

Victim or Villain? A Study of Deconstruction in Tiara Andini's 'Maafkan Aku'

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ABSTRACT

This study applies deconstruction, a key theory in postcolonial studies, to analyze and reinterpret the meaning within Tiara Andini's popular Indonesian song, *Maafkan Aku*. By examining both the literal meaning and its deconstruction, the research aims to uncover hidden layers of meaning in the song's lyrics. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data from the lyrics are analyzed through textual analysis and the concept of deconstruction. The analysis first identifies binary oppositions in the lyrics and then challenges these oppositions to reveal new interpretations. Findings highlight the contrast between themes of penitence (as the song's explicit meaning) and expectation (as its underlying meaning). The lyrics deconstruct the notion of penitence as a "victim" with an opposing sense of expectation as a "villain." This study offers a nuanced exploration of how deconstruction unveils alternative interpretations, contributing to a broader understanding of how popular culture uses language to express complex emotional and relational dynamics.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature and culture share a close connection as the study of literary works, including poems, provides a lens to explore aspects of cultural diversity (Alfisuma et al, 2023). When a poem is adapted into a song, it transforms, acquiring a new existence as a sung composition (Helsing, 2015). A crucial aspect of the interplay between song and poetry lies in how composers respond to the intrinsic sounds, or phonemes, of words (Rodgers, 2017). Throughout history, poetry has been an integral part of the oral tradition, often sung with authentic musical melodies. Professional composers can set poems into music or songs. In contemporary discussions on poetry, there is a consistent emphasis on the musical elements of poems, highlighting a strong correlation between poetry and music. Despite not being originally crafted for singing, these poems often exude qualities reminiscent of songs. This association between written poetry and song is not a casual or vague comparison but a distinct perception (Menninghaus et al., 2018).

YouTube has emerged as a prominent platform for the dissemination and promotion of songs globally. In Indonesia, pop songs, integral to popular culture, have notably become one of the most favoured music genres. The popularity of pop songs experienced a decline before 2020, overshadowed by the dominance of contemporary *dangdut* or *dangdut koplo* genres. However, with the release of a pop song by the winner of Indonesian Idol, a prominent music competition in Indonesia, pop songs regained traction, competing successfully with other Indonesian music genres. Consequently, the pop music genre has claimed top positions on YouTube. Presently, the popularity of pop songs in Indonesia has reached new heights through extensive visibility on YouTube, making them a focal point in this study.

The song "*Maafkan Aku*," performed by Tiara Andini, was written and composed by the renowned music composer Yovie Widianto. Released in mid-June 2020, the song quickly gained immense popularity, topping digital platforms in Indonesia. Upon its release, the music video trended as the top video on YouTube (Dinisari, 2020). Within the first week, the song garnered 10 million views, further solidifying its success. "*Maafkan Aku*" also served as the soundtrack for a

television soap opera on one of Indonesia's leading TV stations in 2020 (antv-official,2020). The song's widespread appeal extended beyond Indonesia, earning accolades both nationally and internationally. "*Maafkan Aku*" received several awards, including Best Composer of the Year and Best New Asian Artist Indonesia at the 2020 MAMA Awards (Puspita & Setuningsih, 2020). Tiara Andini was also honoured at the YouTube Partner Summit 2020, where her single stayed on the YouTube trending chart for an impressive 28 consecutive weeks (Starhits. Id. (2020). With nearly 100 million views on YouTube, "*Maafkan Aku*" is considered one of the most beloved Indonesian pop songs globally, particularly during its release year in 2020 (Andini, 2020). This study aims to delve into the deeper meaning of the emotionally charged lyrics of this pop song using deconstruction theory.

Deconstruction theory, commonly employed in the analysis of literary works like novels, can also be effectively utilized in examining other literary genres, such as poems or poetry. Songs, regarded as literary works containing lyrics, fall within the poetry genre (Supandi, 2015). Researchers like Saifudin (2012), Khofifah (2019), Septiana (2021), Faoziah, Mulyani, and Herdiana (2019) have explored the applicability of deconstruction theory in various contexts. In this study, deconstruction theory is employed to dissect the underlying ideas in the song lyrics of "*Maafkan Aku*" by Tiara Andini, unveiling the woman's expression of regret and delving into the concept behind her penitence. Following Derrida's perspective (as cited in Tyson), language is viewed as an unreliable tool for communication due to the cultural nuances embedded within it. Therefore, by applying deconstruction theory, this analysis scrutinizes the uncertainty of the text or the meaning of the lyrics, revealing the woman as a victim of a particular condition. Deconstruction, in line with Derrida's philosophy, prompts readers to interrogate the ambiguity of sentences, especially in the initial stages of the text (2015: 235, 236).

