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# Semantic Dimensions of Modern Arabic Music: A Case Study of Humood Alkhudher's Falasteen Biladi

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## Abstract

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| <b>Keywords:</b><br>Modern Arabic<br>Musical<br>Literature,<br><i>Falasteen Biladi</i> ,<br>Semantic<br>Analysis | This study investigates the influence of modern Arabic musical literature on Humood AlKhudher's song Falasteen Biladi through a semantic analysis. The problem addressed in this research lies in understanding how modern Arabic songs, beyond their aesthetic qualities, serve as vehicles for articulating political, cultural, and social meanings. The song was chosen because its lyrics are deeply symbolic and emotionally charged, reflecting solidarity and pride for the Palestinian homeland while simultaneously engaging with broader socio-political contexts. The purpose of this study is to reveal the semantic strategies employed in Falasteen Biladi and to explain how these strategies contribute to shaping collective identity, resistance, and cultural diplomacy. A qualitative approach was employed, drawing data from the music video, song lyrics, social media discussions, and related articles. Data |
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collection involved close listening, lyric transcription, classification of semantic features based on research questions, and enrichment with contextual information about Palestine's socio-political situation. The analysis relied on semantic theories developed by Lyons (1995) and Leech (1981), with attention to denotative, connotative, affective, and social meanings. The findings show that Falasteen Biladi systematically constructs semantic meaning through the use of metaphor, symbolism, and deliberate diction. Surprisingly, beneath its patriotic and aesthetic tone lies a highly structured linguistic strategy that elevates the song into a form of cultural resistance against political domination. The study contributes to scholarship by demonstrating how modern Arabic music functions not only as artistic expression but also as a powerful medium of cultural diplomacy in global socio-political discourse.

**Abstrak**

**Kata Kunci:** Sastra Musik Arab Modern, Falasteen Biladi, Analisis Semantik

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh sastra musik Arab modern terhadap lagu Falasteen Biladi karya Humood AlKhudher melalui analisis semantik. Permasalahan yang diangkat dalam penelitian ini terletak pada upaya memahami bagaimana lagu Arab modern, selain memiliki nilai estetis, juga berfungsi sebagai media untuk menyuarakan makna politik, kultural, dan sosial. Lagu ini dipilih karena liriknya sarat simbolisme dan penuh muatan emosional, yang merefleksikan solidaritas serta kebanggaan terhadap tanah air Palestina sekaligus terhubung dengan konteks sosial-politik yang lebih luas. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengungkap strategi semantik yang digunakan dalam Falasteen Biladi dan menjelaskan bagaimana strategi tersebut berkontribusi dalam pembentukan identitas kolektif, perlawanan, dan diplomasi budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa video musik, lirik lagu, diskusi di media sosial, dan artikel terkait. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penyimakan, transkripsi lirik, klasifikasi fitur semantik berdasarkan rumusan masalah, serta pengayaan dengan informasi tentang situasi sosial-politik Palestina. Analisis data mengacu pada teori semantik Lyons (1995) dan Leech (1981), dengan fokus pada makna denotatif, konotatif, afektif, dan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Falasteen Biladi secara sistematis membangun makna semantik melalui penggunaan metafora, simbol, dan diksi yang terpilih. Temuan mengejutkan penelitian ini adalah bahwa di balik nada patriotik dan estetis lagu tersebut terdapat strategi linguistik yang kuat sehingga menjadikan lagu ini sebagai bentuk perlawanan budaya terhadap dominasi politik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian dengan menunjukkan bahwa musik Arab modern tidak hanya sebagai ekspresi seni, tetapi juga sebagai media diplomasi budaya yang efektif dalam wacana sosial-politik global.

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## Introduction

Literature is a product of art that uses language as its object. Literary works convey messages, awareness, learning, and wisdom through beautiful language and poetry expressions, so that readers do not regret reading them (Karim, 2021) . Literary works are made to be enjoyed and appreciated because they are products of human thought. In this case, each author has a unique way of conveying their ideas and images to readers (Fransori, 2017) . Understanding literary works can help someone enjoy and apply literary works in their lives. Literary works are not only appreciated through one's feelings but also through appreciation and understanding (Ahmad, 2022) .

