. The findings show that the terms used to depict women’s representation contain positive and negative connotations, and some term references play a crucial role in portraying the terms used to depict women’s representation. Besides, women are represented differently in the song lyrics; however, in general, they tend to be depicted as creatures bringing the values of beauty, affection, obedience, tenderness, power, wisdom, importance, and comfort, but also passive and weak. Women’s representation in Sheila on 7 song lyrics is in line with the patriarchal society in Indonesia, where women are respected as creatures worthy of esteem who still need protection from men. Since patriarchal gender stereotypes have become a part of the cultural and social environment, the language choice used in the song lyrics proves that the environment influences language.

Keywords: Women Representation; Sheila on 7; Song Lyrics; Semiotic Analysis; Social Study.
INTRODUCTION

Women are often portrayed in public spaces. However, the portrayal of women tends to be very typical, such as bringing beauty and sensuality, holding domestic duties, being loyal and caring, being weak and independent, or even being the sexual object or symbol (Natha, 2017). Those labels bring out stereotypes directed at women, which lead to discrepancies in some aspects of life, such as social, cultural, economic, educational, and so forth.

In Indonesia, women's representation is mostly seen from men’s point of view as a result of the patriarchal paradigm held by society (D. M. Dewi, 2019; Intentilia, 2020; Nurnaningsih, 2023). This social and cultural environment influences how women are seen, including the language choices associated with them.

This article discusses the representation of women in the lyrics of songs by a famous band in Indonesia that originated in Yogyakarta, Sheila on 7. Sheila on 7 is one of the great bands in the country, composed of three men (Eross on guitar, Duta as vocalist, and Adam as bassist). It was formed in 1996 and still maintains its existence and popularity, making this band have cross-generational fans. Until 2023, this band has released 12 albums. One of the additional values of this band is the fact that each member contributes to producing the artwork. Although the songs are mostly written and composed by Eross Candra, other members of the band, such as Akhdiyat Duta Modjo, Muhammad Adam Subarkah, and Saktia Ari Sena (the former guitarist of the band), also contributed to writing some songs. Their songs narrate many things concerning the human journey: friendship, love, and family, and are narrowed to human life, such as values and norms in society, and the song lyrics about women are no exception. An example of the song lyrics concerning women is depicted in the song entitled ‘Untuk Perempuan’ (Dear Women), presented as follows.

Jangan mengejarnya, jangan mencarinya
‘Do not chase him, do not look for him’

dia yang ‘kan menemukanmu, kau mekar di hatinya di hari yang tepat.
‘he will find you, you blossom in his heart in the right day.’

In those first two lines of the song lyrics, the word mekar, which means ‘blossom’, is associated with the growth of flower buds into a better form. The next lyric also depicts how women are portrayed as a kind of flower, while men are portrayed as bumblebees.

tidaklah mawar hampiri kumbang, bukanlah cinta bila kau kejar
‘a rose does not approach a bumblebee, it is not love if you chase it’

The lyrics show a contradictory situation, where women are represented by a flower that is associated with beauty, femininity, and passiveness, while men are represented by a kind of bug that is associated with freedom, masculinity, and activeness. This attribution is relevant to the condition in Indonesian society, where cultural construction has made women less recognized (S. Dewi & Primasti, 2022). In this case, women tend to be seen as beautiful with considerably less ability to move or be active.

Issues of women’s representation have drawn great attention in the last century, especially among feminists. Mohanty (1984) criticizes Western feminism, which sees that women face universal problems; she stands for the belief that women's problems are heterogeneous entities that can differ from one culture to another. She encourages the shift from local, regional, and national feminism to cross-cultural relations. Crenshaw
(1991) introduces the concept of intersectionality, saying that one can experience multiple forms of oppression because of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social class, and even sexual orientation. Beauvoir (2016) expresses that human is born without any specific purpose, so they have to look for their own. However, she realizes that women’s existence is not determined by themselves: it is by men, so men are considered as ‘men’ or ‘the self,’ while women are considered as ‘the second sex’ or ‘the other.’ This differentiation is based on the power they both hold. Beauvoir (2016) then proposes some suggestions to women to build their power by working, becoming intellectual and knowledgeable, being economically independent, and getting involved in creativity and empowerment activities to improve their minds.

The aforementioned feminists have striven for women’s equality and prosperity. However, feminism has broadly developed into more than that. Human civilization has brought improvements in how people interact with each other and how they express their minds or points of view. Thus, women's representation can be seen socially and culturally through many discourses, such as advertisements, films, novels, and songs.