The deconstruction of song lyrics has been explored in previous studies, such as Alexander Angga Pramudya's article titled '*The Meaning of Freddie Mercury's Bohemian Rhapsody: A Study of Deconstruction*,' where the literal and deeper meanings of the song's lyrics are investigated (Pramudya, 2018). Additionally, Alifsuma et al., (2021) conducted research on deconstruction within the dangdut genre, revealing that a woman's perception of herself as beautiful is deconstructed to uncover themes of vulnerability and dependence on a man. Previous studies focus on different song genres, that as dangdut and evergreen songs. This study is noteworthy for being among the few that discuss deconstruction in song genres, and the analysis of deconstruction in Pop Songs serves as a continuation of previous research on deconstruction in Indonesian song lyrics This research employs deconstruction theory to investigate the instability of meaning in the pop song lyrics of '*Maafkan Aku*' by Tiara Andini. The study traces the instability of meaning through the identification of binary oppositions within the text, utilizing these oppositions as a tool to deconstruct the central themes and generate new meanings (Massoudi, 2017). In essence, the focus is on analyzing how binary oppositions operate in the lyrics of Tiara Andini's '*Maafkan Aku*' and how they are subjected to questioning. This questioning arises as the binary oppositions within the song lyrics deconstruct the primary theme, with the ultimate aim of creating a new meaning that diverges from the existing interpretation of the lyrics.

By employing deconstruction as a tool, this research that studies pop song lyrics provides a nuanced exploration of the song's meanings, revealing hidden or alternative interpretations within the text. This approach contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, in the context of popular culture, can convey intricate emotional and relational dynamics. The broader implications of this research extend to the field of cultural studies, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of language use in popular music. This study not only enriches our understanding of this particular song but also contributes methodologically to how researchers can analyze and interpret texts in popular culture. Besides that, in the field of education, this study may elevate teachers' knowledge of songs because songs are increasingly utilized as a tool for English instruction, as they offer students the opportunity to grasp various aspects of the language, including vocabulary. Nonetheless, at times, incorporating songs into the classroom setting may only scratch the surface of deeper discussions. Therefore, by knowing how to analyse the deeper meaning of the song, the class discussion on the language of the song will be challenging (Bram et al., 2019).

METHODS

To examine the centre of the text, the word "*maafkan aku*"/'forgive me', whether it is used to express penitence or expectance, this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach using the step of analysing deconstruction exposed by

Louis Tyson in His Book 'Critical Theory Today'. This study describes and analyzes the collected data from the song lyrics (Alfisuma & Wahyuningsih, 2021). Data were obtained by reading carefully and then noting the song lyrics that reflect the binary opposition 'penitence and expectance' by Tiara Andini entitled "*Maafkan Aku*". Data that were collected for this research consist of textual data and ethnographic data.

According to Derrida as cited in Tyson, binary oppositions are also ranked. It means that there is a powerful or superior and there is less superior one in a binary. Thus, by discovering the binary opposition in a context (such as literary works) and by defining which of the members of the binary is powerful or privileged, people can find something about the idea or concept that is popularized by the construction. The theory of deconstruction tries to find out the gap in the binary opposition found in a text in which the privileged idea is considered as the central theme of a text then its contradictory is considered as the less privileged. Furthermore, the less privileged theme is carried into focus and is also regarded as the main theme. Along these lines, deconstructing poetry concerns presenting how the idea in binary opposition is overlapped, and the focus of deconstruction is to question the opposing idea in the binary opposition (Tyson, 2015, p. 240). In other words, the purpose of deconstructing a literary text is to see what the text can show us about the ideologies of which it is constructed by using new criticism methods or close reading

