

## Semiotic Analysis of Emotional Meaning in the Lyrics of "See You Again" by Charlie Puth, Wiz Khalifa, Justin Franks, and Andrew Cedar

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**ABSTRACT-** Music is an artistic form that can transmit feelings and societal messages. Banoe (2003) argues that music arranges sounds in comprehensible patterns. The art of arranging tones to create a harmonic composition is what the Big Indonesian Dictionary defines as music. The song "See You Again" by Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth, released in 2015, is an illustration of how music blends social messages with feelings. The song, which was written as a memorial to Paul Walker, explores themes of friendship, hope, and sadness. The song reached the top of the Billboard Hot 100 and became a worldwide sensation after receiving over 6.3 billion views on YouTube. Using critical discourse analysis and Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, this study examines the lyrics of "See You Again" in order to determine the emotional meaning they convey. Exhaustion, an emotional voyage, and hope for a reunion are all described in the lyrics, according to the signifier and sign analysis. This study demonstrates how the song's lyrics inspire a universal message about friendship and loss while also establishing a strong emotional bond with the listener.

**Key word :** music, semiotics, emotional meaning, song lyrics, see you again.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This introduction will discuss the background of the song "*See You Again*", the relevance and benefits of the research, and the methodology to be used. Thus, it is believed that this study would advance the field of music discourse analysis research and deepen our comprehension of the social and emotional signals that lyrics can express [1].

One of the most popular mediums for artistic expression is music, which may express a wide range of feelings and societal concerns. [2] asserts that music is another form of art that explores and arranges different sounds into human-understandable patterns. Music is the science or art of composing tones or sounds expressed, combinations, and temporal relationships to produce compositions (sounds) that have balance and unity, tones or sounds arranged in such a way that they contain rhythm, song, and harmony" (especially those that can produce these sounds), according to the [3]

Among the various components of music, song lyrics play a particularly significant role in delivering meaning. Several studies have shown that song lyrics function as symbolic texts that convey emotional and social meanings [4]. Lyrics often reflect personal emotions, cultural values, and social issues, allowing listeners to connect deeply with the messages conveyed. People may experience a wide range of emotions—such as happiness, sadness, excitement, calmness, or nostalgia—simply by listening to a song. As a result, music becomes a powerful medium through which individuals express ideas, emotions, and perspectives on life. In addition to explicit meanings, songs frequently contain implicit messages, including moral values, social criticism, or emotional reflections, which require careful interpretation. Therefore, analyzing song lyrics from a linguistic and discourse perspective is essential to uncover the deeper meanings embedded within them.

The song "See You Again" by Wiz Khalifa & Charlie Puth was written by Andrew Cedar, Justin Franks, Charlie Puth, and Wiz Khalifa, and it was released in 2015. This song is a perfect illustration of how music can effectively blend social and emotional themes. People experience excitement, sadness, happiness, joy, and calmness while they listen to music. Simply listening to music can evoke all of the human emotions. Therefore, one medium through which people can express their ideas or feelings is music. Furthermore, implicit messages—whether moral, societal, or otherwise—can also be incorporated into music.

The touching emotional background of the song "See You Again" contributed to its success in addition to its heartwarming melody. The song was written as a memorial to the legendary actor Paul Walker, who passed away in a tragic vehicle accident in 2013. It has a direct connection to the popular film "Furious 7," in which Walker starred. In addition to affecting the emotions of "Fast and Furious" moviegoers, the song's 2015 release as part of the film's soundtrack also sent a worldwide message of friendship, loss, and the hope of reuniting in the future.

The song became extremely popular all around the world very quickly. One of the most-watched videos in YouTube's history, the official music video for the song "See You Again" has received over 6.3 billion views to date. This success is a result of the song's musical appeal as well as its association with Paul Walker's poignant emotional story and the tragedy of separation that is told in the film "Furious 7". Its accomplishments are also noticeable in the US Billboard Hot 100 list, where it peaked at number one in 2015. "See You Again's" inclusion on the Billboard Hot 100, a chart that lists the top-selling songs in the US, suggests that it has achieved considerable commercial success and broad audience popularity.

Collectively, these elements make "See You Again" more than just a successful song. It also serves as a reminder of the emotional bond between the film's characters and their global fan base, as well as a symbol of Paul Walker's extreme respect and immortality. With its serene message of farewell and optimism for a future meeting, the song continues to be memorable and relevant.

