# The Implicit Ideology in National Council for Peace and Order's Songs

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#### **Abstract**

Due to the political conflicts that had occurred in Thai politics for many years, the Royal Thai Armed Forces launched a coup d'état in May 2014. The Thai military then established the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), which governed Thailand until July 2019. Beginning in May 2014, the NCPO released eight songs, which were from the soundtracks of the TV show, called 'Thailand Moves Forward'. Thais who watched TV regularly would definitely have heard at least one of the songs. which were written and arranged by the NCPO. This study aims to explore an implicit ideology in all eight National Council for Peace and Order's songs and to analyze linguistic strategies used to convey the ideology in the song lyrics by adopting the critical discourse analysis approach. The result showed that the ideology hidden in the songs is the insecurity of the country. There is a war in Thailand, and Thailand is not a safe place. People having three different roles were found in the analysis. The first role was the role of the Thai government as a hero who had the power to save the country and to sacrifice themselves for the Thai people. Next, the role of the Thai people and the country is that of victims who face obstacles and need to have someone to help them. The

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last role is that of the villains: the people who do not accept the assertion that the government has worked hard to save the country. After analyzing these song lyrics, it was found that there are six linguistic strategies used to convey the implicit ideology. They are the uses of lexical choice, transitivity, modality, speech act, presupposition and metaphor.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis; National Council for Peace and Order's Songs; Ideology; Linguistic Strategies

# อุดมการณ์แฝงในเพลงของคณะรักษาความสงบแห่งชาติ

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# บทคัดย่อ

ประเทศไทยเป็นประเทศที่มีความขัดแย้งทางการเมืองมาอย่างยาวนาน และ เพื่อแก้ไขปัญหานี้ กองทัพไทยได้ก่อรัฐประหารในเดือนพฤษภาคม พ.ศ.2557 และ ได้จัดตั้งคณะรักษาความสงบแห่งชาติ หรือ คสช. ขึ้น เพื่อปกครองประเทศไทยจนถึง เดือนกรกฎาคม พ.ศ.2562 ในระหว่างการปกครองประเทศไทย คสช. ได้แต่งเพลง ขึ้นเป็นจำนวน 8 เพลง และยังใช้เพลงเหล่านี้เป็นเพลงประกอบรายการโทรทัศน์ที่ มีชื่อว่า "เดินหน้าประเทศไทย" คนไทยที่ดูรายการโทรทัศน์อย่างสม่ำเสมออาจจะมี โอกาสได้ยินและคุ้นหูกับเพลงเหล่านี้อย่างน้อยไม่เพลงใดก็เพลงหนึ่ง งานวิจัยนี้จัด ทำขึ้นเพื่อสำรวจอุดมการณ์แฝงในเพลงทั้งหมดของ คสช. และเพื่อวิเคราะห์กลวิธี ทางภาษาที่ใช้ในการถ่ายทอดอุดมการณ์ โดยงานวิจัยนี้ใช้แนวคิดวาทกรรมวิเคราะห์ เชิงวิพากษ์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าอุดมการณ์แฝงที่พบสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงความไม่ปลอดภัย ของประเทศ ประเทศไทยกำลังมีสงคราม และไม่ใช่สถานที่ที่ปลอดภัย อีกทั้งจาก การวิเคราะห์ยังพบบทบาทของคนในประเทศไทยจำนวน 3 บทบาท บทบาทแรก คือ บทบาทของรัฐบาลไทยในฐานะวีรบุรุษที่มีอำนาจในการช่วยประเทศไทยและเสีย สละตนเองเพื่อคนไทย บทบาทที่สอง คือ บทบาทของคนไทยและประเทศไทยที่เป็น เหยื่อหรือผู้ประสบภัย และจำเป็นต้องได้รับความช่วยเหลือ บทบาทสุดท้าย คือ คน ที่ไม่ยอมรับความจริงที่ว่ารัฐบาลได้ทำงานอย่างหนักเพื่อช่วยเหลือประเทศ ซึ่งได้ รับบทบาทให้เป็นผู้ร้าย หลังจากการวิเคราะห์เนื้อเพลงเหล่านี้พบว่ามีกลวิธีทาง ภาษาทั้งหมด 6 กลวิธีที่ใช้ในการถ่ายทอดอุดมการณ์แฝง ประกอบด้วย การเลือก