This study focuses on analyzing how binary opposition is in the text by analyzing the data 'song lyrics' and figuring out the surface meaning of the song to reconstruct the meaning of the song. Steps of analyzing the data employ the concept of deconstructing a literary work especially poem or song lyrics according to Louis Tyson (2015). In his book '*Critical Theory Today*', Tyson explains the steps to deconstruct poems or song lyrics. They are: First, a close reading of the text. Close reading is used to reveal the main theme and its binary opposition. Second, deconstruct the main theme of the lyrics with the binary opposition that is found in the first step. This is the act of questioning the main theme, which is considered as the privileged, and the binary opposition which is less privileged. Third, underlining the data 'song lyrics' that oppose the existing main idea. This is what the close reading works to support the new theme, writers should find the evidence that supports the new theme. Specifically, the analysis presents how the lyrics deconstruct the existing theme. The last step, finding out the new idea of the text. This is to outline the new ideology that is created by the act of deconstruction (Tyson, 2015, p. 249)

RESULTS

In line with Louis Tyson's (2015) approach to dissecting song lyrics, the initial stage involves identifying the binary opposition as the central theme. In Tiara Andini's "*Maafkan Aku*," the binary opposition lies in the portrayal of a woman's Penitence and Expectance.

Woman's Penitence Represented in Tiara Andini's *Maafkan Aku*

The representation of women's repentance in Tiara Andini's '*Maafkan Aku*' is evident through both the song's title, '*Maafkan Aku*' / forgive me, and the initial lyrics.

'Aku t'lah tahu kita memang tak mungkin' / I already know we are **impossible** be the one'
'Aku t'lah tahu hati ini harus menghindar' / I already know this heart must **go**'
'Maafkan aku' / forgive me (Tiara Andini, 2020)

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the phrase '*maafkan aku*' or 'forgive me' is used before you ask or say something that might seem rude (Cambridge University Press. (n.d). Additionally, according to KBBI, '*maafkan aku*' is *ungkapan permintaan ampun atau penyesalan/* an expression conveying a request for forgiveness or a sense of regret (Badan Pusat Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (n.d)). The usage of this phrase as both the title of the song and in the closing line of the first stanza suggests that the woman, portrayed as the singer, intends to apologize for an action perceived as undesirable or wrong.

Moreover, the term '*tak mungkin*' / 'impossible' is prominently featured in the lyrics, as seen in the full line "*Aku t'lah tahu kita memang tak mungkin,*" and the phrase '*harus menghindar*' is reiterated throughout the entire song. According to KBBI, '*tak mungkin*' translates to '*mustahil*' (Badan Pusat Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (n.d)) or signifies

something impossible. In the Cambridge Dictionary, '*tak mungkin*' or 'impossible' is defined as a situation that is extremely challenging to handle or resolve. (Cambridge University Press. (n.d).

Furthermore, '*menghindar*'/'go,' as defined by KBBI, means *pergi menjauhkan diri dari; mengelak; menyingkir; menyisi*/ to move away from, avoid, or distance oneself (Badan Pusat Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, (n.d.). Meanwhile, according to Cambridge '*menghindar*'/'go' involves staying away from someone or something (Cambridge University Press. (n.d). Consequently, it can be inferred that the woman or the speaker in this song comprehends that the ongoing relationship must cease due to its forbidden nature, acknowledging the impossibility of its continuation.

Later, in the second stanza of the song, there are two lyrics '*kau harus dengannya*'/'You must be with her' which represent a woman's penitence. Moving on to the second stanza of the song, two significant lyrics, '*luka*'/'hurt' and '*kau harus dengannya*'/'you must be with her', symbolize the woman's penitence.

Senyuman itu / that smile
Hanyalah menunda luka / Just delay **the hurt**
Yang tak pernah kuduga / Which I never expected
Dan bila akhirnya / And when finally
***Kau harus dengannya* / You must be with her**
Mengapa kau dekati aku / Why are you approaching me? (Andini, 2020)

As per the Cambridge Dictionary, '*Luka*'/'hurt' is a verb that denotes an action causing emotional pain to someone (Cambridge University Press. (n.d). Meanwhile, according to KBBI, '*luka*' is a noun encompassing humiliation, loss, injury, damage, error, and injustice (Badan Pusat Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (n.d)). This definition of '*luka*' suggests that the speaker believes the happiness she experienced was merely an illusion, not resulting in injustice, humiliation, guilt, or loss for the involved parties.

Furthermore, the lyrics '*Kau harus dengannya*'/'You should be with her' convey that the speaker acknowledges the necessity of separation, recognizing that the partner must return to their spouse. These lyrics serve as the speaker's expression of penitence, indicating a sense of guilt for engaging in an illicit relationship that was not fully understood beforehand.