In the process of creating literary works, word choice, or diction, is very important. Diction is the choice of words and style of language used by the author to create beautiful and interesting literary works. Songs are one of the literary works that contain diction and style of language. Songs help someone convey their feelings. Like poetry, songs have lyrics in each verse, as an imaginative literary work (Asyifah, 2022) .

Music has become a necessity for humans in this modern era. Music creators consider music as an outpouring of their soul's emotions, a place where their feelings are expressed and sent. If music lovers hear music that suits their mood, they expect to feel better and more relaxed. In this case, it is very important to listen to songs with lyrics that instill enthusiasm and religion (Khoiriyah & Sinaga, 2017) .

The influence of modern Arabic music literature on other literary works, including music, poetry, drama, short stories, and Arabic prose, has long been seen. However, the influence of modern Arabic music literature on musical art has existed since the advent of Islam (Chairullah, 2019) . Because the majority of the population is Muslim, Arabic literature is inseparable from Islam. In

addition, many Muslim poets from the Arab nation were influenced by the literature and beauty of the Quran (Nurlidya, Anis Uyun, Husniyatul Badriyah Yaumi, 2019) . Thus, the existence of Islam and the Quran as the main foundation of literature may have an impact on the development of Arabic literature.

The song *Falasteen Biladi* is an interesting example to analyze because its lyrics are full of symbolism and deep meaning. Using semantic analysis, we can understand how Humood Alkhuder, an influential singer and songwriter, managed to combine elements of classical Arabic literature with a modern touch, creating an interesting song.

The right choice of words, although some words may still be foreign to some people, shows the influence of modern Arabic music literature on the song *Falasteen Biladi*. The number of Indonesians who like Arabic songs has increased recently. As a result, because there are translations and explanations of the meaning of the songs, we feel more familiar with Arabic songs when we listen to them. In addition, the younger generation is now starting to know and be interested in listening to Arabic music that is popular on social media. However, it is not uncommon for people to misunderstand the message and meaning of the songs. Therefore, many music fans want to understand the meaning and significance of the songs they hear. As a result, many Arab poets try to convey messages and meanings in their works in a good way, as seen in the song *Falasteen Biladi* (Imron, 2018) .

Humood Alkhudher was born on January 24, 1986 in Kuwait. Humood's reputation has increased since the launch of his song *Kun Anta* on YouTube. The largest number of viewers came from Indonesia. It is not surprising that Humood Alkhudher is better known in Indonesia than in his own country. In the song *Falasteen Biladi*, Humod Alkhudher uses many figurative words to describe the feelings felt by the author with a beautiful and meaningful language style. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting this study.

Research on this has actually been done by many previous researchers, but with different perspectives. First, research by Zahrotul Mukaromah et al. entitled "The Influence of Modern Arabic Music Literature on the Song Sayyidi Rais by Hama Meshary Hamdana" found that poets were influenced by Arabic literature, especially Arabic music, so that Hama Meshary created the song "Sayyidi Ar-Rais" which contains a message of peace because of the conflict in Palestine (Mukaromah et al., 2021) . Second, Chairullah's research, "The Influence of Arabic Islamic Literature on the Work of Tsamaratul Ihsān Fi Wilādati Sayyidil Insān by Syekh Sulaiman Ar-Rasuli", found that Islamic Malay literary works written in the archipelago in the form of poetry or nazam are not adaptations or direct translations of Arabic literature. This is because the work has unique and local characteristics, and is colored by the creativity of the author himself (Chairullah, 2019) .