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**คำสำคัญ:** วาทกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์; เพลงของคณะรักษาความสงบแห่งชาติ; อุดมการณ์; กลวิธีทางภาษา

#### 1. Introduction

By 2014, Thai politics had been chaotic for more than ten years. There were many conflicts between two or more groups of people. Then in May of that year, the Royal Thai Armed Forces launched a coup d'état and declared martial law to stop the political conflicts. The military established the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) to govern Thailand. Since then, the head of the NCPO, General Prayut Chan-ocha, has been the Prime Minister of Thailand.

One of the well-known activities that the NCPO launched to promote itself among the Thai people was the TV show called 'Thailand Moves Forward'. The show was broadcast daily from 6.00-6.30 p.m. (8.30-9.30 p.m. on Fridays) for five years, from June 6, 2014 to July 15, 2019. For the TV show, the NCPO produced eight songs. Thai people who often watched TV might have had a chance to experience one of these eight NCPO's songs. According to Adams and Fuller (2006), music has been used as a medium for humans to express thoughts, feelings and emotions concerning their society. Therefore, song lyrics are not just written for the beautiful rhymes of the songs, but they can also reflect a hidden message of the producer of the songs. According to Bradby (2003), there are at least three ways to analyze discourse in popular music. The first way is to analyze lyrics as performed language. The next way is to analyze the discourse of music and singers. The last way is to analyze music as discourse. In this study, the NCPO's song lyrics were chosen to analyze for a hidden message from the producers of the songs, the NCPO, and if so, what the message was hidden message might be an implicit ideology the NCPO wanted to communicate to Thais. When people listen to the songs repeatedly, they might perceive an implicit ideology without being conscious of it. In the end, people might believe that the ideology as a truth or fact.

Ideology has been studied in everyday interaction and conversation, but it cannot be reduced to any essential concept. Therefore, critical approaches to discourse are important for separating essential concepts. Even though there is much literature in most fields of the humanities and the social sciences, this does not mean that an ideology or its relationship with discourse can be clearly understood. Thus, the nature of ideology needs to be built from studies of discourse, cognition and society respectively (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 25).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the discourse analysis approach that intends to reveal the relationship between discourse, ideology and power (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). The main focus of CDA is to study the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 2003, p. 352). Therefore, in this study, CDA is considered to be the most appropriate approach to adopt in the analysis of ideology in the text and song lyrics.

According to Fairclough (1989), there are three stages of critical discourse analysis. The first stage is the description of the text. The second stage is the interpretation of the text. The last stage is the explanation of the interaction and the social context. Additionally, Fairclough (1995) stated the concept of a CDA consisting of a three-dimensional framework that intends to link text, discursive practice, and social practice together. The first dimension is text, which may be either spoken or written, and the aim is to analyze the linguistic features and organization of discourse. The second dimension is a discursive practice that examines discourse as the construction, distribution, and consumption in society. The last dimension is a social practice that focuses on social and institutional relations affected by the construction, distribution, and consumption of the text. Furthermore, Fairclough pays attention to the role of discourse in hegemonic practices. The framework of Fairclough

was adopted to analyze the lyrics in order to find the implicit ideology in this study.

This study builds upon previous researches analyzing song lyrics, including Adams and Fuller, 2006; Aleshinskaya, 2013; Martines Jr and Selepak, 2013; Arbain and Sandi, 2016; and Risdianto, 2016. Adams and Fuller (2006), and Martines Jr and Selepak (2013) are the previous studies that reveal the inequality in societies. The first study, Adams and Fuller (2006), analyzed misogynistic lyrics in rap music. The findings showed that even though time passed, and the words used in rap songs have changed, the ideology of misogyny has continued in the United States, especially toward African American women. Similarly, Martines Jr and Selepak (2013) analyzed 38 song lyrics of Angry Aryan, the most famous racist bands in the United States. The results showed that there were many ideologies found in the lyrics, for example, describing homosexual and minorities in the US as inferior and subhuman and portraying non-racist whites as oppressive and a danger to the white people.