In summary, the portrayal of a woman's penitence in Tiara Andini's '*Maafkan Aku*'/'Forgive Me' song lyrics is evident through phrases like '*aku tlah tahu kita memang tak mungkin*'/'I have known that we are truly impossible, '*aku tlah tahu hati ini harus menghindar*'/'I have known that this heart must avoid, '*luka*'/'hurt, and '*kau harus dengannya*'/'you should be with her'. These lyrics convey the woman's intention to reveal the impossibility of the relationship. The speaker perceives herself as a victim in this situation and expresses a desire to terminate such a relationship.

Women's Expectance Represented in Tiara Andini's *Maafkan Aku*

The representation of a woman's expectation in Tiara Andini's '*Maafkan Aku*,' as an opposing concept to the theme of penitence, is substantiated by the lyrics of the song that interrogate the relationship between the speaker and her partner. Furthermore, the notion of expectation is reinforced by lyrics that express a sense of hope.

Tapi mengapa kita selalu bertemu? / **But** why do we always meet?
Namun kenyataan ku tak bisa / **Yet** the reality I cannot
Mengapa kau dekati aku? / **Why** do you approach me?
Bila memang hatimu untuk aku / **If** indeed your heart is for me
Salahkah ku berharap / **Is it wrong** for me to hope
Kalau kau memilih diriku / **That you choose** me? (Andini, 2020)

According to the lyrics of the song, '*tapi*'/'but', '*namun*'/'yet', and '*mengapa*'/'why' are conjunctions serving to link opposing ideas. Conjunctions are linguistic elements that facilitate the connection of words or sentences within a text. Within this context, these conjunctions specifically function as oppositional connectors. Contrastive conjunctions link

two elements of a sentence, presenting a condition, event, or action in the first part and expressing its opposite or contradiction in the second part (Chaer, 2015, as cited in Widuri, J. P., Suparno, S., & Susilowati, N. E., 2021).

From the analysis of the song lyrics, it appears that the speaker raises questions about the relationship through the use of contrasting conjunctions like *'tapi'* / 'but', *'namun'* / 'yet', and *'mengapa'* / 'why'. Despite expressing opposing sentiments in previous lyrics, the speaker seems to harbour hope for the continuation of the relationship. The line *'Tapi mengapa kita selalu bertemu?'* / 'But why do we always meet?' suggests that the recurrent meetings indicate a reluctance to acknowledge that the relationship is wrong.

Additionally, the lyrics *'Namun kenyataan ku tak bisa'* / 'Yet the reality I cannot' imply that the speaker attempts to resist the reality of ending the affair. The concluding lyrics, *'Mengapa kau dekati aku?'* / 'Why do you approach me?' and *'Bila memang hatimu untuk aku'* / 'If indeed your heart is for me', *'Salahkah ku berharap'* / 'Is it wrong for me to hope', *'Kalau kau memilih diriku,'* / 'That you choose me?' convey a sense of expectation. In these lines, the speaker questions why the partner is approaching her if their hearts are meant for each other, expressing hope and questioning the possibility of being chosen despite challenging circumstances. This interpretation suggests that the speaker may be viewed as someone with a villainous role, as she anticipates the continuation of the relationship and does not genuinely wish to end it. The combination of love and the hope to avoid separation compels the speaker to intend to persist in the affair.

In conclusion, the song lyrics reveal a binary opposition between the themes of penitence, portraying the speaker as a 'victim,' and expectance, casting the speaker as a 'villain.' This contrasting idea emerges as a secondary theme, opposing the primary theme of penitence, as evidenced by lyrics expressing the speaker's hope to continue the affair. The exploration of this opposition begins with the use of contrasting conjunctions such as *'tapi'* / 'but', *'namun'* / 'yet', and *'mengapa'* / 'why' and extends to lyrics presenting conditional sentences like *'bila'* / 'if,' expressing a willingness to pursue the relationship.

Deconstruct the Idea of Women's Penitance in Tiara Andini's *Maafkan Aku*

According to Tyson (2015), once the binary oppositions in the song lyrics have been identified, the next step in deconstructing the lyrics involves breaking down the main theme along with its binary opposition. This process includes highlighting the specific data within the song lyrics that contradict the established theme.

