

AFFECTIVE IDENTITY AND RELATIONAL ASYMMETRY IN INDONESIAN POP SONG LYRICS: A DISCOURSE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SEDIA AKU SEBELUM HUJAN

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Abstract

This study examines affective identity and relational asymmetry in contemporary Indonesian pop song lyrics from a discourse linguistic perspective. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), affective linguistics, and stance theory, the article analyzes Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan by Idgitaf as a site of affective meaning-making in popular culture. Using qualitative discourse analysis, the study focuses on micro-linguistic features such as pronominal patterns, modalization, metaphorical framing, repetition, and narrative positioning. The findings show that affective identity is constructed through consistent first-person agency (aku) and anticipatory emotional readiness, while the addressee (kau) is positioned as passive. This configuration produces a structurally asymmetrical relational pattern. Metaphors of rain, preparation, and struggle frame emotional devotion as moral responsibility, whereas modal expressions normalize emotional sacrifice as inevitable rather than negotiable. Repetition functions as an affective anchoring strategy that stabilizes and legitimizes unequal emotional labor. This study contributes to linguistic scholarship by demonstrating how affect and power intersect in intimate, non-institutional discourse. By integrating affective linguistics with CDA and applying it to Indonesian popular music, the research highlights song lyrics as influential discursive sites where cultural norms of love, care, and sacrifice are produced and circulated.

Keywords: *affective identity; critical discourse analysis; relational asymmetry; song lyrics; Indonesian popular music*

Introduction

Popular song lyrics have increasingly been recognized as a significant site of linguistic inquiry, particularly within the expanding field of discourse-oriented and affect-centered studies. Rather than functioning merely as aesthetic or entertainment artifacts, song lyrics operate as discursive practices through which emotions, identities, and social relations are constructed, negotiated, and normalized (Fairclough, 2015; Simpson, 2014). In contemporary popular culture, language in song lyrics serves not only as a medium of expression but also as a mechanism for shaping affective alignment between speakers and audiences.

Recent developments in linguistics and the social sciences, often referred to as the "affective turn," have foregrounded emotion as a socially organized and discursively mediated phenomenon, rather than a purely internal psychological state (Ahmed, 2014; Wetherell, 2012, 2015). From this perspective, affect is enacted through linguistic choices such as stance-taking, evaluation, metaphor, and narrative positioning, which collectively contribute to the construction of what may be termed affective identity—a subject position defined by emotional orientation, vulnerability, and relational commitment (Du Bois, 2007; Kärkkäinen, 2020). Language thus plays a central role in stabilizing emotional meanings and aligning individuals within particular relational frameworks.

Within popular music discourse, affective identity is frequently constructed through asymmetrical relational structures, where one participant is linguistically positioned as emotionally available, sacrificial, or protective, while the other remains passive or undefined. Such asymmetries are often normalized through everyday linguistic patterns that obscure underlying power relations, particularly in intimate and non-institutional contexts (Hochschild, 2012; Bamberg, 2018). Linguistic studies have shown that relational asymmetry may be encoded through pronominal dominance, modality, metaphorical framing, and repetition, which assign responsibility, endurance, and care to one party while minimizing reciprocity (van Dijk, 2018; Kiesling, 2022).

Indonesian popular music, especially contemporary pop songs circulated through digital platforms, provides a fertile context for examining these phenomena. As part of broader urban and digitally mediated cultural practices, Indonesian pop lyrics often foreground emotional vulnerability, personal intimacy, and everyday metaphors that resonate with younger audiences (Heryanto, 2019; Nurhayati & Sari, 2021). Rather than employing grand romantic narratives, many recent songs articulate quiet expressions of loyalty, readiness, and silent endurance, aligning with what Georgakopoulou (2015, 2022) conceptualizes as small stories—fragmented narratives that construct identity through ordinary moments and affective stance.

One prominent example is *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan* by Idgitaf, a contemporary Indonesian pop song that has gained widespread attention for its introspective and emotionally restrained lyrics. The song presents a lyrical voice that repeatedly positions itself as emotionally prepared, self-effacing, and unconditionally supportive, even before the onset of relational difficulty metaphorically framed as hujan ("rain"). Linguistically, this positioning is achieved through anticipatory stance-taking, pronominal asymmetry, and metaphors of preparation and endurance, which collectively construct a relational configuration marked by emotional imbalance.

Despite the growing body of research on song lyrics, identity, and discourse, studies that explicitly integrate affective linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the context of Indonesian popular music remain limited. Existing research has tended to focus either on thematic interpretation or sociological readings, often overlooking the micro-linguistic mechanisms through which affective meaning and relational inequality are discursively produced (Fairclough, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Consequently, there is a need for linguistically grounded analyses that demonstrate how affect, identity, and power intersect at the level of language use in popular music.