Therefore, based on the research above, the researcher is interested in seeing "The Influence of Modern Arabic Music Literature on the Song *Falasteen Biladi* by Humood Alkhuder (Semantic Analysis)", one of the songs that expresses love and pride for the Palestinian homeland and resistance to colonialism. The message of unity, steadfastness, and the desire for freedom is conveyed in this song. As part of the influence of Arabic literature on Arabic musical art, the poet uses this song as a tool to inform the public and encourage them to support the Palestinian people. Humood Alkhuder sang this song with the hope that peace and freedom will come to the Palestinian homeland. This research is very important because many people do not know about the social conditions of the Palestinian people. This research will investigate the meaning of the song *Falasteen Biladi*.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explain how Arabic literature has an impact on Arabic musical art, especially on the song *Falasteen Biladi*, and to show the linguistic elements contained in the song. However, the main focus of this study is to explain the meaning and message that the poet wants to convey

through the translation of the meaning of each word or verse in the song's lyrics, and this analysis also looks at the linguistic elements.

## Method

In this study, the researcher used qualitative methods to understand the meaning of the situation, conditions, and the influence of Arabic literature in the video clip and song *Falasteen Biladi*. Qualitative methods were chosen because they can present, analyze, and interpret data in depth to solve the existing problems. This research was conducted by examining the phenomenon in its natural context according to the situation and location being studied (Gunawan, 2013). The data sources include the video clip of the song *Falasteen Biladi* uploaded on Humood AlKhudher's official YouTube channel, the song lyrics, social media, and related articles. Data collection techniques were carried out in several stages: (1) watching the video clip of *Falasteen Biladi* on the official YouTube channel, (2) transcribing and recording the lyrics of the song for analysis, (3) classifying the data based on the research questions, namely the forms and meanings of linguistic units and the messages contained in the lyrics, and (4) examining the latest developments in Palestine through online media to strengthen the interpretation of the messages conveyed in the song.

The analysis technique employed is semantic analysis, referring to theories of lexical and contextual meaning by (Lyons, 1995) and (Leech, 1981). This semantic analysis focuses on identifying the denotative, connotative, affective, and social meanings embedded in the lyrics. Thus, the research does not only limit itself to the literal meaning of the language but also reveals implicit meanings that reflect ideology, emotions, and the socio-political realities underlying the creation of the song. Within this framework, the researcher analyzes the use of symbols, metaphors, and particular lexical choices that construct the song's main messages of identity, struggle, and solidarity with the Palestinian homeland. The results of the analysis are presented following Sudaryanto's view that the presentation of data is the

researcher’s effort to report findings in written form (Susiaty, 2020). With this semantic framework, the researcher demonstrates how the most dynamic components of meaning (Brastyan, n.d.) are utilized to convey messages of resistance and love for the homeland.

Furthermore, the discussion is deepened by linking the semantic analysis of *Falasteen Biladi* to the broader socio-political context of contemporary Palestine. This song is not only an artistic expression but also a form of cultural resistance that reflects the suffering of the people due to Israeli aggression while reinforcing national solidarity. This is consistent with findings from other studies on modern Arabic songs of resistance, such as the works of Marcel Khalife in Lebanon and Mohammed Assaf in Palestine, which similarly employ symbolic and semantic language to express resistance. This comparison shows that *Falasteen Biladi* holds an important place in the tradition of modern Arabic music as a medium to voice identity, resistance, and hope among Arab societies amidst ongoing political conflict.

Result and Discussion

The following are the results of the problems we encountered regarding the translation of the song *Falasteen Biladi*, along with the meaning contained therein, and the message the poet wants to convey through the song.