In addition to expressing a profound sense of loss and melancholy, "See you again" also conveys ideas about friendship, hope, and the enduring nature of human connections. Through the use of metaphors and emotionally charged language, the song's powerful and captivating story can inspire and stimulate listeners' emotions.

To understand the meaning conveyed in song lyrics, it is necessary to review several theoretical perspectives related to semiotics, meaning, song lyrics, and emotion.

The study of symbols and how they are used in communication is known as semiotics. Words, pictures, sounds, gestures, and other items that transmit meaning can all be considered signs. The study of semiotics looks at the ways in which these signs are employed in many cultural and communicative contexts to produce and transmit meaning. Ferdinand de Saussure used the semiotic approach to lay the foundations for broad language theory. His theory is distinct because of this fact. According to Saussure, language is a system of signs. According to him, signs—particularly linguistic signs—have two primary characteristics: they are linear and arbitrary [5]. The physical manifestation of a sign, which could be a word, sound, or image, is called a signifier. The idea or meaning that the signifier represents is called signified. According to Saussure, there is no logical or natural connection between signifier and signified; rather, their relationship is arbitrary.

Meaning develops when one considers both referents and communicative intent [6]. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, meaning is an idea contained in a linguistic sign [7]. Denotative meaning refers to the literal meaning of a word, while connotative meaning involves emotional, symbolic, and associative aspects of meaning [8].

A song is a collection of rhythmic sounds used for chanting, speaking, singing, and other activities. Song lyrics may reflect emotional expression or represent symbolic meanings. Because songs possess aesthetic qualities and diverse forms, society maintains a close relationship with music [9]. Lyrics in songs often function similarly to poetry, requiring careful word selection and emotional nuance.

Emotion is a psychological state that motivates individuals to respond to internal or external stimuli, often influencing behavior and perception [10]. Emotional expression in music enables listeners to relate personal experiences to broader cultural and social meanings.

The aim of this research is to apply semiotic analysis to the lyrics of the song "See You Again," focusing on the themes of loss and friendship. Through this approach, song lyrics are examined as meaningful signs that construct emotional and social messages within a broader cultural context [1]. The findings are expected to enrich future research on semiotics and popular music, as well as to encourage further studies that explore emotional and cultural values embedded in song lyrics. Thus, "See You Again" stands as an example of how music can transcend entertainment and function as a powerful medium for emotional and social expression.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 Research Approach

According to [11], qualitative research yields descriptive data in writing or voice and subject behavior. Gaining a broad grasp of the participants' viewpoints on social reality is the aim of this study. The qualitative approach of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis method was the research methodology employed in this study. By analyzing signs made up of signifier and signified, this method seeks to comprehend the emotional meaning expressed in song lyrics.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Data collection only uses song lyrics from "see you again" by Charlie Puth, Wiz Khalifa, Justin Franks, and Andrew Cedar. The data for this study were collected through documentation techniques, focusing solely on the official lyrics of the song "See You Again." The lyrics were obtained from reliable and widely recognized sources to ensure accuracy and authenticity. Using a single song as the data source allows for an in-depth and focused analysis, which is essential in qualitative and semiotic research.

Moreover, the song was selected because of its strong emotional content and its global popularity, which indicates its relevance in social and cultural contexts. By limiting the data to one song, the researcher can conduct a

detailed examination of each line and phrase, ensuring that the emotional meanings embedded in the lyrics are thoroughly explored. This focused data collection strategy helps maintain clarity and depth in the analysis.

In qualitative research, textual data such as song lyrics are considered valid sources of data because they contain symbolic meanings that can be systematically analyzed [12]. Song lyrics function as cultural texts that reflect emotional, social, and psychological experiences through language and symbols [13]. Therefore, using the lyrics of *"See You Again"* as the primary data source is appropriate for exploring emotional meanings through a semiotic perspective. The selection of a single song also allows for an in-depth and focused analysis, which is a key characteristic of qualitative research [14].

### 2.3 Research Procedure

The following steps are involved in this research process: Choosing the Lyrics choosing for examination the most representative and emotionally charged passages from the song's lyrics. Reading the full song and forming an initial assessment of its emotional content is known as initial reading and interpretation. Data coding is the process of locating emotional meaning in lyrics. The signifier and signified components will be used to code each line or word in the lyrics.

The research procedure in this study follows standard qualitative analysis stages, including data familiarization, coding, interpretation, and meaning construction (Miles et al., 2014). Coding is an essential step in qualitative research as it helps researchers systematically identify patterns and meanings within textual data [14]. By categorizing lyrics into signifiers and signified elements, this study ensures analytical consistency and methodological rigor. Such a procedure enables researchers to interpret symbolic meanings while maintaining transparency and reliability throughout the analysis process (Creswell, 2014).

