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Analysis of Verb Tenses in Broken Memories Album: Types, Frequency, and Narrative Function

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze verb tense usage in the lyrics of Jamie Miller's Broken Memories album, with three primary objectives: to classify the types of tenses used, quantify their frequency to identify temporal patterns, and examine their function in narrative construction through Labov's (2008) pre-construction framework. Adopting a qualitative approach, this research analyzed lyrics obtained through triangulated sources, including Genius.com and official streaming platforms, and cross-referenced them with auditory verification. The data were processed using computational tagging and thematic coding to identify grammatical patterns. Findings reveal that the simple past tense dominates, often reflecting personal memories and emotional retrospection, while the present tense establishes immediacy and intimacy. The occasional use of the future tense suggests uncertainty and aspiration. These tense patterns support emotional storytelling and reflect mental narrative structuring by songwriters. The study concludes that grammar in popular music operates beyond conventional rules, functioning as a creative tool for emotional expression and audience engagement. Future research is encouraged to explore broader datasets across artists, as well as include modality, voice, and listener reception to deepen understanding of grammatical strategies in musical narratives.

Keywords: Verb Tenses, Frequency, Narrative Function, Broken Memories, Pre-Construction Framework

Language serves as a central medium for human communication, enabling individuals to deliver information, ideas, and emotions through speech, gestures, and written symbols (Arianita & Aini, 2022). Que and Patty (2023) examined the emotional and linguistic features of the song "How Do I Live" by analyzing its lyrics through textual and contextual perspectives. Their study highlights how linguistic elements such as cohesion, deixis, and repetition contribute to the emotional intensity of the lyrics. Through textual analysis, they identify how cohesive devices and lexical choices structure the narrative of longing and dependency. Contextually, they apply deixis—personal, temporal, and spatial—to explore how pronouns, time expressions, and spatial references enhance the listener's emotional engagement. They argue that song lyrics are open to multiple interpretations,

shaped by the individual experiences and emotional states of the listeners. The study demonstrates that meaning in music is co-constructed between the text and the audience, making lyrics powerful tools of emotional expression. Mawaddah and Rahmat (2023) emphasize that the interplay between lyrics—especially idiomatic expressions and conceptual meanings—and melody communicates a range of emotions, from nostalgia to aspiration. Understanding song lyrics, therefore, involves more than interpreting lexical meanings; it also requires attention to grammatical structures, such as verb tense, which subtly shape meaning and emotional impact (Packard, Berger, & Boghrati, 2023).

Rakhmonova (2025) highlights the important roles of syntax and semantics within linguistic theory. It argues that while syntax provides the formal structural rules governing how words combine into coherent sentences, semantics addresses the interpretation and meaning conveyed by those structures. A complete understanding of language requires integrating both syntactic form and semantic interpretation. Syntax, thus, plays a critical role in shaping meaning in musical contexts where standard grammar may be subverted. Werner (2012) investigates how pop song lyrics use language and why they are different from other types of English. Unlike newspapers or books, song lyrics are not included in common English language collections. The researcher created a special collection of British and American pop songs to study how lyrics have changed over time and how they vary by region and style. The study also asks if lyrics are more like spoken or written language and if they are formal or informal. It finds that lyrics are a special kind of language on their own. Packard, Berger, and Boghrati (2023) shows that tense choices influence persuasive power; specifically, the present tense enhances certainty and engagement.

Despite extensive studies on the syntax and semantics of English song lyrics, interpretive challenges persist, especially when linguistic forms are transformed for aesthetic or rhythmic effects. There remains a lack of focused research on how verb tenses in song lyrics specifically contribute to

narrative flow and emotional expression in lyrics, indicating a significant gap in current studies. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Broken Memories (2022), an emotionally charged album by Jamie Miller, with a focus on how tense functions not merely as grammar but as a narrative tool. This study investigates how verb tenses in the album contribute to emotional expression and narrative progression. Tense is not only a marker of temporal reference but also a mechanism that evokes emotional depth and guides listeners through the unfolding of events. Specifically, the research has three objectives: (1) to identify the types of verb tenses used in the lyrics, (2) to quantify their frequency to reveal temporal orientation, and (3) to analyze their narrative roles using Labov's (2008) theory of Narrative Pre-construction.