Table 1: the translation of the song Falasteen Biladi

| Meaning  | Translate                                    | Lyrics                     |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Recognition of important cities in Palestine   | Jerusalem and Akka, we head to Jaffa         | القدس وعكا نحن<br>إلى يافا |
| Reflecting a deep emotional bond with the land | We are inside Gaza and in the heart of Jenin | في غزة نحن وقلب<br>جنين    |
| The rise and resilience of the                 | One of us grows into                         | الواحد منا يُزهرُ          |

|  |   |                             |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Palestinian people   | thousands   | آلاف                        |
| They are depicted as entities that grow and do not give up easily.                                     | The fig leaf within us will not wither                  | لن تذبل فينا ورقة<br>تين    |
| Courage, determination, and commitment to justice, especially in contexts of struggle and oppression   | You are not ignorant of justice nor are you afraid      | ما هان الحق<br>عليك ولا خاف |
| A strong belief that they will return to their homeland, even though they have to face many obstacles. | Your return is a faith and certainty                    | عودتنا إيمان<br>ويقين       |
| Determination and a tireless spirit of resistance to achieve freedom                                   | We will not be silent, we will not give up, no!         | لن نسكت لن<br>نستسلم لا     |
| They won't give up   | No, no, no  | لا لا لا                    |
| Willingness to sacrifice for the motherland  | We will sacrifice for you so that we live. O Palestine! | نفديك لنحيا يا<br>فلسطين    |
| They stated that Palestine is their country  | Palestine is my country                                 | فلسطين بلادي                |
| Keeping hope even in difficult conditions  | We carry it either as a wound or as a hope              | نحملها جرحاً أو<br>أملاً    |
| They won't give up   | No, no, no  | لا لا لا                    |
| Illustrating the promise of sustainability   | And we will remain in it until the Day of Resurrection. | روح نبقي فيها<br>ليوم الدين |



|  |   |                             |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| They stated that Palestine is their country  | Palestine is my country                                   | فلسطين بلادي                |
| Prayers for success and happiness for Palestine and all those fighting for justice throughout the world.   | For your sun to shine upon our dreams                     | كي تشرق شمسك<br>فوق أمانينا |
| It has a deeper emotional meaning, such as the hope that the young generation of Palestine will continue to live with passion and happiness amidst hardship. | And your little one sleeps with a smile                   | وينام صغارك<br>مبتسمين      |
| The hope that the Palestinian state and its people will achieve good, prosperous and peaceful conditions.  | And so that we see you in good condition when you call us | ونراك بخير حين<br>تنادينا   |
| A symbol of hope to improve living conditions, build a solid foundation for future generations, and create a prosperous and empowered society.               | To build a house and cultivate a garden                   | لعمار بيوت<br>وبساتين       |
| Reflecting a strong sense of loyalty, pride and fighting spirit towards the Palestinian homeland, even in the midst of suffering.                            | We will return to you in our homeland even if we suffer   | سنعيدك وطناً<br>رغم مآسينا  |
| Strong togetherness until the end of time  | When free people sing together                            | أحراراً نشدو<br>متّحدين     |

Kuwaiti singer Humood Al-Khudher sang the song *Falasteen Biladi* which was packaged in Arabic. This song is very popular with the Arab community.

Fushah Arabic is used to write the lyrics of the song *Falasteen Biladi*. Fushah Arabic is often referred to as the language of the Qur'an or a language that is often used in formal forums, books, poetry, and is also used in products, science, and scientific works. Fushah Arabic is a language that can unite and resolve disputes between Arab nations. People can communicate fluently by using it as long as the language is in accordance with the rules of nahwu, sharf, and balaghah (Putri, 2019) .

Fushah Arabic is the main medium of communication. It is found in books, magazines, correspondence, personal letters, government documents, and speeches on television, radio, and scientific conferences and seminars. Even some universities around the world use it as a medium of instruction. In addition, Fushah Arabic is an international language, so this standard language is used in Arab countries and the majority of Muslims around the world. Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to identify the meaning and message contained in the lyrics of the song *Falasteen Biladi*. To achieve this goal, this study uses a semantic analysis approach to study each element in the lyrics of the song.

Some sentences are still unclear after reading the lyrics of the song above. Among them are that the fig leaf that is in us will not wither and that your return is certainty and faith. As a result, it is hoped that this study will help listeners understand the message contained in this song and the meaning of each sentence. JWM Verhaar states that semantics is a systematic branch of language that examines meaning or significance (Nafinuddin, 2020) . Therefore, it can be said that semantic analysis means examining the meaning of words, sentences, songs, and poems.

