

***Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean: A Study of Song Form and Meaning**

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Article Details	ABSTRACT
Article History Received mm dd, yyyy Revised mm dd, yyyy Accepted mm dd, yyyy	This study aims to examine the structure and musical meaning in Soegi Bornean's song <i>Asmalibrasi</i> using a musical form analysis and musical aesthetics approach. As a popular musical work rich in expression, <i>Asmalibrasi</i> is worth further analysis, not only in its lyrics but also in its musical elements as written in the score. The method used is a qualitative descriptive approach with score analysis, including observation of song form, expression marks, dynamics, articulation, and harmonic progression. The results of the study show that this song has a three-part form (A–B–A') with divisions into intro, verse, chorus, bridge, interlude, and coda. Expression marks play an important role in shaping emotional meaning. Changes in dynamics, chord progressions, and phrase structure show an emotional journey from calm to climax and back to silence. In conclusion, <i>Asmalibrasi</i> is not only pleasant to listen to but also features a strong, expressive musical structure. This song shows that popular music can be analyzed scientifically and contains deep aesthetic value.
Keywords Asmalibrasi Song Form Meaning Music Aesthetics Folkpop	
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1. INTRODUCTION

In this day and age, there are many ways we can relax our minds. One of them is listening to music. Gani et al. (2022) explain that music elicits positive reactions in listeners, such as feelings of calmness, increased focus, and the ability to express their feelings. Through music, we can express the emotions, feelings, and opinions experienced by both the composer and the listener. This is not only to express their imagination, but also to express their personal experiences. Music is also an effective medium for conveying messages. Music is part of a song. A collection and sequence of notes that are then combined with rhythm and lyrics so that the meaning intended by the creator can be conveyed to the audience is the definition of a song. Music can evoke an unlimited range of feelings that stem from the emotions of the creator and the listener. Beethoven (Sunarto, 2016) once said that music can kindle the fire in the human mind. This means that with music, humans can pour out all their emotions and feelings to become better. As times have evolved, so too have the types of music with their own distinct categories.

Music has been around since the Paleolithic period, which spanned from 300,000 to 12,000 years ago, making it an art form that will never disappear. One of the benefits of music is that it can be used as a medium for communication. This aligns with (2020), who states that music is a medium for humans to express their feelings through sounds, with rhythm, melody, and harmony, thereby touching the emotions of the listener. Meanwhile, according to music, music has various definitions, including (1) Described as a sound or impression of something captured by the sense of hearing, (2) Can be considered a work of art with all its primary and supporting elements, and (3) Defined as a presentation of all sounds produced intentionally by a person or group of people. Music is a work of art that conveys a person's imagination, ideas, thoughts, and

feelings through beautiful harmony (Suci, 2019). According to Widhyatma (2012), music is a clear expression of the human heart, expressed through melodies arranged with beautiful harmonies. To maintain good mental health, music is one option for sustaining human health (Andaryani, 2019).

Music is composed in such a way as to produce harmonious tones and rhythms. According to Rifki et al. (2023), music is pleasant to the ear because it has unique tones. This is in line with the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), which defines music as tones or sounds arranged in such a way as to form rhythm, melody, and harmony, producing a unified and continuous composition of sounds. Pop music or art, Western music at this time began to become a deity in society.

Music can be interpreted as a medium or expression of one's heart through melody, rhythm, and harmonious tones that are pleasant to the ear. According to Pasaribu & Sinaga (2021), music is a universal human need, and the absence of music in a culture is unimaginable. Music composed by its creator has a profound influence on listeners and affects various domains, including emotional, behavioral, physical, educational, and imaginative aspects of individuals.

Music is organized into various categories, commonly called genres. Music genres are classifications of music based on characteristics such as similarities, geographic origins, style, context, musical techniques, and musical themes. One of the music genres is folk. Folk is a form of traditional music that emerged in the mid-20th century. Many musicians were involved in creating new variations of existing genres, a practice that gave their music a distinctive character and appeal. (Firdana, 2024) . One of these is the folk pop genre. This genre combines contemporary folk songs with pop arrangements. It can also be interpreted as pop songs arranged in a folk style. The folk-pop genre is gaining popularity among Indonesian teenagers.