Labov (2008) posits that storytellers cognitively plan narratives by selecting main events and working backward to construct coherence. Stories are rarely linear; they are shaped by memory, relevance, and emotional salience. Tense choice is critical in this planning, marking past actions, habitual states, or imagined futures (Amalia et al., 2023). This study contributes to linguistic, educational, and musical scholarship by highlighting how grammar—especially tense—serves expressive, persuasive, and narrative functions in modern music, offering new insight into how storytelling and grammar interlock in creative discourse.

METHOD

This study aimed to explore how verb tenses in Jamie Miller's Broken Memories album convey emotions and narratives. Following Denzin and Lincoln (2018), qualitative research emphasizes depth and meaning over numerical analysis. While tense frequency was considered, the focus remained on interpreting the lyrics' expressive content. The main data collection method was documentation, deemed appropriate for analyzing written song lyrics. To ensure accuracy, lyrics

were gathered from three official sources: Genius.com, YouTube videos, and web search results. Genius.com served as the primary source due to its user-verified content, while cross-checking with other platforms helped identify non-standard or unclear lyrics. Additional verification was conducted through Spotify, Apple Music, and Google searches to reduce errors and confirm the complete track list. Below is a breakdown of the length and word count of each song:

1. “Last Call" runs for 2 minutes and 34 seconds with 312 words.
2. "Longer" lasts 2 minutes and 56 seconds with 276 words.
3. "Here's Your Perfect" has duration of 2 minutes and 50 seconds, containing 324 words.
4. "I Lost Myself in Loving You" is 3 minutes and 36 seconds long, with 277 words.
5. "It is What It is" runs for 2 minutes and 8 seconds, featuring 352 words.
6. "Over You" has duration of 2 minutes and 34 seconds, with 304 words.

This study aimed to examine how verb tenses are used across Jamie Miller’s Broken Memories album by analysing their frequency, distribution, and thematic functions. The first key corpus analysis in this study was the implementation of TagAnt, a corpus analysis tool that integrated Part-of-Speech (POS) tagging with search functions to examine grammatical patterns (Anthony, 2024). This computational tagging facilitated structural analysis. Lyrics were stored as individual .txt files, cleaned of non-lyrical indicators such as “[Chorus]” or “[Verse]” to maintain syntactic clarity. The corpus was tagged using an external POS tagger compatible with TagAnt, which labelled verbs with grammatical tags such as: walked_- VBD (Past tense), goes - VBZ (Present tense, third-person singular), will-MD (Modals often associated with future reference). To ensure accuracy, two-stage manual review corrected misclassifications and clarified ambiguous forms like gerunds. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) model, mapping tense types to emotional and narrative roles (Mishra & Dey, 2022). Past tense reflected memories or regret; present expressed emotional

states; future conveyed hope or uncertainty.

Labov's (2008) narrative pre-construction theory further explained how tenses shape storytelling. The findings are summarized in a tense distribution table from six album songs, highlighting how grammar supports emotional expression in lyrics.

FINDINGS

This section reports the findings of the verbal tenses used in the lyrics of six songs featured on Jamie Miller's *Broken Memories* album. The data were compiled into a mini corpus, and the frequency of tense usage was recorded, categorized and displayed in six separate groups and six titles. Table 1 represents the tense distribution in the song album, so the tenses used globally across the lyrics can be quantitatively compared to the presence of each tense category.

