

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction regarding the study to be carried out. The introduction contains the background of the study, research question, research objective, research limitations, research significance, and definition of key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Gratitude is often associated with the word or the actions of saying “Thank You” and *”Alhamdulillah”*. Gratitude is not only by saying those words but also be expressed or shown through action. For example, there is a student who was lazy to study because he taught a subject that was difficult to understand. But then he realized that he had been given the ability to think, something called a ‘brain’, a gift from God. He realized that he should be grateful for this kind of gift and used it properly to study hard, understand the lesson as best he can, and not give up just because he is lazy or it is hard to understand. The act of studying hard can be categorized as gratitude too, in the form of action, and the consciousness he has towards the gift is an act of gratitude in the category of being grateful by heart. Simply, showing gratitude is not only by saying *Thank You* and *Alhamdulillah* but also expressed through our actions.

This day, in an era when a lot of things have changed, it seems that there are many people around us, or even ourselves, who are unable to be grateful for God's blessing. When the favor does not meet their expectation, they grumble, complain, and even blame God for their dissatisfaction. Whereas, gratitude is a commendable behavior that can distribute positive energy. People who are always grateful will have optimistic and positive vibes. They will have a good life because they can have enough for every favor, whether it is a little or a lot. This shows how important gratitude is in our life. Because having enough for everything brings us to peacefulness, easy to appreciate and be grateful.

Gratitude is a commendable behavior that is very important in human life as a civilized being. However, for many people, saying thank you makes them feel indebted to someone's kindness. It makes them feel uncomfortable because they thought that they have a debt to someone else and have to pay them off with commensurable kindness. They feel comfortable when they get many goodnesses from themselves, not others. That is why the act of being grateful to others is often ignored by many people (Solomon, 2004).

Gratitude, in the view of Western psychology, is a feeling that arises in a person after receiving kindness from others (Setyawan and Riyadi, 2020). This feeling is often identified with feelings of happiness. It is like a state of peace in someone's heart. Therefore, someone who is always grateful will feel happiness in his life. According to McCullough, Tsang, and Emmons

(2004), it is stated that feelings that arise after receiving kindness exist as a form of reward or appreciation to the giver of kindness.

From the perspective of Islam, being grateful is a form of spiritual intelligence. Gratitude is a commendable behavior that can distribute positive energy to humans in facing various challenges in life (Destiny, 2017). Being grateful teaches people to always be patient and tough in all conditions, both when they are in the best and even worst conditions. People who are always grateful will have optimistic vibes. They will have a physically and spiritually good life.

Discussion about gratitude is not the latest topic. This topic will remain in the future. In addition, this topic is fundamental and essential. The behavior of gratitude must always be applied by all humans at all times because positive things that accompany life can start from its application. Therefore, in their life, humans will always relate to feelings and behavior of gratitude.

Education about gratitude can be obtained in various ways, one of them being through song lyrics. The song lyric is media used by lyricists to express ideas, thoughts, and messages to their listeners (Rendi, Abdurahman, Bakhtaruddin: 2017). Ideas, thoughts, and messages can be conveyed implicitly or expressly in the lyrics. Every song's lyrics contain messages. The lyrics in a song have an important role in distributing messages written by a lyricist. The messages are packaged in such a beautiful way by the lyricist to be understood by listeners. Then, messages contained in a song can be delivered to listeners properly.

A song is a form of literary work. It is a type of oral as well as written discourse (Rahardian, 2020). The song is called oral discourse based on its media and called written discourse based on the lyrics contained in it. Song lyrics are a collection of words that a lyricist puts together beautifully. Lyrics are then sung along with the musical accompaniment. Lyricist often pours their feelings and conveys moral messages through song lyrics written by them.

In this study, the writer studied messages of gratitude contained in songs and identified them. Many songs that have been studied are 8 songs in Maher Zain's album "Forgive Me". The writer choose many songs that contain lyrics related to the message of gratitude.

Maher Zain is a Lebanese singer and lyricist who has an active career and has become a star in the modern Islamic music industry. His songs contain positive and religious messages for everyone who listens to them. The lyrics in all of his released songs are meant to bring listeners to a better and lasting change in everyone's life in the world.