Besides the ideology about inequality, these song lyrics can also reveal the implicit ideology from the composer of the song. According to Risdianto (2016), the song lyric 'We will not go down', a song for Gaza, was analyzed by adopting three aspects of discourse analysis – contextual, grammatical, and lexical aspects. The findings revealed that the background and life experience of the writer or singer of the song has an effect on the representation of the lyrics. The ideology hidden in the song was that Palestinian people would not surrender to anyone or anything.

The analysis of song lyrics can also show the identity of the songwriter or composer as seen in Aleshinskaya (2013), and Arbain and Sandi (2016)'s work. Aleshinskaya (2013) analyzed the lyrics of 129 songs from different

genres. It was found that each genre of music had its unique styles. For example, African American Vernacular English words were used as the lexical selection of rap and hip hop music. Likewise, Arbain and Sandi (2016) analyzed the lyrics of the song 'Love the Way You Lie Part II' written by Eminem. The results showed that there was a transcultural process and that the environment influenced people, as Eminem, a white hip hop singer, used many African American Vernacular English words in the song lyrics to create a new identity.

All of these previous studies show that the lyrics are not just a component of music, but they are also composed of a specific purpose such as illustrating the uniqueness and life experience of the composer. In addition, the analysis of song lyrics can reveal implicit ideologies of the producer of the songs.

This study aims to explore the implicit ideology in National Council for Peace and Order's songs and to analyze linguistic strategies used to convey this ideology in the song lyrics by adopting the critical discourse analysis approach.

# 2. Data and Approach

The lyrics if eight songs from the Thai TV show 'Thailand Moves Forward' were chosen for analysis in the study. Each song was released at a different period of time during the five years of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha's government. The songs are listed in order of release date and each song will be referred to by the number on its left.

1) 'Returning Happiness to Thailand,' the first NCPO song was released on June 6, 2014.

- 2) 'Because You are Thailand<sup>1</sup>' was released on December 22, 2014, as a New Year's present to the Thai people.
- 3) 'Hope and Faith' was released on October 26, 2015.
- 4) 'A Bridge' was released on January 4, 2017.
- 5) 'A Diamond Heart' was released on February 14, 2018.
- 6) 'Fight for the Country' was released on April 11, 2018.
- 7) 'In Memory' was released on January 10, 2019.
- 8) 'A New Day' was released on March 4, 2019.

("Prayut 5 Years 8 Songs", 2019).

All of the songs were written by the Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-ocha, except the first song. which was written by Wichian Tantiphimonphan, a professional songwriter. As the lyrics could not all be found within one source, the lyrics used in the study were obtained from various online websites, such as Kapook, Mgronline, Mthai, The Standard, and Lyrics City.

The critical discourse analysis approach was adopted to analyze the data. The analysis consisted of three steps. First, the text and lyrics were analyzed. Then, the analysis was interpreted. Finally, the analysis was explained in terms of social practice.

#### 3. Results

It was found that six linguistic strategies were used in these song lyrics to convey the hidden message of the songwriter, or NCPO. These were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The names of the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth songs used in the study were translated by the researcher.

the use of lexical choice, transitivity, modality, speech act, presupposition and metaphor.

#### 3.1 Lexical Choice

The first linguistic strategy was the use of lexical choice. The use of lexical choice can be seen in the lyrics of all the songs. The words used can be divided into four main groups. The first group of words is words related to war and difficulty, for instance, phāj 'danger', bà:tmă:ŋ 'conflict', thāmlā:j 'destroy', sû: 'fight', jă:k 'difficult', fānfà: 'struggle', cèpchám 'hurt', and thāmrá:j 'attack'. These words were used to indicate that Thailand is in danger and not safe.

Secondly, a group of words related to cooperation and success were used in the NCPO's song lyrics to convince the Thai people to support the government and to create a sense of reliance on the government and its ability to help the country get through the difficult times. For example, the song lyrics used the words capmi: 'hold hands', rûammi: 'cooperate', cīŋcāj 'sincere', să:mákkhī: 'unite', kwā:mdī: 'goodness', chiê:mân 'reliance', plā:-jthā:ŋ 'destination', khwā:mcīŋ 'truth', ráksă: 'save' plienplē:ŋ 'change', and kê:khǎj 'solve'.