Table 1. Frequency of Tenses Across Six Songs in Broken Memories

Tense Type	Last Call	Longer	Here's Your Perfect	I Lost Myself in Loving You	It Is What It Is	Over You
Simple Present Tense	19	11	27	6	25	14
Present Continuous Tense	2	–	1	5	1	3
Simple Present (with future intention)	12	–	–	–	–	–
Simple Future Tense	4	3	2	–	3	–
Simple Past Tense	–	17	5	16	13	4
Present Perfect Tense	–	2	–	–	–	1
Past Future Perfect Tense	–	3	–	–	–	–
Past Future Continuous Tense	–	1	–	–	–	–
Past Future Tense	–	–	–	–	–	10

Note: "–" indicates that the tense was not present in that song.

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DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The simple present frequency emerges as the most dominant tense, followed by simple past tense and, present continuous, future, and finally, perfective forms. Table 1 reveals not only song stylistic preferences but also unfold functional motivations behind the use of tense in conveying messages. The simple present tense (102 instances), serves as the focal tense in Jamie Miller's lyrics. Its dominant quantity represents the genre's orientation toward a real time event and emotional condition of the singer; it helps dramatic effect. For example, in songs like *It Is What It Is* and *Here's Your Perfect*, the simple present tense creates current emotional condition of the speaker (e.g., "I still love you," "It doesn't make sense").

The simple past tense, with 65 instances, conveys emotional self-reflection, memory, and loss. In *I Lost Myself in Loving You* and *Longer*, the past tense is used to recall past experiences of failed relationship. The past tense allows the singer to create the emotional depth and a chronological contrast between the past and the present conditions. Though less frequent (12 instances), the present continuous tense is used to depict progressive or ongoing emotional struggles (e.g., "I'm trying to forget," "I'm holding on"). The use of progressive tense adds emotional intensity, often associated with mental activities.

The simple future tense (12 instances) and past future tense (10 instances) are used to express expectation, hope, or failure. The simple future tense often conveys a desire for healing or change, suggesting emotional progression or affirmation. By contrast, the past future forms (e.g., "I would have stayed," "You would be mine") refer to unrealized conditions. These forms are used to express regret, lost opportunities, or desperation.

The frequency of present perfect and past future perfect tenses (3 instances each), operates as narrative and evaluative functions. Present perfect tense (e.g., “I have tried”) connects past activity with present consequence. Meanwhile, the past future perfect tense (for example, 'would have been') is used to talk about unreal situations or unrealized expectations, expressing mindful reflections

Tenses in the lyrics position the event in specific timeframes. Present tense describes the current position, emotion and condition; past tense refers to past experiences in a remembered timeline, and future tense project alternative conditions. The tenses frequently represent narrative flashback structure, moving from past events (past tense), to current situation (present continuous), and resolution (future).

The high frequency of present and past simple tenses has two purposes: functional necessity and an aesthetic purpose. The data of verbal tense usage can be interpreted as the intricate interplay between grammar, emotion, and narrative structure in lyrical texts.

Narratives are often restructured through cognitive processes to create meaningful occurrences. The imagined future scenarios are presented as emotionally real even if they have not occurred. The teller builds a narrative framework, even from events that are not yet real. Table 2 depicts tense analysis through Labov’s framework, summarizing how temporal structure in language helps shape narrative meaning and supports the delivery of the song’s message.

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Table 2. Narrative Pre-construction Analysis of "Last Call"