One of them is the band Soegi Bornean. Soegi Bornean gained popularity through the song "Asmalibrasi." One of them is the band Soegi Bornean. Soegi Bornean gained popularity through the song "Asmalibrasi." Soegi Bornean began to gain popularity after releasing a mini-album titled Atma, featuring the single Asmalibrasi. On October 7, 2022, the viral song "Asmalibrasi," released in 2019, reached the second position on Spotify's weekly top songs list in Indonesia. Additionally, as of January 25, 2025, the song has been streamed 85,259,059 times on YouTube, and as of February 18, 2025, it has been streamed 222,533,758 times on Spotify. This achievement has propelled Soegi Bornean's name to prominence in the music world and has garnered him an increasing number of fans. The fans of Soegi Bornean are known as Kawan Bersoegiria.

Soegi Bornean's YouTube channel, Soegi Bornean, expressed the idea that every couple has a unique narrative, each filled with feelings, and that every feeling holds aspirations for love. In this case, I hope that all forms of love are characterized by simplicity and equality. Soegi Bornean arranged this work. Songwriters tend to have different preferences, both in terms of lyrics and melody. Therefore, it is not surprising that each song can have its own meaning. Meaning is defined as an interpretation that gives rise to a concept. The significance of a song lies in how the composer expresses their reflections through a unique medium, thereby revealing the essence of their identity and spirit (Novandhi & Yanuartuti, 2020).

The term "meaning" is used to indicate the relationship between the elements of language itself, with a special emphasis on words (Djajasudarma, 1993: 7) . According to Moeliono (Hasbillaah & Rachmaningtyas, 2022), music, in its purest form, can be defined as an artistic composition that combines sound and language. This integration is reflected in harmonious melodies and the performers' vocal intonation. In modern song structures, especially pop songs, there are usually sections such as *intro, verse, bridge, chorus, refrain, interlude, ending, coda, and outro*. Although not all songs contain all of these sections, parts such as *the intro, verse, refrain, and ending* are always present in every song (Hutomo, 2015) .

There are several unique aspects to Soegi Bornean's song Asmalibasi, such as the combination of cultural and modern elements, profound and poetic lyrics, musical experimentation where the song Asmalibrasi uses various types of musical instruments or sound effects to create a particular atmosphere that describes the meaning of the song, and also this song carries the image of Borneo's identity that is brought to life through music. With its metaphorical lyrics, the combination of Javanese and Kalimantan nuances, and its folk pop genre, the work attracted the author's attention to conduct research, and the researcher chose this topic as a research project. For this reason, the author chose the title "Asmalibrasi by Soegi Bornean in the Study of Song Form and Meaning."

The researcher's objectives in choosing this topic are: (1) To understand the form of asmalibrasi songs. (2) To understand the meaning of asmalibrasi songs in terms of musical aesthetics. Previous research relevant to this article is Nugraha Putra & Dinata (2023), entitled "Analysis of the Form of the Song 'Bhuana Santhi' by I Komang Darmayuda". According to his research, the song "Bhuana Santhi" consists of 67 bars, with a processing technique that emphasizes modulation and uses conventional Western harmony, with the most dominant chords being I-ii-iii-IV-V-vi. The second is a study conducted by Langi et al. (2022) entitled

"Analysis of the Form and Meaning of the Lyrics of the Song '*Ya Servants of God*' in the Hymnal". The results of his research show that the lyrics of the song "*Ya Servants of God*" by Charles Wesley in the Hymnal have a paired rhyme structure and a deep meaning related to the devotion of God's servants in their ministry. The third is a study conducted by Suwaryo (2022) entitled "Stylistic Analysis of the Lyrics of the Song 'Asmalibrasi' by Soegi Bornean". The results of this study show that the diction in the song lyrics is mostly connotative. In addition, the lyrics in the song "Asmalibrasi" use many figures of speech, including metaphors, allegories, and hyperbole.