The third group of words was words related to the people who do not support the government such as khōnlŏnthā:n 'the lost', and khōnrá:j 'villains'. Surprisingly, these words were found only in the sixth song, 'Fight for the Country', which was released in April 2018 during the period of time when many political parties were startiing to prepare for the upcoming Thai election in March 2019.

The last group of words was the words related to a better, more democratic, time. This group of words was mostly found in the later songs (from the fifth to eighth song) and included words such as phrûŋní: 'tomorrow', făn 'dream', fàjfăn 'dream of', wānmàj 'new day' and prà?chā:thípprà?tāj 'democracy'. The latest song, 'A New Day', especially used the word 'democracy' since it was released on March 4, 2019 - just twenty days before the Thai election.

#### 3.2 Transitivity

The next linguistic strategy is the use of transitivity. The pronoun 'you' in (1) and (2) which referred to the Thai people or Thailand was used to be an object of the transitive verbs haj 'give' and phā: 'bring' respectively. From this, it can be interpreted to indicate that the Thai people or the country lacked the power to perform an action for themselves.

(1) Song #1

khǒ: khī:n khwā:msùk hǎj <u>thē:</u> prà?chā:chōn request return happiness give <u>you</u> people 'Return happiness to <u>you</u>, people.'

(2) Song #4

<sup>2</sup>cà? phā: <u>thē:</u> hâj phón thúkphāj MOD bring <u>you</u> give pass danger

'(I) will help **you** pass all the danger.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Abbreviations used in this article are COMP= complementizer, DIS PRO = distributive pronoun, FP = final particle, MOD = modal, NEG = negation, and PAS = passive

#### 3.3 Modality

The use of modality can also be seen in all eight of the NCPO's songs. These include cà? 'will', tôŋ 'must', à:tcà? 'maybe' and cōŋ 'have to'. The use of cà? 'will' and à:tcà? 'maybe' can indicate possibility, whereas the use of cōŋ 'have to' and tôŋ 'must' can indicate certainty. Besides, the use of tôŋ 'must' does not only indicate certainty, but it also indicted an assumption as in (3). The songwriter used 'must' frequently in the last four songs in order to increase their ability to elicit credibility from the Thai people so that they would believe that Thailand would be better soon.

(3) Song #6

tú:kwān	<u>tôŋ</u>	dī:	kh <del>î</del> n	pāj
every day	<u>must</u>	good	up	go

'(It) must be better every day.'

#### 3.4 Speech Act

The use of speech acts can be found in several songs, including the first, third, fourth, seventh and eighth songs. There were both commissive and directive speech acts, but notably, the commissive speech act was found only in the lyrics of the first song as in (4), while the directive speech act was found in the first and in other songs: (5), (6), (7), (8) and (9). This means that the government made a promise to Thai people at first in order to gain their trust. Then, the use of only directive speech acts reveals that the writer of the song lyrics had the power to ask receivers of this message to act as he wanted.

(4) Song #1

nî: kh<del>i</del>: khām sánjā: this be word promise

'This is a promise.'

(5) Song #1

cōη wájcāj lέ? sàtthā: MOD trust and faith

'Trust and have faith.'

(6) Song #3

jà: thó:thé: wànwǎj don't discourage shaken 'Don't be discouraged and shaken.'

(7) Song #4

khó: cōŋ jà: wàn dājdāj request MOD don't afraid anything

'Please don't be afraid.'

(8) Song #7

cōŋ trō:ŋ dū: hâj dī: dûaj hǔacāj
MOD think look give good with heart
'Think carefully with (your) heart.'

(9) Song #8

já: hâj khrāj khâw mā: thām-hâj thāj tôŋ thù:k thāmrá:j don't give who enter come make Thai MOD PAS attack 'Don't let anyone attack Thailand.'