Narrative Component	Explanation	Examples from the Song
Most Reportable Event (e_0)	The most important or emotional part of the story—the one worth telling.	"I wanna be your first call" → the singer's deep emotional wish.
Causal Event Before (e_{-1})	An event that happens just before e_0 and helps explain why it happens.	"Someone's raising toast to someone they say they can't live without."
Earlier Causal Event (e_{-2})	Another moment that happens even earlier and adds to the feelings.	"That couple by the jukebox makes you smile."
Unreportable Event (e_{-n})	A normal or everyday situation that doesn't need explanation—but starts the whole feeling.	The narrator is alone, thinking of the other person (implied, not directly said).
Narrative Flow	The events are not told in order. The singer imagines feelings and situations, going backward.	The singer builds up the story from emotion, not time order.
Emotion as Narrative Logic	The song is organized by feelings, not by what happened first.	Longing, imagining, hoping—not factual storytelling.
Use of Hypotheticals	The singer imagines what might be happening, not what really is.	"I hope you're out somewhere right now..."
Repetition of the Chorus	The most emotional part is repeated to make it stronger.	"I wanna be your first call" appears in every chorus.
Tense and Grammar Choices	Mostly present tense and future intention, showing desire and imagination.	"That's all I want." "You're gonna be my downfall."
Narrative Pre-construction Process	The narrator builds the story starting from the feeling, then adds reasons and background.	Starts with the wish → explains imagined scenes that caused it.

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The table shows the narrative components identified in the lyric based on the narrative pre-construction model, which emphasizes the mental processes a storyteller (singer) undertakes before constructing a full story. Labov argues that before a story is told, the teller first identifies the most reportable event (e_0) —an event significant enough to be worth sharing—then works backward through a series of linked events (e_{-1}), (e_{-2}) and to an unreportable event (e_{-n}) —an ordinary occurrence that requires no description. This recalling process enables the teller to structure his story that may not occur in real time but is reconstructed to make sense to the listener.

1. Last Call

Component: Most Reportable (e_0) → First Cause (e_{-1}) → Earlier Cause (e_{-2}) → Unreportable (e_{-n}) → Repeats Most Reportable (e_0)

Figure 1. Pre-construction Diagram of "Last Call"

In *"Last Call"*, the most reportable event—or **e_0**, in Labov's terminology—is the teller's emotionally vulnerable expectation to be the one he chooses to be with at the end of the night.: "I wanna be your first call." This line represents an emotional moment. It is not just a romantic wish; it carries the weight of solitude, longing for love. In narrative terms, this event is highly tellable moment. It reflects a personal turning point, and is recognizable as a moment of intimacy and vulnerability. Once the teller identifies this key event, he engages in a pre-construction process, working flashback. In the lyrics, this is reflected through verses that explore the imagined circumstances leading up to this climax.

There are two verses in the song. The first verse sets up the imagined scenario: "I hope you're out somewhere right now and it's about that time "Someone's raising toast to someone they say they can't live without." These lines introduce a context where the teller suspects the other person is

thinking of someone else. This establishes **e_{-1}**, a preceding event that increases emotional appeal in the chorus. The imagined toast by someone else causes the teller to reflect on his own place in the addressee's life, which leads to the desire expressed in **e_0**.

The second verse offers another hypothetical yet causally relevant scenario: "I hope that couple by the jukebox makes you smile / Has you thinking 'bout what it'd be like if I was with you now." Here, the teller imagines a nostalgic moment triggered by a couple at a bar, hoping it causes his lover to remember them. This memorable moment becomes e_{-2}, another causal node that feeds into the emotional climax. This verse represents the reconstruction of timeline through recursive process where each preceding event is causally linked to the one that follows. The unreportable event in this lyric is less clearly stated but it can be inferred. Labov suggests that narratives should end with an unremarkable moment that requires no further explanation—e_{-n}. In *"Last Call"*, this might be the simple fact that the teller is alone at the moment, thinking about someone. This condition is not explicitly stated but is implicitly implied throughout the song. The emotional vulnerable feeling and imagined scenarios suggest the teller is currently experiencing solitude. This unremarkable event is considered the unreportable foundation event upon which the more remarkable events are layered.