The initial interpretation of the song, as inferred from its title, revolves around the theme of 'penitence.' This suggests that the song is crafted to articulate a woman's remorse for engaging in a relationship with a man who already has a partner. However, this central theme is challenged by an alternative idea that surfaces through the contrasting lyrics. There seems to be a hidden message, as the use of the phrase *'maafkan aku'* / 'forgive me' differs from the primary meaning of the song. By employing *'maafkan aku'* as a linguistic strategy, the speaker may intend to either diplomatically navigate the situation or express an expectancy to continue the affair with the man. This analysis will delve into and deconstruct the binary opposition by highlighting the contrasting lyrics.

Aku t'lah tahu kita memang tak mungkin / I already know we are **impossible** be the one'
Tapi mengapa kita selalu bertemu? / But why do we always meet?
Aku t'lah tahu hati ini harus menghindar / I already know this heart must **go**
Namun kenyataan ku tak bias/ Yet the reality I cannot
Maafkan aku terlanjur mencinta/ I am sorry I already love you (Andini, 2020)

The deconstruction analysis prompts the question, "Does this song truly embody a theme of regret?" While the woman ostensibly justifies her actions or pursues the affair, the expression of regret, or 'penitence,' is ostensibly conveyed through the lyrics "*Aku t'lah tahu kita memang tak mungkin*" / 'I already know we are **impossible to be the one**.'" This implies a sense of regret on the part of the woman.

However, the subsequent lyrics, are introduced by the contrasting conjunction '*tapi*,'/ 'but' as in "*Tapi mengapa kita selalu bertemu?*" / '**But** why do we always meet?' cast doubt on the sincerity of the regret expressed in the preceding lines. The question posed in these lyrics challenges the notion of regret, suggesting that there may be conflicting sentiments at play. As a result, the expression of guilt initially suggested by "*Aku t'lah tahu kita memang tak mungkin*" / 'I already know we are **impossible to** be the one' is not fully supported by the subsequent lyrics, particularly "*Tapi mengapa kita selalu bertemu.*" / '**But** why do we always meet?'.

The same pattern continues in the subsequent lyrics, such as '*Aku t'lah tahu hati ini harus menghindar*' / 'I already know this heart must **go**'. As per the explanation of the binary opposition, emphasizing the idea of penitence, these lyrics suggest that the speaker acknowledges the impropriety of the affair and the need to end it. However, the subsequent lyrics introduce a sense of doubt regarding the expression of regret. The appearance of the contrasting conjunction '*namun*'/ 'yet' in the line '*Namun kenyataan ku tak bisa*'/ '**Yet** the reality I cannot' implies that the assertion of regret is being challenged. This suggests that the speaker may not genuinely feel regretful.

Finally, the concluding lyrics of the first stanza, '*Maafkan aku terlanjur mencinta*,' / 'I am sorry I already love you' further reinforce the idea of expectance. Here, the speaker seeks forgiveness, acknowledging that she has already fallen in love. This reinforces the notion that the speaker leans more towards an expectation of understanding and forgiveness rather than a sincere expression of regret. The analysis of the deconstruction in the second paragraph is shown by the inconsistency in these song lyrics.

Senyuman itu / that smile
Hanyalah menunda luka / Just delay **the hurt**
Yang tak pernah kuduga / Which I never expected
Dan bila akhirnya / And when finally
Kau harus dengannya / **You must be with her**
Mengapa kau dekati aku / **Why are you approaching me?** (Andini, 2020)

In the analysis of these lyrics, the term '*senyuman*' in the first line of this stanza conveys a positive meaning, suggesting a feeling of love or happiness. However, this positive sentiment is contradicted by the subsequent term '*luka*,' which introduces a negative element. The last two lines of the second stanza contribute to an inconsistent meaning, hinting at the idea that the man enjoys engaging in affairs with multiple women. Consequently, it can be inferred that the speaker perceives herself as a victim of the man's actions. The emotional contrast between positive and negative terms, coupled with the suggestion of infidelity, paints a picture of the speaker feeling victimized in the relationship.

Kau membuat semuanya indah / You make everything **beautiful**
Seolah takkan terpisah / As if it would never **separate**
Salahkah ku berharap / Am I wrong **to hope?**
Kalau kau memilih diriku / if **you choose me**
Ternyata hati tak sanggup melupa / **Turns out my heart can't forget** (Andini, 2020)

The formula continues in the first and second lines of the next stanza. The term '*indah*'/ 'beautiful' expressing something positive, contrasts with the term '*terpisah*' / 'separate' in the second line, introducing a sense of separation. This once again highlights an inconsistency in meaning, suggesting a lack of regret. The juxtaposition of positive and negative terms indicates a complex emotional landscape within the lyrics, where the speaker seems to grapple with conflicting feelings and experiences in the relationship.