The fourth study, conducted by Firdana (2024), is titled "Analisis Bentuk Dan Makna Lagu 'Jayalah Persela' Karya Soegi Asdeni" (Analysis of the Form and Meaning of the Song 'Jayalah Persela' by Soegi Asdeni). The results of this research indicate that the song is divided into several sections, namely Intro, Verse, Pre, Chorus, Bridge, Interlude, and Outro. This structure leads to 'Jayalah Persela' having a song form called "Verse-Pre-Chorus Form." This form is one of the popular structures within the pop music genre. Furthermore, the meaning of this song, in both lexical and grammatical contexts, emphasizes support for Persela, a football club from Lamongan, East Java.

The fifth study, conducted by Advensia Bogar (2023), is titled "Kajian Struktur Dan Makna Lagu Gemu Fa Mi Re Karya Nyong Franco" (Study of the Structure and Meaning of the Song Gemu Fa Mi Re by Nyong Franco). The findings of this research indicate that the song Gemu Fa Mi Re consists of three sections (A, B, and C) with a structural pattern of A-B-A-C-A-B-A-C. The meaning of the first verse in this song is lexical, while the chorus carries a connotative meaning.

The sixth study, conducted by Yunita Noviasari & Kamila Fathiya Rahma (2022), is titled "Majas Gaya Bahasa pada Lirik lagu 'Asmalibrasi' Karya Dimec Tirta, Erick dan Soegi Bornean dalam Album Atma" (Figures of Speech in the Lyrics of the Song 'Asmalibrasi' by Dimec Tirta, Erick, and Soegi Bornean in the Album Atma). The results of this study show that the dominant figure of speech used is associative comparison. The overall meaning of the song 'Asmalibrasi' depicts a wedding.

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method, a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of words and descriptions of the objects observed. In other words, the research report will contain a series of sentences, including quotations and images, for the presentation. According to Prof. Burhan Bungin (in Ibrahim, 2018), qualitative research is a research process with unlimited depth of data, even though its targets are limited. This means that the higher the quality of the data obtained and the deeper the quality of the data, the higher the quality of the research results. In qualitative research, generalization of findings is not possible due to the specificity and detailed nature of the research guidelines. Additionally, this research also has subjective and *transferability* characteristics.

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive analysis approach with Music Form Analysis (IBAM) because the objects did not require measurement or statistical processes. According to Mohamad Ali (1982:120), descriptive analysis is used to address problems that occur in the present. The IBAM approach was conducted based on the song's structure, as determined by its sentence parts (Banoe, 2003).

The primary data sources for this study were musical notation, song lyrics obtained through observation and documentation, and interviews with additional data sources from journals, printed and electronic books, and online platforms (websites, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Spotify). Notation is fundamental to learn and understanding in the context of music. Notation in music is a fundamental step in recognizing a piece of music or creating a song. (Mahendra et al., 2025) The researchers used various data collection techniques, including observation, literature review, and documentation. Non-participant observation: the researchers did not interact directly but analyzed musical notation and then observed the meaning of the song. Literature review obtained from articles, journals, books, both printed and electronic, and online platforms such as websites, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Spotify. Interviews served as validators of the researcher's study by gathering opinions and analyses from sources with diverse backgrounds, enriching the research results. Interviews were conducted with Drs. Heri Murbiyanto, M.Pd, a lecturer in Music Form, and Rekso Waskito provide a perspective on the creation of the song "Asmalibrasi." Documentation from the musical notation data of the song Asmalibrasi, the lyrics data of the song Asmalibrasi

In this study, researchers used data analysis methods, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions, as explained by Ibrahim (2018) in his book Qualitative Research Methodology. Data validity is determined through a rigorous examination process to ensure the scientific integrity of the research. Therefore, data validation is essential. According to Moleong (Ibrahim, 2018), four criteria are used to ensure research validity: credibility testing, transferability testing, dependability testing, and confirmability testing

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Form of Asmalibrasi Songs by Soegi Bornean

Researchers use the theoretical framework developed by Karl Edmund Prier SJ. (1996). In the analysis of Asmalibrasi music, the 1996 reference is an essential source. Researchers can apply the principles of musical form analysis to comprehensively understand the structural composition of musical works that are divided into several parts. In this context, the theory is used to identify and analyze the form of the song "Asmalibrasi" by Soegi Bornean.