### 2.4 Denotative and connotative analysis

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, while connotation involves associative, emotional, and cultural meanings that emerge beyond the literal level [15]. In the context of song lyrics, connotative meanings often play a dominant role in conveying emotions and symbolic messages to listeners (Storey, 2018). Therefore, applying denotative and connotative analysis allows this study to uncover both explicit and implicit emotional meanings embedded in the lyrics of *"See You Again."*

- Signifier: Recognizing lines, words, or phrases that serve as signifiers in the lyrics. This involves examining the words, sounds, and sentence structure that make up the lyrics' physical shape.
- Signified: Determining the signifier's meaning, both connotatively (emotional and symbolic connotations) and denotatively (literal).
- Examination of the Marker-Sign Relationship: Examines how the signifier- signified relationship influences the song lyrics' emotional content. This entails examining how the indicators work within the overall context of the lyrics.

This stage of analysis focuses on uncovering both denotative and connotative meanings embedded in the lyrics. Denotative analysis is used to identify the literal meaning of words and phrases, while connotative analysis explores emotional, symbolic, and cultural associations. By applying these two levels of meaning, the researcher can interpret how the lyrics convey complex emotions beyond their surface meaning.

### 2.5 Inference

Generate conclusions from the research findings based on the semiotic analysis that was carried out, emphasizing the emotional meaning that emerged from the signifier-signified interaction. It is intended that by using this approach, the study will be able to offer a thorough comprehension of the emotional significance found in the lyrics of the song *"See You Again"* as well as how it represents emotional and cultural values in a larger social context.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Sign and Signifier Analysis

#### a. Signifier and Signified

The physical manifestation of the sign, which consists of words, phrases, and sentence structures, is known as the signifier in song lyrics. Both literal and connotative interpretations of the information provided by each signifier are possible. Both denotatively (literally) and connotatively (emotionally and symbolically), the signifier specifies the meaning it signifies.

The concept of signifier and signified is central to Saussurean semiotics, as it explains how meaning is constructed through language. In song lyrics, signifiers are not merely linguistic units but also emotional triggers that guide listeners toward particular interpretations. The interaction between signifier and signified allows lyrics to function as a medium that conveys both explicit messages and implicit emotional states. In *"See You Again,"* this interaction becomes particularly significant because the song deals with universal human experiences such as loss, separation, and hope.

By examining specific phrases in the lyrics, this study demonstrates how simple linguistic expressions can carry deep emotional significance. The signifier provides the observable linguistic form, while the signified represents the

emotional, psychological, or symbolic meaning associated with it. Through this process, listeners are able to relate the lyrics to their own experiences, which strengthens the emotional impact of the song.

From a semiotic perspective, the identification of signifiers in song lyrics is not limited to linguistic form alone, but also includes emotional resonance and contextual significance. In *"See You Again,"* the signifiers operate within a shared cultural framework where themes of loss, remembrance, and friendship are widely understood. This shared understanding allows listeners to decode emotional meanings almost intuitively. As Saussure suggests, meaning is produced through difference and relational systems; therefore, each signifier in the song gains meaning through its contrast with absence, silence, and separation.

Moreover, the repetitive use of emotionally loaded signifiers reinforces the emotional message of the song. Repetition functions as a discourse strategy that intensifies emotional engagement and emphasizes key themes. In this context, repetition strengthens the listener's emotional connection and ensures that the signified meanings—such as grief and hope—remain dominant throughout the song.

a) It's been a long day

- 1) Signifier: This phrase describes the amount of time that has gone by with the sense that the day went by slowly.
- 2) Signified: This phrase's emotional connotation includes the weariness and emotional strain that one may experience.

The song's background depicts a period of time when losing a significant other makes things feel heavy. The phrase makes the listener feel sympathetic and links them to the common experience of emotional distress.

This phrase functions as a powerful emotional signifier because it reflects both physical exhaustion and emotional fatigue. The use of the adjective *"long"* emphasizes the heaviness of time, suggesting that emotional pain can alter one's perception of duration. In the context of grief, time often feels extended and burdensome, which aligns with the emotional theme of the song. As a result, this line immediately establishes a melancholic tone and prepares listeners for the emotional narrative that follows.