The teller selectively chooses what to include in his narration based on reportability and relevance, and this selectivity is evident in *"Last Call"*. The teller does not tell events explicitly. Instead, he presents a series of emotionally driven moments. These moments do not follow a clear progress timeline but are instead organized to maximize emotional resonance impact. For instance, the use of the chorus multiple times reinforces the most emotional event, creating a refrain that allows the listener to revisit the emotional climax repeatedly. Each return to the chorus leads to a loop back to **e_0.**

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The use of the simple present tense with future intention ("I wanna be your first call") throughout the chorus and bridge reflects the desire projected into a future, rather than the telling of past events. Furthermore, the pre-construction process is evident in the teller's thoughts through imagined situations: seeing a couple, thinking about a toast, imagining a lonely bar, considering what would happen when "loneliness and all the lights turn on." These imagined events causally support the teller's focal desire, each one giving a reason why his lover should reach out when the night ends. Thus, the narrative structure follows the pre-construction frame of starting with the emotional event and recursively generating causally connected moments, emotion and desire, how events are restructured into narrative timeline. In *"Last Call"*, there is no single linear timeline, but rather an emotional logic that creates the progress of the story. This emotional causal relation—rather than sequential events—builds the structure that helps the teller reconstruct the present moment.

In conclusion, the song *"Last Call"* presents the processes of narrative pre-construction, starting from a tellable emotional event—the desire to be someone's first call at the end of the night—and constructs a chain of imagined events that causally lead to it. Though the events are hypothetical and the timeline is not linear, the lyric remains coherent because it follows a logic of emotional causality and relevance. The final message serves both as an evaluative refrain and a narrative closure, affirming the speaker's emotional state.

2. Longer

Component: Most Reportable (e_0) → First Cause (e_{-1}) → Earlier Cause (e_{-2}) → Unreportable (e_{-n}) → Repeats Most Reportable (e_0)

Figure 2. Diagram of "Longer" Pre-construction

Every story begins in the story teller's memory when he spots the **"**most reportable event" the moment or emotional feeling that is worth telling. The event is the teller's wish: **"**I wish forever

was longer." This line **(e_0)** sums up the core of the song —a longing for more time with someone he loves. The teller has that key wish in mind, and recalls the moments that caused it. First, he imagines they met earlier in life: **"**If we done met when we were younger, we'd have had more time making memories." This is the event just before the big wish, labeled e_{-1} that explains why he wants "forever" to extend; because he feels he has already lost time.

Going further back (e_{-2}), the singer remembers sunsets: "All those sunsets I've seen would've looked so much better if we were together." These memories retain the main desire by showing how much he values shared experiences together. The trivial moment is when the singer is simply alone, thinking of the other person, **(**unreportable event**:** $\mathbf{e_{-n}}$**).** This ordinary event does not need explanation. The singer does not tell real time events. Instead, he starts with the strongest feeling (the wish), then fills in the backstory.

The grammar of the song—combining past wishes ("would've had"), present reflections ("I wish forever was longer"), and future hopes ("still won't be long enough")—also depicts a story in the singer's mind. He imagines different moments, times and places to support his focal wish. By repeating **"**I wish forever was longer**"** at the end of each chorus and the outro, the song repeats $\mathbf{e_0}$**,** reinforcing that core emotional feeling. Even though the events are mostly imagined and are organized in order, the listeners can follow the singer's emotional logic.

3. **"Here's your perfect."**

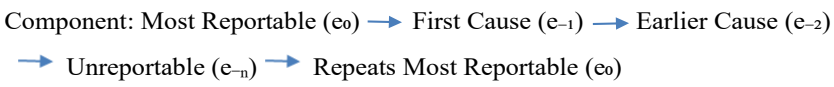


Figure 3. Diagram of "Here's Your Perfect" Pre-construction

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In "Here's Your Perfect," the most reportable event (**e_0**) is the teller's final act of letting someone go: "Here's your perfect." This phrase marks the emotional climax, where the teller decides to end their relationship. He selects the "most reportable event", then works backward through linked moments until reaching a simple everyday situation that needs no explanation.