The composition titled "Asmalibrasi" is classified as a pop folk song. This work uses the basic scale of E. In addition, the tempo is around 80 beats per minute, which, in classical terms, is called "andante." The composition titled "Asmalibrasi" is divided into several parts, including *intro*, *verse*, *chorus*, *bridge*, and *outro*. This configuration classifies Soegi Bornean's composition "Asmalibrasi" as a three-part work, with the sequence A, B, A'.

3.1.1 *Intro to "Asmalibrasi"*



Figure 3.1 Asmalibrasi Intro Motif
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The intro to Asmalibrasi starts from the first bar to the eighth bar. In this section, the guitar serves as the opening instrument, setting the tone for the song. This is followed by the use of humming vocals, executed using the legato technique. The use of humming vocals in the song's introduction aims to create an emotional atmosphere and grab the listener's attention, setting the initial focus on the melody before moving to the first verse.

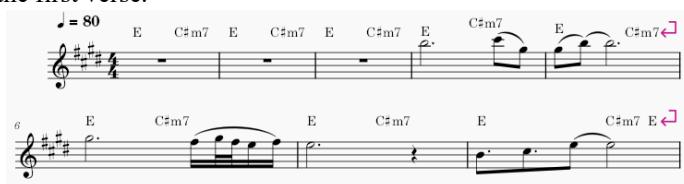


Figure 3.2 Asmalibrasi Intro Chord Progression
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The chord progression forms a repetitive pattern of I–vi7 that repeats eight times. This pattern does not form a cadence in the classical sense, as it does not contain a dominant (V) or subdominant (IV) chord. The C#m7 (vi7) chord gives a soft minor impression, contrasting with the stable E major. This shift from major to minor creates a melancholic atmosphere. Although technically this section does not contain a cadence, structurally this repetition acts as an introduction and provides a calm harmonic backdrop for the main melody in the next section.

3.1.2 *Verse "Asmalibrasi."*

Next, the *Verse* section is divided into three parts, namely *Verse 1*, *Verse 2*, and *Verse 3*. The vocals begin singing the opening lyrics. Accompanied by the guitar as the main instrument, with light strumming and picking following the chord progression; the bass instrument with a slow tempo following the guitar's chord progression; and light percussion, such as the cajon, providing the main rhythm. *Verse 1* spans bars 9–16. In *Verse 1*, 2 main motifs form 1 period containing two phrases (question & answer). Each phrase consists of 4 bars, making a total of 8 bars.

Figure 3. 3Chord Progression Verse 1
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025



In verse 1, the chord progression consists of: E - C#m - G#m - F#m | E - C#m - G#m - F#m | A - G#m7 - F#m7 - B7 - E - E7. This progression begins with a movement from the tonic (E) to the submediant (C#m), mediant (G#m), and subdominant (F#m). This sequence does not form a cadence. Next, the progression A - G#m - F#m7 serves as a bridge to the authentic cadence via the movement IV - iii7 - ii7. The main resolution occurs in the progression F#m7 - B7 - E, which is a perfect authentic cadence (ii7 - V7 - I), providing a strong tonal affirmation. The E7 chord that appears afterwards functions as a secondary dominant (V7/IV), which serves to strengthen or emphasize the A chord. In contrast, *verse 2*, despite using a similar sequence of notes, is performed with greater emotional emphasis, creating a motif that feels more intense. This difference stems not only from dynamic aspects or vocal accentuation, but also from the lyrical context, which gives a new color to the melodic structure. Unlike the motifs in *verses 1 and 2*, *verse 3* has only half a period, with 4 bars. *Verse 3* shows a stronger expressive development than the previous *verses*. *Verse 3* features the chord progression A - G#m7 - F#m7 - B7 - E - E7. This section forms an imperfect authentic cadence because, although there is a resolution from the dominant (V7) to the tonic (I), the previous structure begins with the iii7 chord and does not reach a final climax. The E7 chord that appears after E reinforces or affirms the A chord.