DISCUSSION

The repetition of the formula helps the writers to reveal the hidden meaning of the song, from the expression of penitence to the expression of expectance. This is also supported by the research conducted by Alifsuma and Mirotin (2021) which states that the concept of truth often encompasses multifaceted definitions. Deconstruction theory unravels the concealed messages embedded in the song "Lagi Syantik." On the surface, the song conveys a positive portrayal of a woman characterized by beauty, confidence, and strength. Through the application of deconstruction's binary opposition in

textual analysis, the hidden significance of the song becomes evident. The lyrics reveal the vulnerability of a woman, manifested in her continual efforts to seek acknowledgement from a man.

In this song '*Maafkan Aku* by Tiara Andini' the repetition of the formula which contradicts the positive and negative meaning helps the study to conclude that this song is not expressing true regret. The lyrics "*Salahkah ku berharap kalau kau memilih diriku*" / "Am I wrong if I hope you choose me" suggest that the woman is giving the man the opportunity to be unfaithful to his partner. This raises a question about the sincerity of regret, as the actions that supposedly lead to regret are not terminated. This indicates that the woman may not be the victim in this situation, but rather, she is the one providing the opportunity for infidelity.

The assertion that the woman is not the victim but may engage in verbal abuse is an interpretation based on the lyrics. It underscores the complexity of the relationship dynamics portrayed in the song, where roles and emotions appear to be fluid and subject to interpretation. The analysis suggests that the woman might have a more active role in the situation than initially implied, challenging the perception of her as a mere victim. This analysis of the deconstruction of a song that has ambiguity in meaning is also supported by an analysis of deconstruction conducted by Khurshid, R., & Farid, A. (2023). In the analysis, the lyrics of '*Look What You Made Me to Do*' Through deconstructive techniques like repetition and intertextuality, Swift deliberately introduces instability and ambiguity, prompting listeners to scrutinize their assumptions and engage in critical thinking about the workings of power in society. This intricate and layered song challenges conventional notions of power, agency, and identity.

In conclusion, while the song initially appears to convey regret for engaging in a love affair, a deeper analysis of the lyrics reveals a more complex dynamic. The woman in the song is aware that the man she loves already has a partner, yet she allows the affair to persist. The use of the word '*maaf*' / 'forgive' in this context emphasizes that the woman, who permits the ongoing relationship, is expressing regret for her actions. It suggests a nuanced perspective where the woman acknowledges her role in the affair, highlighting the complexity of emotions and decisions within the relationship. Besides that, according to Susanto & Handayani (2021), the hidden meanings are brought to light through the words, phrases, and sentences within the lyrics. The significance of the language or frequently used words by songwriters serves as a means to convey and express their intentions.

'*Maafkan Aku*' As a 'Verbal Abuse'

The final step in deconstructing the song lyrics involves identifying any new ideas within the text. This entails examining the song for any emerging themes, perspectives, or ideologies that may not have been immediately evident. By scrutinizing the lyrics for additional layers of meaning or shifts in narrative, a more comprehensive understanding of the song's message could be gained. This idea is supported by the previous research conducted by Romadlani, Susylowati, and Alfisuma (2023) who stated that identifying the linguistic aspect of a spoken language may reveal the reason behind the motives of the deconstructive language.

The expression '*maafkan aku*' / 'forgive me' literally or according to the locution is the speaker apologizes to the speech partner. Apologizing is a universally recognized and culturally embedded behaviour. When someone expresses remorse using "*maafkan aku*," it goes beyond mere words; it carries the weight of acknowledging a mistake and seeking forgiveness. Moreover, the effectiveness of an apology lies in its sincerity. A meaningful apology involves the apologizer recognizing their wrongdoing, directing the apology to the affected party, and often, making a commitment not to repeat the same mistake. This aligns with social and moral norms, making the act of seeking forgiveness a socially acceptable and morally correct behaviour across various languages and cultures.

