

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical foundations that will guide the analysis of Swift's lyrics, focusing on the principles of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in context. It begins with a brief overview of pragmatics and its relevance to musical language, followed by a detailed explanation of the core concepts of pragmatics that will be used to analyze "Evermore." These concepts are mood and modality, and narrative pragmatics.

2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics, as defined by Levinson (1983), is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language. It seeks to understand how meaning is constructed not only from the words themselves but also from how they are used in particular situations. In addition to this view, pragmatics focuses on how speakers convey meaning through language use in real social contexts. It is concerned with how utterances are interpreted based on factors such as the relationship between speakers, the situation, and cultural norms. Pragmatics emphasizes that successful communication depends not only on grammatical accuracy but also on the appropriateness of language choices in specific contexts (Nurdiana, 2019).

Building on this perspective, pragmatics also examines meaning as something that is closely tied to the speaker's intention and the context of interaction. Meaning in pragmatics is not fixed, but emerges from how utterances are produced and understood in real communication. Context such as the situation, the emotional state of the speaker, and the relationship between participants plays a crucial role in shaping pragmatic meaning. Through pragmatics, language can function effectively because speakers are able to adjust their utterances to match the

communicative purpose. This shows that pragmatics helps explain why the same expression can carry different meanings depending on how and where it is used (Astutik, 2024).

In the domain of song lyrics, pragmatics allows us to explore how singers use language to perform acts such as expressing love, regret, anger, or hope. Through pragmatic analysis, meaning is understood not only from the words themselves but also from the context, intention, and emotional stance of the speaker. This approach also reveals how artists construct relationships with listeners, reflect personal experiences, and manipulate time and space through linguistic choices. As a result, pragmatics becomes a useful tool for uncovering deeper meanings in creative texts that go beyond literal interpretation (Hafiza Saumi Ramadilla et al., 2025). This perspective is particularly relevant when analyzing Taylor Swift's songs, as her lyrics often present personal narratives and emotional expressions that rely heavily on context and implied meaning.

To understand these meanings more clearly, it is important to distinguish pragmatics from other approaches to meaning, such as semantics. Unlike semantics, which examines the literal meaning of words and sentences, pragmatics considers what the speaker or writer means in a given context, how the message is intended to be understood by the audience, and what additional meanings are implied or implied. Songs often rely on indirect language, metaphor, perspective shifts, and emotional ambiguity all ideal topics for pragmatic analysis. Throughout the "*evermore*" album, Swift uses shifting narrative voices, implied meanings, and emotional subtext in her lyrics. As a result, listeners need to interpret more than the literal words to fully understand the messages of the songs. what is explicitly stated.

2.2 Mood and Modality

In linguistics, mood refers to the verb forms that express the speaker's attitude toward an action or state, such as indicative, declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative, and subjunctive. While modality refers to the expression of possibility, necessity, permission, or obligation and often conveyed by modal verbs such as might, should, could, and must.

1. Mood

Mood refers to the grammatical feature of verbs that expresses the speaker's choice of words toward a proposition, as it indicates whether a statement is factual, hypothetical, desired, or doubtful. Mood is closely related to interpersonal meaning because it reflects how speakers interact with others through language. Mood shows whether the speaker is giving information, asking a question, or giving a command. This grammatical system helps explain how language is used to negotiate roles, attitudes, and relationships between participants in communication. Therefore, mood is not only a matter of sentence form, but also a key resource for expressing interpersonal meaning in context (Ngongo et al., 2016).

There are six types of mood according to (Aliyu, 2022) and (Halliday, 2014), which are:

a. Declarative Mood

Declarative mood is used to give information or to make statements. In this mood, the speaker provides facts, opinions, or explanations to the listener. It is commonly found in conversations, academic texts, and narratives because it helps speakers share ideas and describe situations clearly. This type of mood plays an important role in communication since it allows people to express thoughts and beliefs.

Example:

- 1) She is very confident.
- 2) They are ready for the meeting.
- 3) We believe in justice.

b. Interrogative Mood

Interrogative mood is used to ask questions. The speaker uses this mood when they want to get information from the listener. It can appear in the form of yes/no questions or wh-questions such as what, who, where, and why. This mood supports interaction because it encourages responses and dialogue between speakers.

Example:

- 1) Do you understand the lesson?
- 2) Where are they going?
- 3) Why did you leave early?

c. Imperative Mood

Imperative mood is used to give commands, instructions, or requests. In this mood, the speaker directs the listener to perform an action. The subject is often not stated because it is understood. Imperative mood is commonly used in daily instructions, warnings, and formal commands.

Example:

- 1) Sit down.
- 2) Please listen carefully.
- 3) Open the window.

d. Modulated Interrogative Mood (Offer)

Modulated interrogative mood is used to make offers or polite suggestions. Although it has the form of a question, its main function is not only to ask but to offer help or assistance. This mood is often used to sound polite and respectful in social interactions.

Example:

- 1) Would you like some help?
- 2) Can I assist you with this task?
- 3) Shall I explain it again?

e. Indicative

The indicative mood is used for exchange of information and factual content. It functions to employ statements, beliefs, perceptions, and inquiries about reality. This mood positions the speaker as provider or seeker of information and represents propositions as factual or assumed to be real.