As a form of literary work, songs have become a medium for an artist to entertain himself/herself and deliver, as well as express his/her experience and message to others (Hidayat, 2014). The experiences and points of view in the song are shared by the songwriter and singer through words written in the lyrics (Juwita et al., 2022). Therefore, the words, phrases, or sentences in the song lyrics can be investigated to find out how certain entities are represented.

In revealing the meaning of words, phrases, or sentences in the song lyrics to see the representation of certain entities, a semiotic approach can be involved. Ferdinand de Saussure (1967) in Chandler (2007) introduces the concept of semiotics through the dichotomy of the sign system, which refers to the associative relation between signifier and signified. Following Saussure’s semiology, Barthes (2007) proposes two orders of meaning: denotation (the signifier, the literal meaning, which becomes the first order of meaning) and connotation (the signified, the nonliteral, emotional, and subjective meaning, which becomes the second order of meaning). Connotation also deals with the interaction between a signifier (denotation) and the feelings, emotions, and cultural values held by the users (Riwu & Pujiati, 2018). In the second order of meaning, there is a myth, that depicts the dominant ideology that gives a justification for the values in a certain period of time. Barthes’ map of signs is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Barthes’ map of sign (Barthes, 1977)](image)

The representation of women through song lyrics may vary. Several studies have been conducted related to women's representation in song lyrics. Lisara (2014) focuses on revealing the portrayal of women and gendered messages in Katy Perry’s selected song lyrics viewed from post-feminism perspectives. Her study indicates that women are
portrayed in the highlight of physical appearance, as sexual objects, as having passive behavior, and as being dependent on men. The portrayals are in line with patriarchal society’s ideology. Natha (2017) studies the representation of women stereotypes and patriarchal culture in the music video of “All About That Bass” by Meghan Trainor. Her study addresses the issue of women’s insecurity about their body size, which emerges as a result of the mass media’s image of women’s ideal, slim, and perfect bodies. Natha concludes that women’s representation in the studied music video supports the stereotype about women. Besides, patriarchal culture considers women as subordinate and sexual objects to men. Kurniawati (2021) finds the representation of women’s power in Beyoncé Knowless’ song “Run the World (Girls)” under Paul Ricouer's hermeneutics theory. Her study reveals that black women’s power ideology is infused in the song, as represented by the verbal and visual signs in the song lyrics and music video. The power portrayed in the song is about black women’s independence in economic and educational aspects and their ability to bear children. S. Dewi and Primasti (2022) investigate women's identity that is associated with domestic affairs in popular culture through the song lyrics of “Mendung Tanpo Udan”. Their study reveals that pop culture has positioned women as the second sex after men, as seen by the word choices used in the song lyrics that are less preferable and tend to have negative connotations. Tateanna and Sulistyani (2023) study women’s role in the lyrics of a song entitled “Guys Don’t Read Sylvia Plath”, which contains criticism and disappointment toward the rule and social demands that prohibit women's empowerment. Their study urges the expectation of social acceptance of the gender equality concept to achieve justice.

Those previously conducted studies mostly focused on how women are represented in society in relation to feminism. However, the terms that are chosen to depict women’s representation contain influential signs and meanings, which are also crucial to study. These terms can be used as a frame or even a key concept to interpret Sheila on 7’s point of view in representing women through their songs. Therefore, this study focuses on two objectives: (1) to identify the terms depicting women’s representation, and (2) to reveal how women are represented in the songs’ lyrics.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research employed a qualitative model involving the lyrics of songs associated with women by Sheila on 7 as the data. The data were limited to 35 songs from nine albums found to have reference terms associated with women. The data were collected by a document study, in which the researchers listened to the songs, read the song lyrics, and traced other sources related to the songs. The data were analyzed using an interpretative descriptive method by (1) organizing the data, (2) finding out the terms depicting women’s representation (sign), (3) elaborating and analyzing the song lyrics based on the three aspects of meaning by Roland Barthes: denotation meaning, connotation meaning, and myth meaning (Barthes, 2007), (4) interpreting the meaning of the signs, and (5) drawing synthesis to conclude the research.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In finding out what a song may convey, an analysis of the song’s lyrics can be carried out, especially by looking up the key terms that are used. Thus, in order to reveal how women are represented in their songs, some terms depicting women’s portrayal in Sheila on 7 songs’ lyrics can be identified and discussed to bring out the key concept. The terms are presented in Table 1.
Table 1 shows that 35 songs contain reference terms associated with women in the lyrics. Of those 35 songs, 44 terms are listed to convey women's representation. It is
clear that one song may contain more than one term. Those terms are then categorized into some references to facilitate analysis: interesting objects, women’s names, addressing terms, endearment terms, adjectives, metaphors, and actions. Based on the analysis, the terms used to depict women’s representation can convey positive connotations, negative connotations, or neutral tones. To make it clearer, each term reference is elaborated as follows.