The insincere use of apologies aligns with the idea of verbal abuse or linguistic abuse. When phrases like "forgive me" or 'I'm sorry' are employed without genuine remorse or to deceive, it can be considered a form of verbal abuse. This perspective is supported by the notion that insincere apologies lack authenticity and can be disrespectful, especially when directed towards someone who deserves genuine remorse. This is supported by Pettigrove, G. (2004) who states that making the utterance of 'I forgive You', potentially reveals a current emotional state, specifically the sentiment of forgiveness. In this lyric interpretation, the act of forgiving encompasses both the acknowledgement of a present emotional state and a commitment to a future course of action.

The comparison to making promises that will not be kept or giving false hopes underscores the potential harm of insincere apologies. Such actions can be seen as manipulative, as they exploit the trust of the person to whom the apology is directed. In a healthy speech community, where sincerity and trust are valued, a mock apology is considered an immoral linguistic act. This reflects an awareness of the ethical dimensions of language use and how the sincerity of communication plays a crucial role in maintaining trust and fostering healthy relationships within a community.

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (2013) provides valuable insights into the connection between verbal communication and politeness strategies. In situations where there may be a perceived threat or expression of disapproval, individuals might employ politeness strategies as a way to navigate and manage potential negative outcomes. In the context of the phrase '*maafkan aku*' / 'forgive me', can indeed be seen as a politeness strategy. While apologies are generally considered polite and socially appropriate, they can also be employed in situations where there is a negative impact or a potentially harmful intention. This aligns with the notion that politeness strategies are context-dependent and can serve various communicative goals, even when the overall impact might be negative.

The application of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory to the use of '*maafkan aku*' / 'forgive me' in potentially negative situations demonstrates the pragmatic aspects of language and communication. It highlights how language choices can be strategic, serving social functions beyond simple expressions of remorse. This observation aligns with the concept of denial as a form of verbal abuse, as outlined by Patricia Evans (2009). Denial involves refusing to acknowledge one's harmful behaviour and its impact on others. The abuser may attempt to rationalize or justify their actions by seeking reasons behind their behaviour, essentially rejecting the notion that what they did was wrong. In the context of offering an apology like 'forgive me,' this act could indeed be seen as a form of denial, especially if it is insincere or lacks a genuine acknowledgement of the harm caused. Apologizing can sometimes be used as a strategy to deflect responsibility or downplay the severity of the actions, contributing to a denial of the negative impact on others. This demonstrates an understanding of how verbal abuse, particularly through denial, can manifest in interpersonal communication, and how certain linguistic strategies may be employed to manipulate or mitigate the perception of harmful behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The deconstruction of song lyrics, particularly in Tiara Andini's "*Maafkan Aku*," reveals that beneath the surface expression of regret lies a more complex dynamic, questioning the sincerity of the apology and the woman's role in the relationship. While the lyrics suggest penitence, a deeper analysis indicates that the woman is not a passive victim but may be actively enabling infidelity. The repetition of contrasting formulas in the lyrics, such as "*Salahkah ku berharap kalau kau memilih diriku*," introduces ambiguity, suggesting that the woman is not genuinely seeking forgiveness but is aware of the ongoing affair without ending it.

This type of linguistic manipulation aligns with the idea of verbal abuse, where apologies lack sincerity and serve as a form of control or denial of responsibility. As noted by Pettigrove (2004), genuine apologies involve not only acknowledging a mistake but also committing to change future behaviour. However, insincere apologies, as in the case of the song's lyrics, can be seen as a strategy to avoid accountability, a concept supported by Brown and Levinson's (2013) politeness theory, which suggests that apologies can be employed as strategic tools, even in contexts with harmful intentions.

Furthermore, research by Alifsuma and Mirotin (2021) and Khurshid & Farid (2023) supports the use of deconstructive techniques in analyzing hidden meanings within texts, revealing multifaceted truths that challenge initial interpretations. The song's language serves as a means for the songwriter to express intentions beyond mere remorse, aligning with Susanto & Handayani's (2021) assertion that frequently used phrases like "*maafkan aku*" carry deeper significance in conveying complex emotions and relational dynamics. Through deconstruction, the song's apology emerges as a potential form of denial, which Evans (2009) describes as a linguistic abuse tactic where the abuser manipulates language to avoid acknowledging their harmful actions.

In summary, "Maafkan Aku" reflects the intricate interplay of power, regret, and denial in relationships, where apologies are sometimes employed as verbal strategies to manipulate the perception of wrongdoing rather than express genuine remorse.

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