The key moment is when the teller recalls to find the reasons behind it. The first causal step (**e_{-1}**) appears in the verses where the singer recalls falling in love and trying to be perfect: "I remember the day…that I fell for you," and "How I tried…to be great for you." These lines explain that he invested time and effort into the love relationship. Going further back (**e_{-2}**), the pre-chorus shows how the teller relieved heartbreak through small rituals: "Call you up in three days," "send you a bouquet," or "drink my troubles away**."** These imagined actions show the teller's repeated efforts to move on, even though their relationship is over. These moments lead to the final decision to step away. The unreportable event (**e_{-n}**) is the singer's everyday life after the breakup—walking around with a memory stuck in his head. This ordinary background needs no explanation; it simply exists.

By arranging these moments from the final decision back to everyday life, the song shows how the teller cognitively reconstructs a story before telling it. The use of different tenses supports this process: past tense for remembered events, present for ongoing feelings and condition, and future for imagined actions. This combination highlights that the story is not a straight progressive timeline but a mental reconstruction built by a teller.

Repeating "Here's your perfect" in the chorus and outro brings listeners back to the emotional peak (e_0) each time, reinforcing the climax breakup. Although the song moves through retrieval memories and imagined series of events, listeners can understand the sequence and emotional logic: love, struggle, coping, and, ultimately, letting go.

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4. I Lost Myself in Loving You

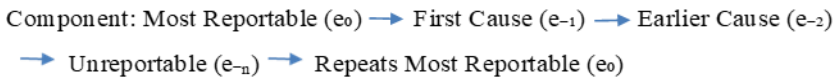


Figure 4.
Diagram of "I Lost Myself in Loving You" Pre-construction

In "I Lost Myself in Loving You," the singer's most reportable event (e_0) is losing his own identity through failed love: "I lost myself in loving you.**"** The first causal event (e_{-1}) shows how the singer tried to keep things together: "I'm here trying to pick the pieces up of the old me" and "I was there when you needed saving." These efforts explain how the loss felt so deep.

Going further back (e_{-2}), the verses reveal trivial everyday moments: "Time is always meant to heal" and "you ruined all my favorite things to do." These expressions represent ordinary life before a love relationship turns into a painful breakup. That everyday context—time passing, favorite activities—needs no explanation and serves as the unreportable event (e_{-n}). By arranging these moments from the key emotional climax back to normal life, the song shows the singer's mental process of pre-construction. The combinations of past and present tenses highlights retrieved memories and ongoing feelings. Repeating "I lost myself in loving you" brings listeners back to the main emotion each time. Though events are not linear, the story remains clear: love, self-loss, effort, and the quiet life that began it all.

5. It is What It is

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Component: Most Reportable (e_0) → First Cause (e_{-1}) → Earlier Cause (e_{-2}) → Unreportable (e_{-n}) → Repeats Most Reportable (e_0)

Figure 5. Pre-construction Diagram of "It is What It is"

The most reportable event (e_0) is the realization that the relationship has ended and cannot be fixed, shown in the repeating line: "I guess it is what it is." This emotional acceptance leads the listener backwards to understand why. The first cause (e_{-1}) shows that the relationship was full of lies and false hope, as seen in "false hope broke me," and "night time white lies." The singer couldn't resist, but it led to heartbreak. Earlier events (e_{-2}) reveal how something seemed good at first ("you were my heaven sent"), showing their hope and love that did not last. The unreportable event (e_{-n}) is the starting point of their relationship—normal, unremarkable moments. The teller transforms his emotional memories into a story of love, betrayal, and acceptance. Though the breakup is painful, the song ends with willing acceptance: "It is what it is."

Thus, tense plays a critical role in organizing both the sequence of events and the expression of emotions. Narrative pre-construction describes the process by which a storyteller builds the story backward from the most reportable event—the one that holds the most emotional significance—and then supplies earlier causal events that help explain it. In this framework, tenses contribute to the effectiveness of communication by situating each event in time and allowing the narrator to evoke emotions and states of mind that give the story its resonance.