In addition to representing emotional exhaustion, the phrase *"It's been a long day"* can also be interpreted as a metaphor for an extended period of mourning. The *"day"* symbolically represents a phase of life marked by sorrow and adjustment following loss. This metaphorical interpretation allows the lyric to transcend literal time and instead refer to a prolonged emotional struggle. As a result, listeners who have experienced grief may strongly identify with this expression.

b) We've come a long way

- 1) Signifier: This phrase conveys the length of the journey.
- 2) Signified: This phrase refers to a shared emotional journey and a sense of success. It demonstrates closeness and dedication in the partnership. This signal aids in reminding the listener of the priceless moments spent together and the challenges they have surmounted.

This expression signifies not only physical or temporal distance but also emotional growth and shared experiences. The phrase evokes memories of struggles, achievements, and moments of togetherness. In semiotic terms, the signifier *"long way"* represents progress, endurance, and commitment, while the signified reflects emotional bonding and mutual support. This reinforces the theme of friendship that is central to the song.

This phrase further functions as a collective memory marker. It recalls shared experiences and emotional milestones that define the relationship portrayed in the song. From a discourse perspective, such expressions help construct a narrative of continuity, suggesting that relationships are built over time through shared challenges and achievements.

c) I tell you all about it when I see you again

- 1) Signifier: This phrase suggests a resolve to exchange experiences and tales in the future.
- 2) Signified: Involves sentiments of longing, hope, and the wish to share future experiences. It highlights the idea of optimism and hope that there will be an opportunity to reunite and complete the unfinished story at some point.

This line expresses anticipation and emotional continuity despite physical separation. The promise to share stories in the future suggests that the relationship remains meaningful even after loss. Semiotically, this phrase transforms absence into expectation, allowing hope to coexist with grief. This duality strengthens the emotional depth of the song.

This expression not only conveys hope but also reflects the human tendency to maintain emotional dialogue with those who are absent. Psychologically, such expressions serve as coping mechanisms, allowing individuals to preserve emotional connections despite physical separation or death. In this sense, the lyric reflects a deeply human response to loss.

### 3.2 Analysis of the Relationship between signifier and Signified

The relationship between signifier and signified is used in the lyrics of *"See You Again"* to create profound emotional meaning. The listener is connected to a global emotional experience through the layers of meaning created by this relationship.

Furthermore, the interplay between signifier and signified enables the song to function as a universal narrative. While inspired by a specific individual, the lyrics avoid personal names or details, allowing listeners to substitute their own experiences of loss. This openness enhances the emotional accessibility and cultural relevance of the song.



## a. Frasa long day

a) Signifier: these term described A difficult and exhausting time.

b) Signified: Expressing sentiments of desire and emotional tiredness. This line, in the context of the song, captures the intensity of the grief and the emotional difficulties that a person has following the death of a loved one.

This phrase exemplifies how a simple temporal reference can represent emotional suffering. The signifier “*long day*” does not specify an event, allowing listeners to project their own experiences onto it. The signified emerges as emotional exhaustion, which is a common response to grief. This ambiguity increases the universality of the song’s message.

## b. We've come a long way.

a) Signifier: Denotes accomplishment and a protracted process.

b) Signified: Shows the bond that has been formed and the memories created with one another. This relationship fosters a profound emotional meaning of intimacy and mutual success.

The phrase symbolizes emotional resilience and shared history. It suggests that relationships are built through time and effort. The emotional meaning derived from this relationship strengthens the song’s theme of friendship and loyalty, emphasizing that emotional bonds persist even after loss.

## c. See you again

a) Signifier: Expresses a wish for reunion and the future.

b) Signified: Expresses optimism and faith in the future. Despite the brief separation, it refers to the idea of hope and the conviction that the partnership would continue.

This phrase serves as the emotional core of the song. The promise of reunion provides comfort and reduces the finality of separation. Semiotically, it transforms loss into continuity, reinforcing the theme of hope that balances the song’s sadness.

**3.3 Connotative Analysis**

Connotation is the additional meaning associated with a signifier, which often relates to emotion and symbolism. According to [16]. Connotation is the meaning that emerges from the speaker's or listener's association of language with the language they read or state.

Connotative meaning plays a crucial role in shaping the emotional response of listeners. Through connotation, lyrics move beyond literal interpretation and evoke feelings, memories, and personal associations. In “*See You Again*,” connotative meanings strengthen the emotional intensity of the song and allow listeners to emotionally engage with the narrative.