#### 3.5 Presupposition

The use of presupposition was found in the third, fourth, sixth, seventh and eighth songs. This use can reveal three existences – the existence of discouragement among the Thai people, people who did not support the government, and people who wanted to destroy the country. Firstly, the use of presupposition in (10) and (11) may indicate that some Thai people might already be discouraged and shaken because of the instability of Thai politics. Thus, the songwriter wanted the Thai people not to be discouraged.

(10) Song #3

jà: thó:thɛ: wànwǎj don't discourage shaken 'Don't be discouraged and shaken.'

(11) Song #4

jà: phêŋ thó:thɛ: don't just discourage

'Don't be discouraged'

Furthermore, the presupposition used in the sixth song in (12) and (13) shows that there might be some groups of people who criticized the government

and did not accept the truth of the assertion that the situation in Thailand had been improved as the government claimed. The songwriter might have wanted want to convince people who did not support the government to open their minds and accept the truth about what the government had done so far.

#### (12) Song #6

mέ: mī: khrāj tì?chǐn thâwràjeven have who criticize how much

'Even (I am) criticized by (others)' no matter how much I am criticized

#### (13) Song #6

mō:ŋ dûaj cāj dûaj khwā:mcīŋ cà? hěn wâ: mān dī-kwà: look with heart with truth MOD see COMP it better 'Open (your) mind and accept the truth. (You) will see (the situation) is getting better.'

Lastly, the use of presupposition in the later songs in (14) and (15) can be interpreted to indicate that there were some people who wanted to destroy or attack Thailand. So, the Thai people should not let anyone hurt the country.

## (14) Song #7

jà: hâj khrāj khǎw mā: thāmlā:j jà:ŋ-khē:jmā: don't give who enter come destroy used to be 'Don't let anyone destroy (our land) as (he/she) used to do.'

(15) Song #8

já: hâj khrāj khâw mā: thām-hâj thāj tôŋ thù:k thāmrá:j don't give who enter come make Thai MOD PASS attack 'Don't let anyone attack Thailand.'

#### 3.6 Metaphor

The last linguistic strategy is the use of metaphor. The use of metaphor was found in the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth songs. All the metaphors found in the NCPO's songs can be divided into four categories. First, there is the metaphor that gives the picture of insecurity of Thailand, for instance, likening the danger to a fire in (16), and to a fast-flowing river that is a great obstacle in (17).

(16) Song #1

phā:nphāj fāj lúk-chō:n danger fire blaze

'Danger is a blazing fire.'

(17) Song #4

cē: mê:ná:m chîewkrà:k ùpprà?sàk thǐ: sě:n-jǐnjāj
meet river fast-flowing obstacle COMP great
'Facing a fast-flowing river (is) the great obstacle.'

The next metaphor is the metaphor showing the government is a bridge in (18). This indicates that the government was willing to lead the Thai people from a bad place to a better place.

#### (18) Song #4

chán phró:m cà? pēn sà?phā:n I ready will be bridge

The third metaphor is a metaphor displaying the importance of the Thai people to the government such as comparing 'you' to the country, 'your smile' to happiness, 'your strength' to a diamond's in (19), (20), (21) and (22). From the use of these metaphors, it can be seen that for the government, the most important people are the Thai people, for they are Thailand. Therefore, everything that the government had done was to increase the happiness of Thai people.

#### (19) Song #2

phró? thē: nán khī: prà?thê:t thāj because you COMP be Thailand

# (20) Song #2

thē: khī: sìŋ thî: jítmân you be thing COMP adherence

# (21) Song #5

thām cāj hâj pēn phét thé: do heart give be diamond real

<sup>&#</sup>x27;I am willing to be a bridge.'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Because you are Thailand'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;You are adherence.' what I belive in

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Make (your) heart as strong as diamond.

Song #5

jím cà:k thē: rú: máj khī: sùk khỏ:ŋ chǎn smile from you know FP be happiness of I 'Your smile is my happiness.' Do you know that your smile is my happiness?

The last type of metaphor is the metaphor depicting the people who did not accept the proposition that the government helped improve the situation in the country as lost as in (23), so that the songwriter compared these lost people with an extinguished light that needed someone to light it.

(22) Song #6

hâj knōnlŏŋthā:ŋ tɨ:ntōn sà?wà:ŋ cāj plān give the lost awake bright heart immediately 'Enlighten the lost immediately.'