**Addressing terms**

The addressing terms in this research refer to the way the songwriters address women. The choice of addressing terms can be influenced by someone’s social status (Olii, 2021), especially social relationships. In Sheila on 7 song lyrics, some examples of addressing terms are employed to refer to women, such as *kakakku*, *mama*, *bunda* and *kekasih gelapku*.

The term *kakakku* semantically means ‘my elder sister’, so it denotes a term that is used to address a woman who is older than the speaker. Therefore, the term *kakakku* connotes a respectful addressing term that is used to refer to a woman. The term *mama* means ‘mother’. It denotes a term that is used to address a woman who gives birth to the speaker. In Indonesian culture, a mother is generally addressed as *ibu*. The term *ibu* has the same semantic meaning as *mama*, but they both have different senses. While *ibu* is used to refer to a mother in general, *mama* brings a more urban-cultural sense and sounds more modern. It is usually used by children in urban areas to call their mothers. Therefore, the term *mama* connotes an addressing term for an urban-cultured mother with a modern touch. Having a similar semantic meaning with *ibu* and *mama*, the term *bunda* also means ‘mother’. However, the sense that is brought by this term is slightly different. The term *bunda* has a very close sense to the term *ibu*, which brings a common sense of motherly attitudes and wisdom. It is a fact that in Indonesia, the terms *ibu* and *bunda* are often compounded into *Ibunda*, which brings the same sense as the addressing terms *ibu* and *bunda*.

Those addressing terms are known to have positive connotations, so through those terms, women are depicted as having good values. However, as portrayed by the term *kekasih gelapku* which semantically means ‘my mistress’, women are also seen negatively. This term denotatively means a person who has an illegal love affair with someone he/she should not be in a relationship with. Therefore, the connotative meaning of this term in the song lyrics is a woman who is involved in a forbidden love affair with a man she should not date.

**Women’s names**

This category of reference terms that depict women’s representation refers to the use of certain women’s names in the song lyrics. Sheila on 7 uses women’s names quite often in the song, considering that based on Table 1, eight songs contain women’s names in the lyrics. Those names are Rani, Sephia, Niah, Khaylila, Disya, Lia, *ibu* Linda (Mrs. Linda), and Lovely. It is interesting to notice that, by tracing other sources such as the Internet and social media as well as by simple research, some names are derived from the songwriters’ relatives. Khaylila in the song entitled Khaylila’s Song is the name of Eross’ little sister, and Lovely in the song entitled My Lovely is the name of Adam’s daughter. Thus, those songs containing their names are dedicated to those relatives. The mention of women’s names in the song lyrics has a neutral tone since it is used to refer to someone personally and to strengthen the characters of the songs.
Metaphors

A metaphor can be understood as an implicit comparison between two things (Armstrong, 2005). The two different things in metaphors are compared without explicitly showing the terms indicating similarity between them. This study found that some metaphors are employed in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics to depict women’s representation. Some examples of the metaphors used are pendamping hidup, bingkisan Tuhan, and mekar.