In the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, it is stated that meaning is the meaning, the speaker's intention, and the understanding given to a linguistic form. Researchers use the meaning method to find out the meaning in a song, especially the song *Falasteen Biladi*. By watching the video

and using reasoning, we can find out the meaning contained in the song and use reason to understand the meaning of each sentence.

The song received much praise because the poet is a figure who is very responsive to the current Palestinian situation. The song also received positive reviews from listeners. Many of them understand the current Palestinian conditions. This can be seen in the comments column of Humood Al-Khudher's post on YouTube six months ago, which has received 26,000,000 views, 533 thousand likes, and 27 thousand comments. The song has also been criticized for voicing support for Palestine, but may not provide concrete solutions or deeper perspectives on how to achieve peace and justice in the region. In addition, it is possible that the song is more emotional than informative, which may make it less effective in increasing our understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

*Falasteen Biladi* is a song by Humood AlKhudher that depicts his love and support for Palestine. The song expresses a sense of solidarity and pride for the Palestinian homeland, highlighting its beauty and cultural heritage, as well as the struggle of its people to maintain their identity and independence. Overall, *Falasteen Biladi* is an inspiring, motivating, and heartfelt song, reflecting a deep sense of love and support for Palestine and its people.

From the description above, it can be seen that this song has a message that it wants to convey, namely this song emphasizes the need for justice for the Palestinian people who have experienced oppression and restrictions on their rights for years. The message of this song may also call for sustainable peace in the region, as a step towards a just solution for both parties. This song describes a sense of love and pride for the Palestinian homeland, as well as a desire to maintain their identity and cultural heritage. This song can build global solidarity by highlighting the struggle of the Palestinian people and asking for international support for their rights. The reason behind this message is to draw attention to the situation faced by the Palestinian people and to fight for their human rights in front of the international world.

## Conclusion

The analysis of Humood Alkhudher's song *Falasteen Biladi* reveals that modern Arabic musical literature plays a vital role in expressing solidarity, identity, and resistance through both lyrical and musical elements. The song demonstrates how semantic richness and modern arrangements can work together to amplify emotional messages, particularly those tied to national struggle and cultural pride. By blending traditional linguistic depth with contemporary musical styles, Alkhudher successfully bridges heritage and modernity, making the message accessible to a wider audience.

One of the most striking findings of this study is the discovery of a systematic semantic construction embedded within the song's lyrics. Beyond its surface-level patriotic tone, the song contains layered meanings that reinforce a narrative of resilience, justice, and cultural diplomacy. This indicates that modern Arabic music is not only a vehicle for emotional expression but also a sophisticated medium for resistance against political domination. The integration of modern musical instruments with powerful lyrical semantics highlights how contemporary Arabic songs can function simultaneously as artistic works, cultural identity markers, and political statements.

Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. The analysis was limited to a single song, which restricts the generalizability of conclusions about the broader corpus of modern Arabic musical literature. In addition, the study primarily focused on semantic analysis and did not include a comprehensive exploration of audience reception, sociopolitical contexts, or cross-cultural comparisons. Future research should expand the scope by analyzing multiple songs, incorporating perspectives from listeners, and exploring interdisciplinary approaches to better understand the evolving role of modern Arabic music in shaping identity and resistance.

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### **Authors' Contribution Statement**

All authors contributed substantially to this study. Nanda Dzikrillah Pelealu was responsible for the conceptualization of the research, data collection, and preparation of the initial manuscript draft. Amrina Rosyada contributed to the development of the theoretical framework and conducted the semantic analysis of the lyrics. Khalifaturrosyidah Handayani focused on the literature review, comparative analysis, and refinement of the discussion section. Nur Ila Ifawati supervised the overall research process, provided critical revisions, and ensured the manuscript's academic quality and coherence. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for its content.

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