3.1.3 *Chorus* "Asmalibrasi."



Figure 3. 4
Chorus Chord Progression Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The chord progression in *the chorus* is F#m7 - B7 - E (ii7 - V7 - I). Although the ii7 chord is not a dominant chord, it is part of the ii7-V7-I progression, which forms a perfect authentic cadence. The first chorus phase begins at measure 17 and continues through measure 24. *Chorus 2* is from measure 35 to measure 42. Furthermore, *Chorus 3* spans measures 55-62. All instruments provide complex playing. The melodic motif in the *chorus* section is arranged in a repetitive pattern. Although the notation of the motif remains the same, there are differences in musical expression in each repetition. In *chorus 1*, it is presented with soft dynamics, creating a calm, reflective impression. *Chorus 1* serves as the foundation for the song's initial theme. Then, in *chorus 2*, there is an increase in musical intensity, both in terms of arrangement and vocal articulation. There is a layer of vocal harmony that gives the impression of emotional growth, even though the basic motif remains the same. Then, in *chorus 3*, the song reaches its emotional climax. The vocals are more expressive, with greater dynamics, reinforcing the lyrics' and melodic motifs' expressiveness. Although there is no structural change to the motif, the musical arrangement emphasizes the closing.

3.1.4 "Asmalibrasi" Bridge



Figure 3. 5Bridge Chord Progression
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

As defined, *the bridge* is the connecting part between *the chorus* and *verse* in an asmalibrasi song. *The bridge* is located in bars 25-26. This *bridge* does not contain a cadence but rather extends the tonic function with a stable and calm I and vi7 chord. In terms of meaning, this bridge serves as a transitional space for listeners—giving them a moment to reflect on the theme of love that has been "calibrated" before returning to the second verse. Its position between the first chorus and the second verse also helps break up the monotony of the song, so listeners do not get bored and remain connected to its emotions.

3.1.5 *Interlude "Asmalibrasi."*

Figure 3. 6Chord Progression of the Interlude “
” Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The chord progression in the interlude is F#m7 – B7 – E with G#m7 and C#m7 as transitions or embellishments. The ii7–V7 chord progression reinforces the resolution function and indicates the end of a harmonic period. The iii7 and vi7 chords serve as a bridge between the dominant and the predominant without changing the final destination to the tonic. The cadence in the interlude is authentic. The interlude in the song "*Asmalibrasi*" is marked as a transitional section that connects the two main segments. Contextually, and in line with standard practices in modern pop music arrangements, the interlude section is often played at a moderate tempo and with a flowing rhythm. This creates a reflective and calm atmosphere, with dynamics likely ranging from mezzo piano to mezzo forte. The written melody moves in a conjunctive contour (stepwise motion) with a few small leaps, creating a smooth, non-contrasting sense of harmony.

3.1.6 *Coda "Asmalibrasi"*

The coda in this song is from measure 63 to measure 70. The harmonic motif is repetitive and contemplative, arranged in symmetrical periods that create a sense of stability and calm. The slow, consistent rhythm supports the reflective mood as the melody descends. The coda is kept soft, without any volume bursts, creating an open, non-climactic ending that swings slowly and reinforces the song's overall emotional message.

Figure 3. 7
Coda Chord Progression Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The *coda* section features a consistent, repetitive chord progression, emphasizing stability and tonal resolution. The progression begins with F#m7 – B7, which functions as ii7 – V7 in E major, creating anticipation towards the tonic (E). It is then followed by G#m7 – C#m7 (iii7 – vi7), which indicates a movement towards the submediant (vi).

Next, the progression returns to F#m7 – B7 – E, which clearly forms an authentic cadence (ii7 – V7 – I), namely the resolution from the subdominant (ii7) to the dominant (V7), and ends on the tonic (I). This is a strong and familiar cadence in tonal music, clearly marking the affirmation of the tonal center of E major. At the end of the first phrase (measure 66), there is an addition of C#m7 – B/D#, which can be interpreted as:

- C#m7: vi7 chord (minor third of E major)

- B/D#: dominant chord (V) with inversion (with D# as bass), creating a linear movement from E downward

The role of B/D# is to bridge the tonic chord and the repetition of the following phrase, not as the main final cadence.