The term pendamping hidup which literally means ‘companion of life’ is a metaphor. This metaphoric expression has the denotative meaning of ‘spouse’ because companionship in a lifetime is closely associated with marriage. Therefore, the connotative meaning of the term pendamping hidup is ‘a wife’ because this expression is uttered by the songwriter or the singer who is a man so that the spouse of a man is a wife. In addition, the term bingkisan Tuhan which semantically means ‘God’s gift’ is also a metaphor. It denotes a highly valuable thing from God given to the speaker. Thus, in Sheila on 7’s song lyric, this term connotes a woman’s highly valuable meaning to the speaker. The term mekar which means ‘blossom’ in this case is considered a metaphor because this term is used to refer to an action experienced by a woman. It denotes the formation changing process from a bud to a full-bloom flower. Thus, this metaphor connotes a woman’s development into a better woman, because in this case, the woman is compared to a flower. The term bintang semantically means ‘star’. Referring to the semiology of Barthes (1977), its denotative meaning is a space object that reflects the sun’s light so that it looks shining at night. Due to the thousand kilometers distance between the star and the planet Earth where we can see it, the star looks like a little attractive shining object. It is then connotated to be a cute girl who looks beautiful and attractive. A similar logic applies to the term mawar. It semantically means ‘rose’ to refer to a kind of flower that is beautiful and often used as a symbol of love or affection. It is then associated with women who bring a sense of beauty and affection. The term bunga liar (wildflower) denotatively means a flower that grows without human care in a wild environment and usually can endure extreme weather changes. It is connotatively used to refer to a woman who grows beautifully and strongly defeats any threats. Those aforementioned metaphors that are used in the song lyrics are formed as metaphors with good meaning, thus, they bring positive connotations to women’s representation in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics.

Endearment terms

The endearment terms are used to show certain feelings like tenderness, love, or affection (Landmann, 2022). Since the main goal is expressing affection, endearment terms have positive connotations. Some examples of endearment terms found in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics are kekasih, sayang, and ‘my dear’.

The term kekasih semantically means ‘lover’. It denotes someone who loves someone else and is usually referred to as having reciprocal feelings. Thus, in Sheila on 7’s songs, kekasih connotes a woman who loves and is loved by the speaker. The term sayang means ‘darling’. It denotes a person we are fond of. In the songs, this term connotes a woman that the speaker (in this case, the singer) is fond of. The term ‘my dear’ is found in the song entitled Terjemah yang Lain. The song lyrics are written in a mix of Indonesian and English, so the term ‘my dear’ is used as it is. It denotes a person that the speaker loves or is really fond of. Thus, in the song, it connotates the beloved person of the speaker.
Interesting objects

Interesting objects are the most common category of reference for terms depicting women's representation in the song’s lyrics. In this case, interesting objects are seen as certain objects that attract the songwriters to use them as references associated with women in the song lyrics. The references can be in the form of living things, such as humans and plants, or inanimate objects, such as space objects and abstract concepts. Those interesting objects are constructed of nouns or noun phrases. Some examples of interesting objects used to depict women’s representation in the song’s lyrics are found in the terms alasanku untuk dewasa, and kasih tak terungkap.

The abstract concept alasanku untuk dewasa which semantically means ‘my reason to be mature’ refers to a concept of someone’s reason to grow to be a man with a better attitude and mindset as signs of maturity. Thus, in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics, this term is used to refer to a woman who becomes a source of power and a reason for a man to try to grow better than who he was.

The aforementioned term associated with women is known to have positive connotations, which means that through the term, women are depicted as having a good value. However, in the song lyrics, women are also depicted as having a bad value, as portrayed by the term kasih tak terungkap which semantically means ‘unrevealed love’. This term denotatively means the love or affective feeling that is hidden from others’ sight and knowledge. Therefore, the connotative meaning of this term in the song lyrics is a woman who is hidden and kept out of other people’s sight and knowledge because it may cause trouble if he is caught having a relationship with the woman.

Adjectives

The adjectives that are used as the terms depicting women’s representation found in Sheila on 7’s song lyrics are adjectives that contain good meanings, namely cantik, mungil, and terhebat. Therefore, those terms in this category of reference have positive connotations.

The term cantik literally means ‘beautiful’. It denotes the value of being lovely and good-looking. In the songs by Sheila on 7, this term connotes a woman’s value of being lovely and attractive to see. Besides, the term mungil which means ‘cute’ refers to the sense of being little and sweet. Therefore, it connotes a woman’s value of being small in size but attractively sweet. The term terhebat semantically means ‘the greatest’ and denotes a superlative degree of being great or good at something. Thus, the term terhebat connotes a woman’s value as being the person who is best or greatest at something compared to others.