In Indonesian linguistics, several studies by Rawuh Yuda Yuwana and colleagues have demonstrated the effectiveness of discourse-based and functional linguistic approaches in revealing how language constructs meaning, cultural orientation, and ideological

positioning in various Indonesian texts, including humor, national songs, and cultural discourse (Yuwana, Santosa, & Sumarlam, 2019; Yuwana & Pertiwi, 2022; Yuwana & Betaubun, 2024). These studies highlight that linguistic patterns are systematically shaped by cultural and relational values, suggesting that similar approaches can be productively applied to contemporary pop song lyrics.

Responding to these gaps, the present study investigates how affective identity and asymmetric relations are constructed through linguistic discourse in *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan*. Employing a discourse-linguistic framework that integrates Critical Discourse Analysis and affective linguistics, this study aims to demonstrate how everyday linguistic choices in popular song lyrics normalize emotional devotion, vulnerability, and relational inequality, thereby contributing to broader discussions on affect, discourse, and power in contemporary popular culture.

Method

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative discourse-analytic design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and informed by affective linguistics and stance theory. CDA is employed to examine how language functions as a social practice that both reflects and reproduces relational meanings, power asymmetries, and ideological positioning (Fairclough, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The integration of affective linguistics enables the analysis to move beyond structural description toward an understanding of how emotions are discursively enacted, circulated, and normalized through everyday language use (Wetherell, 2012, 2015). This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing popular song lyrics, as such texts operate simultaneously at the levels of personal expression and cultural discourse, allowing affective meanings to be framed as natural, intimate, and unquestioned.

In analytical practice, CDA guides the identification of power relations and ideological positioning through linguistic structures, while affective linguistics informs the interpretation of how emotions are discursively enacted through pronominal choices, modality, metaphor, and repetition at the textual level.

Data Source and Corpus

The primary data of this study consist of the complete official lyrics of *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan* by Idgitaf, obtained from verified lyric publications on IDN Times and Detik.com (accessed in 2025). These platforms were selected because they provide officially curated and widely circulated versions of Indonesian song lyrics, ensuring textual reliability and methodological transparency. The song was selected based on three criteria: Cultural relevance, the song is widely circulated within contemporary Indonesian popular music, and resonates strongly with urban youth audiences. Linguistic density is evident in the lyrics, which exhibit a high frequency of affect-laden expressions, pronominal constructions, modality, metaphor, and repetition. Analytical suitability, the text presents a clearly identifiable speaking subject (aku) and an implied addressee (kau), allowing for the examination of relational asymmetry and affective positioning. The lyrics

were treated as a self-contained textual corpus, analyzed as a written discourse artifact rather than as a musical or performative object. This delimitation ensures analytical focus on linguistic structures and meanings.

Analytical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Following Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, the analysis operates at three levels: the textual level (lexical choices, grammar, metaphor, and repetition), the discursive practice level (patterns of meaning-making and positioning), and the social practice level (broader cultural norms surrounding love, care, and emotional labor). CDA enables the identification of how relational asymmetry is discursively produced and legitimized.

Affective Linguistics

Affect is treated as a discursively organized phenomenon, not as an internal psychological state (Wetherell, 2012; Besnier, 2021). Linguistic features such as evaluative language, metaphor, and repetition are analyzed as mechanisms through which affective identity is constructed and stabilized.

Stance and Positioning Theory

Stance theory (Du Bois, 2007; Kärkkäinen, 2020) is used to examine how the lyrical subject positions itself emotionally, epistemically, and relationally. Narrative positioning (Bamberg, 2018) further supports the analysis of how the speaker repeatedly adopts a role of readiness, sacrifice, and endurance.

Analytical Procedures

The analysis followed a systematic, multi-step procedure: Text segmentation involved segmenting the lyrics into thematic units based on shifts in imagery, pronoun use, and modality. Coding of linguistic features. Each segment was coded for: pronominal patterns (aku, kau), modal expressions (epistemic and deontic), metaphorical constructions (e.g., hujan, bekal, peperangan), repetition and parallel structures, and evaluative and affective lexis. Interpretative analysis, coded features were interpreted in relation to affective identity formation and relational asymmetry, drawing on CDA and affect theory. Contextualization, findings were situated within broader discussions of emotional labor, intimacy, and popular culture in contemporary Indonesia (Hochschild, 2012; Heryanto, 2019). To enhance analytical rigor, interpretations were cross-checked against existing literature on affect, stance, and discourse, ensuring theoretical coherence rather than subjective reading.

