

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the study, and the scope and limitations.

1.1 Background of the Study

A word is the smallest independent unit of language that carries meaning and functions as the foundation of communication. Words may be expressed in spoken or written form and consist of one or more phonemes (Supardan & Puspaningrum, 2024). Through words, people communicate ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences in everyday life. In English, words can be classified into several categories, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions. As language continues to develop, new words are constantly created to meet the communicative needs of society (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2023).

The study of word formation belongs to the field of Morphology, which is a branch of Linguistics concerned with the internal structure of words and the processes through which words are formed. The term Morphology originates from the words *morph*, meaning “form,” and *-logy*, meaning “the study of” (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2023). Morphological studies examine how meaningful units combine to produce new words through several word-formation processes, such as affixation, compounding, conversion, reduplication, and abbreviation (Jelimun, 2024). Therefore, Morphology provides an essential framework for understanding how vocabulary develops and how meaning is constructed through word formation.

One of the most productive word-formation processes discussed in Morphology is compounding. According to Purinanda (2017), compounding is a word-formation process that combines two or more existing lexical items to produce a new lexical item with its own meaning. Through this process, English vocabulary continues to expand efficiently without creating entirely new root words. Consequently, compound words frequently appear in various forms of

communication, including newspapers, advertisements, literary works, and song lyrics (Purinanda, 2017).

Compound words are particularly important because they allow speakers and writers to create new lexical items by combining two or more free morphemes into a single unit of meaning (To'rayevna, 2025). Unlike ordinary phrases, compound words function as lexical units that often carry meanings beyond the simple combination of their individual elements. Consequently, compound words contribute significantly to vocabulary development and enrich language use across different communicative contexts (To'rayevna, 2025).

One context in which compound words frequently occur is song lyrics. Songwriters often employ compound words to create vivid imagery, convey emotions, and produce stylistic effects that enhance the aesthetic quality of their lyrics (Lestari, 2019). Damayanti and Malini (2022) argue that compound words contribute to imagery, emotional expression, and stylistic variation in literary texts, including song lyrics. Therefore, analyzing compound words in song lyrics provides valuable insights into how morphological creativity contributes to artistic expression.

Among contemporary musicians, Taylor Swift is widely recognized for her distinctive songwriting style and creative use of language (Ray, 2025). As an American singer-songwriter, she has released twelve studio albums consisting of more than 190 songs throughout her career (Ram, 2025). Her achievements, including becoming the first artist to win fourteen Grammy Awards, demonstrate her remarkable contribution to contemporary music (Ray, 2025). More importantly, her lyrics are widely appreciated for their poetic diction, figurative language, and expressive vocabulary, making them an interesting source for linguistic analysis.

Taylor Swift's eleventh studio album, *The Tortured Poets Department* (2024), is particularly notable for its poetic language and emotionally expressive lyrics. Throughout the album, Swift explores themes of love, heartbreak, loss, memory, and self-reflection, the lyrics provide many examples of word-formation processes, making them suitable for morphological analysis. These characteristics make the album an appropriate source for investigating how

compound words function morphologically in contemporary English song lyrics.

Based on the previous studies, Nurwulan and Heryono (2025), focused on identifying the types, functions, and meanings of compound words, while Rachman and Simatupang (2022), focused on the types and meanings of compounds. Sakti et al. (2021), focusing on the use of endocentric and exocentric of compound words, whereas Puspaningrum and Biantara (2024) identify and compare the types and patterns rather than compound words. Although these studies contribute to the understanding of compound words from different perspectives, none of them combines Hamilton's (2022) classification of morphological structures with Lieber's (2009) types based on meaning in analyzing Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album. Therefore, the present study combines these two theories to analyze the morphological structures and types of compound words found in the album.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the above research background, the researcher will focus on discussing only two issues.

1. What are the morphological structure of compound words found in Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album?
2. What are the types of compound words based on meaning found in Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In this study, the researcher has two research objectives, as follows:

1. To describe the morphological structures of compound words found in Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album.
2. To describe the types of compound words based on the meaning found in Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, as follows:

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the field of Linguistics, particularly Morphology, by enriching the discussion of compound words in English song lyrics. The findings are expected to enhance the understanding of the morphological structures of compound words and their types based on meaning. In addition, this study may serve as a useful reference for future researchers who are interested in word formation, especially compound words in literary works, songs, or other media.

Practically, this study is expected to be beneficial for students, researchers, English teachers, songwriters, and the general public. For students and researchers, the findings may serve as a reference for conducting further studies on compound words or other aspects of Morphology. For English teachers, the findings may be used as supplementary teaching material to explain word formation through authentic examples from song lyrics. For songwriters and the general public, this study is expected to increase awareness of the use of compound words and the role of morphological word formation in English song lyrics, particularly in Taylor Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department" album.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is Morphological analysis, focusing specifically on compound words found in song lyrics. In this study, compound words are treated as lexical units, meaning that the analysis does not differentiate compounds based on grammatical categories such as compound nouns, compound verbs, or compound adjectives. The theories used in this research are Lieber (2009) and Hamilton (2022). The researcher limits the study to two main aspects. First, an analysis of the Morphological structure of compound words based on (Hamilton, 2022) theory, which classifies compound word structures into three main forms: single-word compounds, hyphenated compounds, and separated compounds.

Second, identify the types of compound words based on (Lieber, 2009) theory, which divides compound words into endocentric and exocentric compounds. These two aspects are aligned with the research questions and objectives of this study.

The study also focused on Taylor Swift's album "The Tortured Poets of Department" (2024). The researcher only analyzed 14 songs from a total of 35 songs in the album with the sub-themes of romance and heartbreak. The selected songs are "Fortnight (feat. Post Malone)," "My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys," "Down Bad," "So Long, London," "But Daddy I Love Him," "Fresh Out the Slammer," "Florida!!! (feat. Florence + The Machine)," "loml," "I Can Do It With a Broken Heart," "The Alchemy," "Chloe or Sam or Sophia or Marcus," "So High School," "I Look in People's Windows," and "Peter."