In this study, the writer has two reasons for choosing Maher Zain's album "Forgive Me" as the object of study. Linguistically, the writer choose those songs because of the language used in the lyrics and the topic related to the background of this study. Most of Maher Zain's songs in this album are written in English. In conducting the study, the writer chooses songs that are written in English. The writer then chooses songs whose lyrics contain messages of gratitude. Non-linguistically, the writer choose Maher Zain's

songs because he influenced Muslim and even non-Muslim's life through the messages delivered in his songs. The writer choose this album which is the second released album that has surpassed the success of his debut album.

In carrying out this study, the writer used the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes. Semiotics is a branch of science that examines signs and processes related to signs such as signs and processes that apply to the use of signs. Semiotics, in Barthes, is defined as an analysis method to study signs. It wants to study how humanity interprets things (Nathaniel & Sannie, 2018). Interpreting means that objects do not only bring information but also constitute a structured system of signs. In other words, when someone looks at an object, the object tries to communicate by delivering the meaning (Nadira, 2018). The core of Barthes' theory is the idea of two orders of signification, which consist of denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation means the literal meaning of the text. Connotation means the meaning given to symbols referring to cultural value. Myth means how culture explains many aspects of reality. This theory is used to examine the messages of gratitude delivered in Maher Zain's album more deeply by analyzing the signs in it systematically.

There are several ways or theories for carrying out studies on the analysis of song lyrics. Some researchers use semiotic theory to study signs in interpreting the meaning of something, in this case, the lyrics. the first research is a study conducted by Aniqotul Maula (2014) that examines messages of gratitude in song lyrics using semiotic theory. In the results of

another study by Zaivin Iflah Illiyyin (2019) that study The Representation of Grateful Meaning in Maher Zain Songs, the writer made it one of the references in compiling research that focuses on the same topic, but with different objects. Furthermore, in another reference, the writer used research conducted by Fina Nurul Ma'sumah (2021) which used semiotic theory in studying the video clips on Justin Bieber's album. The writer conducted this research using semiotic theory because this theory is suitable for the research objectives of interpreting the meaning of a sign in song lyrics using qualitative research techniques.

#### **B. Research Question**

Based on the research background, the research questions are:

1. What are denotation, connotation, and myth in Maher Zain's album Forgive Me?
2. What are the messages of gratitude delivered in Maher Zain's album Forgive Me?

#### **C. Research Objective**

According to the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify denotation, connotation, and myth in Maher Zain's album Forgive Me
2. To find out messages of gratitude in song lyrics of Maher Zain's album Forgive Me.

**D. Research Limitations**

This study was limited to applying the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes to find the denotation, connotation, and myth meaning to find the gratitude messages in the album *Forgive Me* by Maher Zain.

**E. Research Significance**

In this study, there are several advantages expected by the writer: Theoretically, the writer hopes that this study can give both writer and readers knowledge about the use of semiotic theory. The writer used semiotic theory in conducting the study that focused on song lyrics.

Practically, the writer hopes that the result of this study can be accepted as one of the fulfillment of the requirements of obtaining a bachelor's degree. The writer hopes that this result study can be one of the references in learning about gratitude for readers and for further researchers who will study the same theory or topic. The writer hopes that this study can attract readers' interest to not only listen to the song but also understand the meaning of the lyrics and apply it in their daily life.

Furthermore, the writer hopes that this research will be useful for students in learning about the importance of gratitude. The English lyrics are hoped to help them in increasing their vocabulary and English understanding.

**F. Definition of Key Terms**

There are some key terms used which are related to this study. The key terms have their definition to make the readers can easily understand the discussion in this study. The short definition of the key terms will be explained in the following points.

1. Gratitude

Gratitude refers to three concepts of how gratitude is expressed by people. These three concepts are being grateful verbally, with peace of heart, and grateful in action.

2. Maher Zain

Maher Zain is a Lebanese blood singer, lyricist, and music producer. He is a Swede who come from New York to the United Kingdom and joined Awakening Music to create many albums that were fully reflective of his spiritual growth and development as an artist.

3. Semiotics

Semiotics is a study that examines the signs contained in an object to know the meaning contained in the object.