## 4. Implicit Ideology in NCPO's Song Lyrics and Roles of People in Thailand

As seen in the results in the previous section, the uses of all of these linguistic strategies can help convey an implicit ideology and a clear picture of people in Thailand. The implicit ideology in NCPO's song lyrics is the insecurity of Thailand. The use of lexical choice, such as phāj 'danger', bà:tmă:ŋ 'conflict', thāmlā:j 'destroy', sû: 'fight', cèpchám 'hurt', càpmī: 'hold hands', rûammī: 'cooperate', khōnlŏŋthā:ŋ 'the lost', khōnrá:j 'villain' and wānmàj 'new day', helps convey the ideology that Thailand is in the middle of a war, and the Thai people need to cooperate with the military commanders, the NCPO, in order to pass through this difficult situation. Moreover, the use of transitivity,

the pronoun 'you' as an object of transitive verbs, may reveal that the Thai people, the victims of the war and are not able to save themselves. Next, the use of modality 'must' can help the government or the NCPO, who is the hero in the war, receive credence and trust from the Thais. The uses of commissive and directive speech acts also help convince the victims of the war to trust their leader and his ability to save them from risks. Additionally, the use of presupposition, such as the existence of people who intend to destroy the country, can emphasize the insecurity of Thailand. Last, metaphors, such as 'danger is a blazing fire', intensify the picture of Thailand as an unsafe and dangerous country.

According to Van Dijk (2006), ideologies are not only constructed by a dominant group of people that use their power to lead a consensus, but also by other people in the same society. However, the dominant group may have a more effective organization to make their ideologies acceptable. Similarly, in this study, the songwriters were considered as members of the dominant group in Thailand. Thus, the lyrics of these eight songs were important in terms of reflecting the implicit ideology of the dominant group which seemed to have the most power in the country. One possible explanation related to the implicit ideology is the schema of the creator. According to Risdianto (2016)'s finding, the life experience and background of the writer had an effect on the content of the songs. In this study, as the song lyrics were written by people from the military group, the ideology may relate to the concept of war and security.

In addition, from the analysis, the NCPO's song lyrics also reveal three roles of people in Thai society. The first role is the role of the government as a hero who tried hard to rescue the Thai people and the country. The next role is the role of Thai people as victims who did not have the power to save

themselves. According to Bayram (2010), the main goal of the politicians is to convince the audience to believe in their political claims. It can be seen that the songwriter is attempting to persuade this group of people to trust the government and their ability to help them and to bring democracy back to Thailand. The last role can be clearly found from the sixth song, 'Fight for the Country'. It is the role of people who did not support the government and are portrayed as villains or as the lost who needed to open their minds and accept the truth that the government had done many things to improve the situation in the country. The reason that the role of a villain occurred only in this song might be because many rumors and bad news about the government had been increasing during the time that song #6 was released. Moreover, it was a time when both old and new political parties who might have had political ideals opposed to those of the government were beginning to prepare for the election in March 2019.

#### 5. Conclusion

Beginning in 2014, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) released eight songs from the soundtracks of the TV show called 'Thailand Moves Forward'. Seven out of the eight songs were written by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, the Prime Minister of Thailand and the leader of the NCPO. Almost all these lyrics were written by one person who is from the dominant group of people in Thailand. Consequently, it can be concluded that the implicit ideology reflects the hidden intention of the group that has power in Thailand.

From the analysis of the NCPO's song lyrics, the implicit ideology is the insecurity of Thailand. There is a war in Thailand, and the situation in Thailand is unsafe. Therefore, the Thai people need to have someone who can protect them and rescue them. Moreover, there are three roles of people found in the analysis. The first role is the role of the Thai government as a hero who had the power to save the country and who would sacrifice himself for the Thai people. Next, the role of the Thai people and the country is that of victims who faced obstacles and needed to have someone to help them. The last role is that of the villains, the people who did not accept the claim / assertion / proposition that the government had worked hard to save the country. After analyzing these song lyrics, it was found that there are six linguistic strategies used to convey the implicit ideology. They are the uses of lexical choice, transitivity, modality, speech act, presupposition and metaphor.

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