## a. Loss and Sadness

Lyrics like “It's been a long day without you, my friend” act as a symbol for intense emotions related to losing a significant other. A strong sense of loss and melancholy serves as the marker. The idea of the individual left behind experiencing melancholy and emotional pain is further supported by this notion.

This connotation reflects the emotional aftermath of separation and death. The absence of the loved one becomes the central emotional focus, reinforcing the theme of grief that permeates the song.

## b. Friendship and Memories

The phrase “We've come a long way” represents an exhaustive and priceless journey spent together. Its meanings demonstrate enduring bonds and memories that have been cultivated over time. This signifier highlights the value of the bond and recollections that serve as the emotional underpinnings of the song's lyrics.

This connotation emphasizes loyalty and shared history. Memories function as emotional anchors that sustain relationships beyond physical presence, reinforcing the song’s emotional depth.

Memories function as emotional anchors within the song. The connotation of shared memories suggests that relationships continue to exist through remembrance. This perspective aligns with psychological theories that emphasize memory as a key component of emotional resilience.

## c. Desire to Meet

The lyrics “I tell you all about it when I see you again” express optimism for the future and a wish to share the experience that lies ahead. Here, the meaning is one of hope for a better future and the belief in reunion. It gives the listener an emotional lift and fosters a sense of hope and tranquility. This hopeful connotation balances the sadness in the song. It suggests emotional healing and continuity, allowing listeners to cope with loss through optimism.

**3.4 Denotative Analysis**

Denotative analysis focuses on literal meanings, providing a foundation for deeper interpretation. The denotative meanings in “*See You Again*” present straightforward expressions of time, separation, and movement. These literal meanings allow the lyrics to remain accessible while serving as a base for emotional interpretation. Denotative

meanings provide narrative clarity and structure. By using simple and direct expressions, the song ensures accessibility for a wide audience. These literal meanings function as entry points for deeper emotional interpretation. The clarity of denotative meaning allows listeners to follow the emotional storyline without confusion, while connotative layers enrich emotional engagement. This balance between simplicity and depth contributes to the song's enduring popularity.

a. "It's been a long day"

The period of this day suggests that the time that has passed is perceived as being burdensome or time-consuming. The passing of time is perceived as being longer than normal, but there is no particular indication of the kind of activity that occurred that day.

b. "Without you, my friend"

The day is more difficult without that friend. This expression conveys the absence of a significant or intimate person, which impacts the day's experience.

c. We've come a long way"

In a literal sense, it indicates that a person or group has advanced significantly from where they began. This expression indicates a protracted experience or journey from the past to the present.

d. From where we began"

It signifies the beginning or origin of the event or trip. There is evidence that since the start of the journey, there has been evolution or change.

e. I tell you all about it when I see you again"

This shows that when they eventually get together again in the future, they intend to discuss all experiences or knowledge that has not yet been revealed.

f. When I see you again"

Actually, it denotes a precise point in the future when two persons who have been separated will reunite. The meeting is scheduled or anticipated, but no specifics are provided regarding how or when it will take place.

g. We've come a long way from where we began"

It indicates how the process or trip has changed and evolved significantly since it began. draws attention to the advancements or outcomes of the efforts that have been done.

Denotatively, these expressions are simple and direct, yet they create a strong narrative structure. This simplicity allows listeners to easily grasp the storyline while enabling deeper emotional interpretation through connotation and semiotic analysis.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

A semiotic analysis of the lyrics of "See You Again" shows how the signifiers and signs in the lyrics convey deep emotional meaning. Through the use of emotionally charged language and metaphors, the song is able to evoke feelings in its listeners and create a strong emotional connection. The lyrics incorporate themes of loss, friendship and hope, providing a universal and inspiring message. This research reveals how effective lyrics are in conveying an emotional experience to the listener that makes them get carried away with the song.

In addition to these findings, the results of this study demonstrate that the interaction between signifier and signified plays a crucial role in shaping emotional interpretation. The lyrics of "See You Again" do not merely present literal messages but construct emotional realities that resonate with listeners across different cultural and social backgrounds. By combining simple linguistic expressions with rich connotative meanings, the song succeeds in delivering complex emotional messages in an accessible and relatable manner.

Finally, this study contributes to the field of linguistic and music discourse analysis by providing insight into how emotional meaning is constructed and communicated through lyrics. The findings are expected to enrich future research on semiotics and popular music, as well as to encourage further studies that explore emotional and cultural values embedded in song lyrics. Thus, "See You Again" stands as an example of how music can transcend entertainment and function as a powerful medium for emotional and social expression.

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