One of the primary functions of tense in this model is to draw a clear distinction between what is real and what is imagined. Present tense and present continuous tense are often used to make the teller's emotions feel immediate and alive. The present continuous tense reinforces the feeling that these thoughts are continuous. By using these present tenses, the teller makes the listener feel as though they too are witnessing and felling the emotions.

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Tense also marks the order of events and offer clarity about causality. Earlier causal events (e_{-1}, e_{-2}) need to be established after the most emotionally significant event (e_0) has been introduced. In the song, the most reportable event is the singer's deep wish to be their partner's first call at the end of the night, expressed in present tense with future meaning, once this is established, earlier imagined or observed scenes, such as "Someone's raising toast to someone they say they can't live without," also mostly in present tense, offer a kind of backdrop that builds up to this central longing. Even though these events may not have happened in a strict linear order, tense anchors them to a vivid present, allowing the listener to piece together the narrative through emotion rather than chronology.

The use of tense also allows the teller to imagine future hopes and fears, which is a critical part of the emotional nuances of the songs. Employing the simple future tense anticipate the narrator's desire. Similarly, the present tense is often intended to describe a future state of being, thus merging present desire with future action. The most emotionally significant moment organizes the story and guides the following expression. Simple past tense is reserved for memories that contribute to the cause-and-effect chain. This past tense contrasts with the present tense to show the shift between what was once tempting or painful and what is still longed for in the present.

6. Over You

Component: Most Reportable (e_0) → First Cause (e_{-1}) → Earlier Cause (e_{-2})
→ Unreportable (e_{-n}) → Repeats Most Reportable (e_0)

Figure 6. Pre-construction Diagram of "It is What It is"

The singer (teller) mentally organizes his story by selecting the most reportable event first, then tracing backward to earlier, causally linked events. The most reportable event is the emotional

unresolved state—"Thought I would be over you by now"—which the teller expresses using the past future tense, marking an expectation unmet in the present. The narrative then reconstructs emotional and temporal triggers leading to this moment, using a sequence of tenses. The simple past tense, as in "I loved you without a doubt", refers to a closed emotional chapter. The present tense, as in "I still wonder how you're doing" and "I can't figure it out", places the teller in an ongoing emotional struggle, indicating that the pain remains alive. The present continuous, such as "I'm wondering why you're still not calling", builds emotional immediacy. Thus, the pre-construction proceeds from current emotional confusion, back through persistent memories and expectations, to past love. The teller mentally revisits these moments to make sense of their continued longing, effectively shaping a narrative built on emotional reasoning rather than linear time.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has achieved its three objectives: identifying the types of verb tenses used across Jamie Miller's Broken Memories album, quantifying their frequency to identify temporal reference patterns, and applying Labov's pre-construction framework to examine how these tenses contribute to emotional depth and narrative progression in lyrics. The tense use serves as an artistic tool to express emotional narratives. The simple past tense is mostly used to reflect memories and regrets, while the present tense creates a sense of immediacy and emotional closeness. The future tense, though used less often, conveys hope and uncertainty, completing the emotional journey in the lyrics. Through the integration of computational tagging, manual validation, and thematic coding, the study provided a comprehensive view of how grammatical features contribute not only to lyrical coherence but also to emotional storytelling. Applying Labov's framework further revealed how narratives are mentally pre-constructed by song composers in organizing emotional experiences into coherent,

resonant stories.

Future research may consider extending the study by including multiple albums from different singers to compare how tenses are used. Researchers could also explore the role of modality and voice as well as tense to find additional grammatical strategies in lyrics. Moreover, incorporating the effects of listener reception studies may provide more compressive insights into how tense and narrative construction impact emotional interpretation and engagement. Finally, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate cognitive linguistics, education, and corpus analysis could deepen our understanding of how grammar, memory, and cognitive interplay in lyrics.

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