The second phrase (measures 67–70) repeats the same harmonic pattern and closes with E major, reforming the authentic cadence (F#m7 – B7 – E), which provides a strong final affirmation.

3.2 The Meaning of the Song "Asmalibrasi" in Terms of Musical Aesthetics

The musical meaning in Soegi Bornean's song *Asmalibrasi* can be understood through the signs of expression, dynamics, articulation, and harmonic progression written in the score. Through a musical aesthetic approach, these elements function not only as technical instructions but also as symbols of expression that shape the song's inner atmosphere and emotional message. The opening section of the song uses an *Andante* tempo ($\text{♩} = 80$) and the expression *dolce*, meaning "soft." The use of *mp* (mezzo piano) dynamics in this section creates a calm, intimate musical character. The absence of accents or harsh articulation indicates that this section contains reflective nuances that flow emotionally.

Entering the middle section of the song, the dynamics increase to *mf* (mezzo forte) and *f* (forte), accompanied by a *crescendo* sign indicating a gradual development of emotion. The rhythm becomes tighter and more accentuated, even though it is not explicitly marked with accents. This shows that this section is the climax of previously restrained emotions. The chord progression C#m – A – E – B gives an impression of tension and emotional conflict.

The use of the expression marks the end of the song, *tranquillo*, *dolcissimo*, and *sotto voce*. The dynamics return to *mp*, marked by *ritardando* and *diminuendo*. This shows that the previously heightened emotions have now subsided, leaving a peaceful atmosphere. The chord progression F#m7 – B7 – G#m7 – C#m7 – E in this section gives a calm and accepting impression. Overall, the meaning of the song *Asmalibrasi* is entirely shaped by its musical dynamics: from softness, increasing in intensity, then subsiding back into calmness. The musical symbols in the score not only reinforce the song's structure but also clarify the meaning the songwriter intends to convey. This song shows that even popular music can contain a depth of musical expression that is aesthetically meaningful.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the song *Asmalibrasi* by Soegi Bornean through two main approaches: a song-form analysis based on the theory of Music Form Science (IBAM) and a musical-meaning analysis based on a musical-aesthetic approach. Based on the results of score analysis and musical observation, it was found that the song *Asmalibrasi* has a complete form structure and deep musical meaning.

In terms of form, this song is arranged in a three-part structure (A–B–A') that includes an intro, verse, chorus, bridge, interlude, and coda. Each section is arranged with logical and cohesive relationships, both in terms of chord progression, motif repetition, and transitions between sections. The form of this song reflects a structured compositional plan and is not merely repetitive, as many popular songs are.

In terms of meaning, this song describes an emotional journey that begins with calmness, culminates in an outpouring of feelings, and ends in peaceful silence. Musical elements such as expression marks, dynamics (*mp*, *mf*, *f*), articulation, and chord progressions play an important role in shaping and reinforcing the emotional atmosphere of the song. Changes in musical texture and dynamics indicate a calibration of feelings that is central to the song's message.

Thus, it can be concluded that *Asmalibrasi* is not only a piece of popular music that is pleasant to listen to, but also has musical value that is worthy of scientific analysis. This song shows that Indonesian popular music has strong structural and expressive potential, and can be used as an object of academic study of musical form and aesthetics. This research also contributes to the development of musical literacy and opens the door to similar studies of other contemporary musical works in Indonesia.

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 A portrait photograph of Alya Nada Satyawidya, a young woman with dark hair, wearing a black hijab, smiling against a red background.	<p>Alya Nada Satyawidya https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3769-8890 is an undergraduate student majoring in music at the Faculty of Language and Arts, Surabaya State University. Her research focuses on the meaning and lyrics of Soegi Bornean's work, Asmalibrasi. She can be contacted via email: alya.21011@mhs.unesa.ac.id</p>
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