

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of several sub-sections. It starts with the background of the research, which explains the reasons and academic urgency of the topic. This is followed by the research questions that prompted this research. The next section outlines the research objectives, describing the specific objectives of the research. The significance of the research illustrates the theoretical and practical value of the research. Finally, scope and limitations explain the limits within which research is conducted.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a means through which humans think, interact, and express meaning. Whether expressing emotions or discussing ideas, language enables us to convey our thoughts, feelings, and intentions clearly. Through language, people build relationships, engage in cultural life, and navigate social interactions. One important element that ensures clarity and fluency in both spoken and written communication is cohesion. Without cohesion, sentences may appear fragmented, and the intended message becomes difficult to understand. Therefore, understanding cohesion is essential for maintaining the unity of texts in both academic and everyday contexts.

Despite the importance of language in communication, there is another concept that is no less important: cohesion. This concept relates to the relationship of meaning within a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Stating that cohesion is a network of linguistic relationships that unites different parts of the text. Without cohesion, a discourse will seem disjointed and can confuse its audience. In general, cohesion is divided into two categories, namely lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion. Lexical cohesion is concerned with the relationship of meaning through repetition, synonyms, antonyms, and collocation. Meanwhile, grammatical cohesion concerns the relationships between parts of the text through language structures such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Grammatical

cohesion plays a major role in maintaining continuity between sentences and ideas in the text.

In this context, understanding cohesive devices is essential because they function as linguistic elements that connect one part of a text to another, thereby creating continuity and unity of meaning. Cohesive devices help readers or listeners follow the flow of ideas more easily and understand the relationship between sentences within a text. This study specifically focuses on cohesive devices because they contribute significantly to maintaining the integration of meaning and ensuring that a text remains clear and well-organized. For example, in the sentences, “The students are in the classroom. They are preparing for the exam,” cohesion is established through the pronoun *they*, which refers back to the “students” mentioned in the first sentence. This referential relationship links the two sentences together and avoids unnecessary repetition. As a result, the message can be conveyed more effectively while preserving the continuity of meaning throughout the text. Therefore, the use of cohesive devices reflects how language structures are employed efficiently to create connected and meaningful communication.

Furthermore, the importance of cohesive devices can also be observed in literary and musical texts, particularly in song lyrics that present complex narratives and emotional expressions. One notable example is Taylor Swift, who is widely recognized for her ability to compose lyrics that are both descriptive and emotionally engaging. This quality is clearly reflected in the song *All Too Well (10 Minute Version)* (2021), which contains an extended lyrical structure yet remains coherent and cohesive in presenting its storyline. The song’s success further strengthened Swift’s reputation, as it debuted at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 and accumulated more than 400 million streams on Spotify by 2024. Similar characteristics can also be found in several songs from the album *The Tortured Poets Department* (2024), including *The Black Dog*, *How Did It End?*, and *loml*. These songs combine poetic language, emotional intensity, and intricate linguistic structures, while also achieving remarkable popularity through millions of streams and strong positions on global music charts. Consequently, these lyrics can be viewed not only as artistic musical expressions but also as linguistic texts that contain rich examples of grammatical cohesion.

Moreover, grammatical cohesion in these songs plays a significant role in connecting ideas, organizing narratives, and maintaining the continuity of meaning across the lyrics. Through the use of cohesive devices, the songs are able to present layered and interconnected stories that enhance both emotional impact and textual unity. This demonstrates that Taylor Swift's lyrics possess substantial analytical value from a linguistic perspective. Therefore, analyzing her song lyrics through the framework of grammatical cohesion not only provides insight into the linguistic structures employed in the songs, but also broadens understanding of how popular music can function as an effective medium for expressing emotional, linguistic, and cultural meanings.

The reason for choosing this topic is that cohesive devices are fundamental to understanding how language constructs meaning and coherence across various forms of discourse. Although Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory of cohesion has been extensively applied to literary and academic texts, its application to modern song lyrics has received limited scholarly attention. This gap is significant because song lyrics represent a creative form of written discourse that demonstrates how linguistic structure supports narrative development and emotional expression. Taylor Swift's lyrics, in particular, provide rich examples of how grammatical cohesion contributes to unity, continuity, and meaning construction within authentic language use.

Looking at Taylor Swift's songs like *All Too Well (10 Minute Version)*, *The Black Dog*, *How Did It End?*, and *LOML*, we can see how cohesive elements link ideas, build stories, and keep emotions flowing from one verse to the next. Her songs mix poetic language with easy-to-understand storytelling, which makes grammatical cohesion work well to create strong emotional feelings and clear meaning. This linguistic richness makes her lyrics useful for looking at how language works in communication.

Taylor Swift Taylor Swift was chosen as the subject of this study because her song lyrics exhibit complex narrative structures and the use of various forms of grammatical cohesion, such as personal references, conjunctions, and ellipsis (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). An analysis of the four selected songs *All Too Well (10-Minute Version)*, *The Black Dog*, *How Did It End?*, and *LOML* reveals that Taylor

Swift consistently integrates shifts in time, perspective, and emotional expression within her lyrics. Therefore, grammatical cohesion plays a crucial role in constructing meaning in these songs. For example, *All Too Well* presents a long, continuous narrative of memories, while *The Black Dog* and *How Did It End?* feature shifts in perspective to depict different emotions. Meanwhile, *LOML* highlights the connection between ideas and feelings across lyrical sections. The novelty of this study lies in its discussion of grammatical cohesive devices and their functions in Taylor Swift's songs across various albums and different periods. This study also emphasizes how grammatical cohesion is used to build narrative continuity, strengthen emotional expression, and create unity of meaning in modern popular song lyrics.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background, the research questions are

It is formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of grammatical cohesive devices are found in Taylor Swift's songs?
2. What are the functions of each type of grammatical cohesive devices found in Taylor Swift's songs?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the above research questions, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify and describe the types of grammatical cohesive devices found in Taylor Swift's songs
2. To identify and describe the function of each type of grammatical cohesive device used in lyrics.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the existing literature on cohesion and discourse analysis, particularly in the field of applied linguistics. It provides empirical evidence of how the grammatical cohesive devices functions in song lyrics, thus supporting the continued relevance of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory.

Practically, this research is expected to be useful for students, researchers, and educators in the field of English language and literature. For educators, it can offer alternative musical media to teach discourse and grammar. For researchers, it can serve as a reference or basis for further studies in discourse analysis and cohesion in other media or genres.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research was conducted within the framework of Discourse Analysis, with a particular focus on grammatical cohesion as outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976). This analysis is limited to four types of grammatical cohesive devices, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, along with their functions in the text. These devices are examined because they play a crucial role in maintaining the smooth flow of meaning and integration between sentences in the text. In the context of song lyrics, the use of grammatical cohesion not only builds logical connections between lines but also strengthens the narrative and emotional expression of the lyrics.

This study focuses on four selected songs by Taylor Swift: All Too Well (10 Minute Version) from the album Red (Taylor's Version) released in 2021, The Black Dog from the album The Tortured Poets Department (2024), How Did It End? from The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology (2024), and LOML from The Tortured Poets Department (2024). This study does not address lexical cohesion, figurative language, or musical aspects such as melody and rhythm; the analysis is limited to the level of the lyric text.