As text, song lyrics cannot be separated from context. The role of context is very crucial in understanding the point of view placed by an author to see certain phenomena (Riyanto, 2018). Therefore, in order to see how Sheila on 7 represents women through their songs’ lyrics, analysis was conducted on those 35 songs that are closely associated with women. The analysis was carried out by implementing the semiology of Barthes (1977) to find out the denotation meaning, connotation meaning, and myth that are brought by each song. Then, synthesis is applied in order to see how women are represented by Sheila on 7 as a product of social culture. Since presenting all of the song lyrics’ analysis would be exaggerated, an example of the analysis of a song is presented in Table 2.
Table 2. Analysis of Roland Barthes’ semiology in *Untuk Perempuan* song lyrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lyrics</th>
<th>Denotation</th>
<th>Connotation</th>
<th>Myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jangan mengejarnya, jangan mencarinya</td>
<td>Prohibition to chase and search a man</td>
<td>A woman is not supposed to chase after a man</td>
<td>When it comes to love and relationship, it is the man who should come approaching the woman. A woman is valuable so she deserves all efforts a man can do to be with the woman he is in love with, and the woman is supposed to wait patiently for him to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dia yang ‘kan menemukanmu, kau mekar di hatinya di hari yang tepat</td>
<td>The man will find the woman who will fill his heart at the right time</td>
<td>The woman is supposed to wait for the man who will find her to be his spouse at the right moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jangan mengejarku, jangan mencariku</td>
<td>Prohibition for the woman to chase and search the man</td>
<td>The woman is not supposed to chase after the man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aku yang ‘kan menemukanmu, kau mekar di hatiku di hari yang tepat</td>
<td>The man will find the woman who will fill his heart at the right time</td>
<td>The woman is supposed to wait for the man who will find her to be his spouse at the right moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidaklah mawar hampiri kumbang, bukanlah cinta bila kau kejar</td>
<td>A flower cannot move to approach the bumblebee, so it is not love if it requires the woman to chase after the man</td>
<td>The woman should passively wait for a man to come and love her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenanglah, tenang, dia ‘kan datang dan memungutimu ke hatunya yang terdalam</td>
<td>A suggestion to be calm and an assurance that the man will come and put the woman inside his heart</td>
<td>The woman should be patient for the man will surely come and give very special treats for her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahkan dia tak ‘kan bertahan tanpa</td>
<td>The man even cannot live without the woman</td>
<td>The woman will become the most important thing that the man cannot live without</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibukkan harimu, jangan pikirkanmu</td>
<td>A suggestion for the woman to mind her business and not to think about the man</td>
<td>The woman should seize her time by doing meaningful things and not think about other things that might make her busy in vain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takdir yang ‘kan menuntunku pulang kepadamu di hari yang tepat</td>
<td>The faith will lead the man to see the woman at the right moment</td>
<td>The man and the woman will be united by God’s faith one day at the right moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenanglah tenang, aku ‘kan datang dan memungatimu ke hatiku yang terdalam</td>
<td>A suggestion from the man to the woman to be calm and an assurance that he will come and put her inside his heart</td>
<td>The man assures the woman that he will surely come to give her special treats and she should be patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahkan ku tak ‘kan bertahan tanpa</td>
<td>The man assures the woman that he cannot live without her</td>
<td>The man assures the woman that she will become the most important thing that he cannot live without</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aku yang ‘kan datang</td>
<td>The man will come</td>
<td>The man assures her that it is him who will come approaching her, not vice versa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the lyrics of *Untuk Perempuan* song contain the songwriter’s message for women neither to be in a rush nor chase after men when it comes to a relationship. Thus, the song represents a woman as a valuable creature that deserves men’s efforts.

From the analysis conducted on all 35 songs as the research data, and considering the terms used as references to depict women’s representation, it can be inferred that Sheila on 7 tends to represent women as having a high value and associated with beauty.
Women’s Representation in Sheila on 7 Song Lyrics: A Social Semiotic Analysis
(Ririn Susetyaningsih, Wiwik Retno Handayani)

affection, obedience, tenderness, power, wisdom, importance, and comfort. Although women are also represented negatively in a song entitled ‘Sephia’, that is, as being a mistress that brings a low sense of social value, however, the positive representation of women still dominates the songs.