Trustworthiness and Analytical Validity

Rather than statistical reliability, this study emphasizes theoretical validity and interpretative transparency. Validity is supported through explicit articulation of analytical categories, consistent application of theory-driven interpretation, and engagement with established linguistic scholarship. This aligns with qualitative standards in discourse studies, where meaning is understood as context-dependent and socially situated (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The study analyzes publicly available song lyrics and does not involve human participants. Therefore, no ethical clearance was required. The analysis remains focused on the text and its discursive effects, avoiding speculative claims about the songwriter's personal intentions.

Findings and Analysis

Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan

By Idgitaf

Jadi waktu itu dingin
Kuberi kau hangat
Walaupun ku juga beku
Tapi ku aman saat kau nyaman

Jadi waktu itu panas
Kuberi kau angin
Walaupun ku juga gerah
Tapi ku penuh saat kau teduh
Sudah paham 'kan sejauh ini?

Ku yang lama di sini
Menjagamu tak patah hati
Sedia aku sebelum hujan
Apa yang kau butuh kuberikan
Ke mana pun tak akan kau temukan
Yang siapkan bekalmu di peperangan
Jika tak setara, kumaafkan
Memang sebegitunya aku

Ku tak punya pilihan
Yang dikendali pikiran
Ada namamu disebutkan
Ke situlah arahku berjalan
Sudah paham 'kan sejauh ini?

Ku yang lama di sini

Menjagamu tak patah hati
Sedia aku sebelum hujan
Apa yang kau butuh kuberikan
Ke mana pun tak akan kau temukan
Yang siapkan bekalmu di peperangan
Jika tak setara, kumaafkan
Memang sebegitunya aku
Soal cinta aku jatuh

Ini janjiku
Untuk hadir
Dan mencintaimu
Di hari baikmu
Dan di hari burukmu

Sedia aku sebelum hujan
Apa yang kau butuh, kuberikan
Ku yang lama di sini
Menjagamu tak patah hati
Sedia aku sebelum hujan
Yang siapkan bekalmu di peperangan
Sedia aku sebelum hujan

(Source: IDN Times and detik.com in 2025)

1. Pronominal Asymmetry and Affective Positioning

One of the most salient linguistic features in the lyrics is the persistent use of the first-person singular pronoun “aku” in contrast to the second-person pronoun kau. The pronoun “aku” consistently occupies the role of agentive subject, as seen in clauses such as “kuberi kau hangat, menjagamu, and kuberikan”. In contrast, kau functions almost exclusively as a recipient of actions, rarely assuming grammatical agency.

From a discourse perspective, this pronominal pattern constructs a relational asymmetry in which emotional responsibility and initiative are disproportionately assigned to the speaker. According to stance theory, repeated agentive positioning reinforces a stable affective stance that becomes normalized through repetition (Du Bois, 2007; Kärkkäinen, 2020). The lyrical subject is thus constituted as a figure of emotional readiness and endurance, while the addressee remains linguistically undefined and passive.

This asymmetry aligns with previous findings in discourse studies that demonstrate how pronominal dominance contributes to the naturalization of unequal relational roles, particularly in narratives of care and intimacy (Bamberg, 2018; Kiesling, 2022). In this song, affective identity emerges not through explicit self-description but through **recurrent grammatical positioning**, suggesting that identity is enacted rather than declared.

2. Metaphorical Framing of Affective Crisis

Metaphor plays a central role in framing emotional experience in the lyrics. The recurring metaphor of “hujan” (rain) functions as a conceptual representation of anticipated emotional crisis. Rather than describing conflict directly, the song employs indirect metaphorical language to index vulnerability and hardship.

Within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory, “hujan” can be interpreted as mapping the source domain of natural disturbance onto the target domain of relational difficulty (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Importantly, the phrase “sebelum hujan” positions the speaker temporally prior to the crisis, emphasizing preparedness rather than reaction. This anticipatory stance reinforces the speaker's affective identity as emotionally vigilant and self-sacrificing.

Additional metaphors such as “bekal” (provisions) and “peperangan” (war) further intensify this framing. These metaphors introduce a discourse of struggle and survival into an otherwise intimate relational narrative, thereby legitimizing emotional labor as a form of necessary preparation. As Wetherell (2012) argues, metaphors do not merely reflect emotion but actively **organize affective meaning**, shaping how emotions are understood and valued within discourse.

3. Modalization and the Normalization of Emotional Sacrifice

Modal expressions in the lyrics play a crucial role in framing emotional devotion as inevitable and unquestionable. Utterances such as “ku tak punya pilihan” and “jika tak setara, kumaafkan” exemplify a form of epistemic and deontic modalization that constrains alternative subject positions.