Example:

- 1) Tobias remembers the incident about the night clearly.
- 2) We believe the story is true.
- 3) She knows the truth.

f. Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood expresses hypothetical situations, wishes, emotions, uncertainty, and non-factual conditions. It represents meanings that are imagined, desired, feared, or evaluated rather than factual.

Example:

- 1) If she was stronger, she would survive.
- 2) I wish it were different.
- 3) If she had known, she would have changed.

2. Modality

Modality refers to the way the speaker expresses attitudes toward the truth, likelihood, necessity, or desirability of a proposition, reflecting how certain, possible, necessary, or obligatory something is. In linguistics, modality functions as an important tool for showing a speaker's judgment, belief, or evaluation toward a situation or event. Rather than only serving a grammatical role, modality also conveys interpersonal meaning by influencing

how messages are interpreted by the audience. It allows speakers or writers to express degrees of certainty, obligation, ability, or willingness through linguistic choices such as modal verbs and adverbs. Therefore, modality plays a crucial role in shaping meaning and guiding interpretation in communication by revealing the speaker's stance toward what is being said (Ritonga et al., 2025).

According to (Palmer, 2001), there are four types of modality, which are:

a. Epistemic Modality

To indicate the degree of certainty, possibility, or probability about a statement. The pursue is to concern the speaker's judgement of truth based on knowledge or evidence. The words used are; may, certainly, might, could, must, and possibly.

Example:

- 1) Faathir might be at home. (possibility)
- 2) Faathir must be tired after playing all day. (certainty)

b. Deontic Modality

To indicate of obligation, prohibition, and permission. The pursue is to examine the authority, norms, and rules imposed by the speaker or context. The words used are should, may, must, have to, can't, ought to.

Example:

- 1) You must submit your thesis by Tuesday. (obligation)
- 2) You may leave early. (permission)
- 3) You can't sit here. (prohibition)

c. Dynamic Modality

To indicate ability and willingness of the subject to perform an action. The pursue is to internal reflects on capacity or decision rather than external obligation. The words used are; can, could, would, will.

Example:

- 1) She can swim very well. (ability)
 - 2) I will help you. (willingness)
- d. Bouletic Modality

To indicate wishes, desires, and hopes.

Example:

- 1) May you find your own happiness.
- 2) I hope she arrives safely.

The mood and modality in “Evermore,” indicate emotional tone and psychological state. In “Marjorie,” uses indicative mood to present memories as factual, while the subjunctive mood conveys longing for unreal situations. These linguistic features highlight the remembrance and emotional loss of the song “Marjorie,”

2.3 Description of the Research Object

This study takes the album Evermore (2020) by Taylor Swift as the object of analysis. The album represents a narrative-driven musical work characterized by storytelling, emotional expression, and complex linguistic structures in its lyrics. Evermore (2020) consists of songs that explore experiences and relationships making it relevant source for linguistic and pragmatic analysis.

As a lyrical text, the album provides rich data for examining interpersonal meaning through grammatical choices, particularly in the use of mood and modality. The diversity of narrative voices, perspectives, and emotional descriptions within the song allows for systematic analysis of how speakers construct meaning and positioning themselves in relation to others. Therefore, Evermore (2020) is considered an appropriate and representative corpus for analyzing mood and modality in contemporary song lyrics.

2.4 Previous Related Studies

(Kalamor & Febrian, 2025) conducted a semantic study titled "Kajian Semantik: Analisis Makna Kiasan Lirik Lagu Taylor Swift Dalam Lagu "New Romantics & Blank Space"" published in *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*. They examine the use of figurative language, such as metaphors, personification, simile, hyperbole, symbolism, irony, and paradox to uncover layered meanings in Blank Space and New Romantics. This study fits within a semantic paradigm (Geoffrey Leech's framework), focusing on how non-literal language conveys emotional and social messages.

(Kamaliah & Adistia Mursyidatul, 2021) conducted an interpersonal meaning study titled "Interpersonal Meaning of MOOD Choices on Taylor Swift's Song Lyrics in Folklore Album". She examined 256 clauses in five selected song lyrics of Taylor Swift's Folklore album. From the speech function, statement was dominant type that indicated that the composer presented the ideas of the song lyrics by giving the information to the listener.

(Maulida & Imperiani, 2023) conducted an interpersonal meaning study entitled "*Interpersonal Meaning Analysis of Taylor Swift Song Lyrics in Fearless (Taylor's Version) Album.*" This study analyze interpersonal meaning by focusing on the mood system and modality in three selected song lyrics from Taylor Swift's *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* album, namely *Love Story*, *Hey Stephen*, and *White Horse*. Using a qualitative approach based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, the researchers examined 137 clauses found in the selected songs. The findings revealed that declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods were employed in the lyrics, with declarative mood as the most dominant type. The dominance of declarative mood indicates that the singer mainly conveys ideas, feelings, and experiences by providing information to the listeners. In addition, the use of modality with different degrees reflects the singer's level of certainty and attitude toward the messages expressed in the song lyrics.