The value of beauty can be seen in the lyrics of several songs such as *Perhatikan Rani*, *Canggung*, Khaylila’s Song, *Hingga Ujung Waktu, Untuk Perempuan*, and also by considering the use of some terms representing beauty (*cantik* ‘beautiful’, *mawar* ‘rose’, etc.). The value of affection can be seen in the lyrics of the songs entitled *Percayakan Padaku*, *Takkan Pernah Menyesal, Buat Aku Tersenyum*, *Bertahan di Sana*, and so forth, and by considering several terms associated with endearment such as *kekasih* ‘lover’, *sayang* ‘darling’, *pujaan hatiku* ‘my crush’, my dear, etc. The value of obedience can be seen by several songs such as *Temani Aku, Hingga Ujung Waktu, Percayakan Padaku, Bertahan di Sana, Generasi Patah Hati*, and so on, and by considering several terms such as *peri kecilku* ‘my little fairy’, *istriku* ‘my wife’, *pendampingku* ‘my companion’, etc. Those songs and terms can also reflect women’s values of tenderness and comfort. Women’s power can be seen through several songs such as *Yang Terlewatkan*, Lia Lia, and so forth, as well as by considering some terms such as *terhebat* ‘the greatest’, *bunga liar* ‘wild flower’, etc. Women’s wisdom can be seen by investigating songs such as *Lihat Dengar Rasakan, Ibu Linda*, and so on or by considering several terms such as *bunda* ‘mother’, *ibu Linda* ‘Mrs. Linda’, and so forth. The value of women’s importance can also be seen in the songs entitled *Segalanya, Radio, Bingkisan Tuhan*, and so forth, and by considering several terms such as *segalanya* ‘everything’ and *bingkisan Tuhan* ‘God’s gift’.

The depiction of women’s values of beauty, affection, obedience, tenderness, power, wisdom, importance, as well as comfort through Sheila on 7’s song lyrics, is also followed by additional embedded values that come together with and are inseparable from those positive values. What lies beyond it is the fact that those positive values that are held by women tend to be seen as labels given by men. Men tend to advise on how women should act or behave or describe women as beautifully powerful by comparing them with flowers or stars and other interesting objects as if they have the power to do that. In this point of view, women’s power is seen to come together with fragility, so women are considered to be powerful and weak at the same time, making men need to protect them.

Women and their identities are usually placed in contradictory positions; being adored on one side but suppressed on the other (Riyanto, 2018). Such dualism, together with the terms and language used to depict it can be influenced by Indonesian society’s cultural environment. Song (2016) argues that culture and thought can influence language. Thus, it can be inferred that language is a reflection of the cultural and social environment.

Even though there are various kinship systems in Indonesia, such as the matrilineal system in Minangkabau, the bilateral system throughout Indonesia (especially Java), and the patrilineal system like in Bali and Batak (Nurmila, 2018), the patriarchal gender stereotype has been deeply rooted in society. The patriarchal ideology held by Indonesian society makes the measurement of women’s representation values justified by men’s points of view (Nurmaningsih, 2023). This condition builds the cultural and social environment to be men-oriented, so that it influences many aspects of society, including language choice.

**CONCLUSION**

From the research findings, it is concluded that (1) the terms used to depict women’s representation can contain positive and negative connotations. Several
references are involved to categorize terms used to depict women’s representation in 
Sheila on 7’s song lyrics. Those references are beneficial to convey the key terms for 
understanding the song lyrics portraying women and to see how they are represented in 
the songs. (2) The song lyrics portray women in a variety of ways, whether in a positive 
or negative light. Generally, they portray women as beings who embody virtues such as 
beauty, affection, obedience, tenderness, power, wisdom, importance, and comfort, but 
also as passive and weak. The representation of women in Sheila on 7 song lyrics is in 
line with the patriarchal paradigm held by Indonesian society, in which women are 
respected as creatures worthy of esteem who still, need protection from men. Therefore, 
the terms and language choices used in the song lyrics to depict women’s representation 
demonstrate how the environment influences language, as patriarchal gender stereotypes 
have become deeply ingrained in the cultural and social milieu.

REFERENCES
Cromwell Press.


tanda, simbol, dan representasi* (Y. Iriantara & D. L. C. Subandy (eds.); I. 
Mahyuddin (trans.)). Jalasutra.


https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039


https://doi.org/10.33366/jkn.v4i1.105

*EJournal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2(1), 243–258.

Intentilia, A. A. M. (2020). Analyzing patriarchy, political participation, and active 
https://doi.org/10.24198/intermestic.v5n1.2

Makna motivasi dalam lagu Diri dari Tulus (Analisis semiotika Ferdinan De 
https://doi.org/10.36761/kagangakomunika.v4i1.1918

Kurniawati, N. (2021). Representation of women power in Beyoncé Knowless’ song 
“Run The World (Girls).” *E-Structural*, 4(01), 68–79. 
https://doi.org/10.33633/es.v4i01.4747

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078421000249

2(2), 61–68.

Women’s Representation in Sheila on 7 Song Lyrics: A Social Semiotic Analysis
(Ririn Susetyaningsih, Wiwik Retno Handayani)