The phrase “ku tak punya pilihan” signals a perceived lack of agency, framing emotional commitment as a condition beyond rational negotiation. This aligns with what Palmer (2020) identifies as epistemic modality that naturalizes subjective belief as objective necessity. Similarly, “kumaafkan” operates as a moral modality that pre-empts imbalance by transforming inequality into virtue.

From a critical perspective, such modalization contributes to the normalization of unequal emotional labor, a phenomenon that has been extensively discussed in sociolinguistic and feminist scholarship (Hochschild, 2012; van Dijk, 2018). Linguistically, sacrifice is not presented as a choice but as a moral default, thereby obscuring the power dynamics embedded in the relational structure.

4. Repetition as Affective Anchoring

Repetition constitutes a key discursive strategy in reinforcing affective identity. The repeated line “Sedia aku sebelum hujan” functions as an affective anchor, stabilizing the emotional orientation of the speaker throughout the song. Rather than advancing narrative progression, repetition serves to intensify emotional commitment and ensure its memorability.

Discourse prosody theory suggests that repeated lexical patterns accumulate evaluative meaning over time (Stubbs, 2001). In this case, repetition does not merely emphasize devotion; it renders emotional readiness as an enduring and unquestioned identity trait. As Toolan (2021) notes, repetition in lyrical discourse often serves as a

mechanism for affective alignment between the text and the audience, encouraging listeners to internalize the speaker's emotional stance.

The cumulative effect of repetition, metaphor, modality, and pronominal positioning yields a coherent affective identity that is both emotionally compelling and ideologically charged.

Interim Discussion

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan* constructs affective identity through **linguistic consistency rather than narrative development**. Emotional devotion is framed as stable, anticipatory, and morally justified, while relational asymmetry is subtly normalized through everyday language choices. This supports Fairclough's (2015) assertion that ideology often operates most effectively in texts that appear personal and non-political.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan* constructs affective identity through a constellation of **micro-linguistic strategies** that collectively normalize relational asymmetry. Rather than relying on overt ideological statements, the song employs subtle grammatical, metaphorical, and modal patterns that frame emotional devotion as natural, inevitable, and morally commendable. This confirms Fairclough's (2015) assertion that ideology often operates most effectively in texts that appear intimate and non-political.

From the perspective of **affective linguistics**, the song exemplifies how affect is not merely expressed but **performed through discourse**. The repeated positioning of the lyrical subject as emotionally prepared "before the rain" enacts a form of anticipatory affect, where care and sacrifice precede any explicit conflict. This supports Wetherell's (2012, 2015) argument that affect should be understood as a socially organized practice rather than an internal emotional state. In this context, affective identity emerges as a discursively sustained orientation toward endurance, readiness, and self-effacement.

The asymmetrical relational structure identified in the analysis aligns with scholarship on emotional labor, particularly Hochschild's (2012) observation that care work is often rendered invisible through moral framing. Linguistically, the normalization of sacrifice is achieved through epistemic and deontic modalization (ku tak punya pilihan; kumaafkan), which constrains alternative subject positions and limits the speaker's perceived agency. This finding extends van Dijk's (2018) discussion of power in discourse by illustrating how inequality can be reproduced not through dominance, but through voluntary self-positioning encoded in language.

Importantly, the song reflects broader tendencies in contemporary Indonesian pop discourse, which increasingly favors minimalist narratives, emotional subtlety, and everyday metaphors. These features resonate with Georgakopoulou's (2015, 2022) concept of small stories, where identity is constructed through fragmented, non-heroic narratives rather than grand plot structures. In this sense, *Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan* does not merely tell a story of love, but participates in a cultural discourse that valorizes quiet endurance and emotional readiness as desirable relational traits.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to **Critical Discourse Analysis** by demonstrating the analytical value of integrating affect theory and stance analysis. While CDA has traditionally emphasized macro-level power relations, the present findings highlight how power and inequality can be reproduced through **affective alignment and emotional intimacy**. This suggests a need for CDA to more explicitly engage with affective dimensions of discourse, particularly in texts that circulate widely within popular culture.

Conclusion

This study examines how affective identity and relational asymmetry are discursively constructed in the lyrics of "Sedia Aku Sebelum Hujan" by Idgitaf, utilizing an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, affective linguistics, and stance theory. The analysis reveals that affective devotion is linguistically framed as anticipatory, morally justified, and inevitable, while relational inequality is subtly normalized through pronominal asymmetry, metaphorical framing, modalization, and repetition. By foregrounding the role of language in organizing affect and relational meaning, this study demonstrates that popular song lyrics function not merely as expressions of emotion but as discursive sites where cultural norms of love, care, and sacrifice are produced and circulated. Future research may extend this analysis by examining comparative datasets across genres, artists, or cultural contexts, thereby further illuminating the linguistic politics of affect in contemporary popular culture.

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