

Analysis of Tense Selection in Heaven's Song Lyric by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting

¹Resti Amalia, ²Livia Feranty, ³Tri Arie Bowo
¹²³ Universitas Bangka Belitung, Kabupaten Bangka, Indonesia

¹ resti@ubb.ac.id*; ² lferanty06@gmail.com; ³ arie622@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the type of tense used in the lyrics of the song "Heaven" by Lyodra Ginting and Calum Scott. The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive research method. The data used in this study came from the lyrics of the song "Heaven," which Calum Scott wrote and sang by himself and Lyodra Ginting. The researcher uses the theory of grammar and style in Stylistics to analyze the tenses selection in the song lyrics data. The study results show that this song's lyrics predominantly use the simple present tense, and the rest use the present continuous tense, present perfect continuous tense, simple past tense, past continuous tense, and past future tense. There are reasons behind the songwriter's tense selection. The tense in the song is dominated by simple present tense to express a habitual use indicating a generalization over a set of times.

Keywords: Calum Scott; Heaven; Lyodra Ginting; Stylistics; Tense Selection; Song Lyrics

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential element used by humans to communicate and interact with society (Aprianti & Parmawati, 2020). Language can express feelings, convey messages to others, share ideas and provide opinions (Purwata, 2022). Language is divided into two types, namely spoken language, and written language. Spoken language can be in the form of everyday conversation. Meanwhile, written language can be in the form of non-literary and literary works (Isti'anah, 2016 in Saputri, Manalu, & Anggraeni, 2020).

Language can also be expressed in the form of music. Songwriters can express their feelings and

emotions in their language and style. So that later, the message they want to convey can be felt by listeners. Thus, music can also build communication between songwriters and society (Purwata, 2008). Song lyrics express the poet's thoughts, feelings, or perceptions of a particular situation (Abrams, 1993 in Brewster, 2009). Most songwriters pour their emotions into their work. The song can be based on personal experiences or issues that are currently popular. A song lyric is a form of interaction between the writer and listener (Dallin, 1994 in Corke, 2012). Song lyrics provide listeners with a deep understanding of the message in a song (Firdaus, 2013).

Linguistics studies language as a communication system in people's lives (Halliday, Michael, & Webster, 2006 in Abdumughni, 2019). One branch of linguistic analysis in literature is stylistics, or the study of style (Candria, 2019). Style is a way or method used by the author in forming words based on the author's thoughts (Batool, 2008 in Golzadeh & Mahdipoor, 2016). Stylistics is a branch of linguistics related to style in literary works (Simpson, 2004 in Golzadeh & Mahdipoor, 2016). Furthermore, stylistics is a language study that aims to connect literary works with their artistic functions (Leech & Short in Golzadeh & Mahdipoor, 2016). From the understanding of some of these experts, it can be concluded that stylistics is the study of style in the language uniquely used by a writer.

Grammar is a study of the structure of the formation of a language and how a collection of several words can unite and form meaningful sentence constructions (Williams, 2006 in Chetioui & Hammami, 2021). It can be said that grammar refers to the way a language is constructed. Grammar is not only related to the combination of several words to form a sentence, but also must create complete sentences that are meaningful and can be used to communicate (Chetioui & Hammami, 2021).

Tense is an important category or part of grammar related to the form of a verb and the time an event occurs (Chetioui & Hammami, 2021; Stephens & Sanderson, 2021). There are 16 tenses used in English which consist of: simple present tense, present continuous tense, present perfect tense, present perfect continuous tense, simple past tense,

past continuous tense, past perfect tense, past perfect continuous tense, simple future tense, future continuous tense, future perfect tense, future perfect continuous tense, past future tense, past future continuous tense, past future perfect tense, and past future perfect continuous tense (Ferikoglu, 2018 in Stephens & Sanderson, 2021).

The tense chosen by a songwriter can give listeners an idea of the meaning contained in the lyrics of the song. Listeners can also find out what the songwriter has experienced in the past, the songwriter's feelings in the present, and the writer's hopes for the future. Therefore, the choice of tense in writing songs is essential for a songwriter so that the meaning or message can be appropriately conveyed to the listeners.

According to Saeed (2003), the tense helps a speaker to indicate a situation relative to some point in time references, most likely the time of speaking. The speaker views this time of speaking as the situation of speech. It can also be said that tense related to the speaker's view of time. By understanding that the speaker's utterances show the time view, the listener is expected to give the same and expected responses to the speaker in order the communication will run smoothly.

Tense also locates a situation in time relative to a reference point mostly the present or time of speech (Nurse and Devos, 2019). Since tenses reflect not the world but our categorization of the world, different languages may divide the timeline up differently, resulting in a different number of tenses. The above theory also states that the use of language

that is based on different time causes different forms of sentences.

Previous research on song lyrics has been widely studied. For example, Purwata (2008), in his thesis entitled "A Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Patterns Used in Westlife's Song Lyrics," the writer focuses on analyzing the Noun Phrase and Verb Phrases used in Westlife songs. In analyzing the data, the writer also explains a little about the tenses used in the song's lyrics.

Another research was written by Purwaningsih (2017) in a thesis entitled "Representation of Experiences through Transitivity and Tense Selection in the Song Lyrics of Twenty One Pilots' Blurryface Album (A Stylistic Study)." In analyzing the data, the writer explains the type of transitivity process and tense selection contained in the Blurryface song album. Then the writer concludes the type of transitivity process and tense selection that the songwriter dominantly uses.

Based on the two previous studies and several other studies, it was found that no research discussed the tense selection in the lyrics of the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting. Therefore, the writer wants to do research by focusing only on tense selection in *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting's lyrics.

METHOD

This study uses a Stylistics approach in the form of grammar and style in knowing the choice of tense in *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting's song lyrics. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Qualitative research seeks to identify the subject

and find out what is felt and experienced by the subject in everyday life (Basrowi & Kelvin, 2008 in Nugrahani, 2014). In descriptive qualitative research, the researcher must explain the process by which a phenomenon occurs based on the theoretical framework during the study (Nugrahani, 2014).

The data used in this study are the lyrics of the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting. This study aims to determine the dominant tense used in the lyrics of the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting. Then, the reasons for the songwriter's use of the dominant tense will be concluded from the selection of the songwriter's tense.

Data collection techniques are carried out as follows. 1) Listening and reading the whole song. 2) Marking the parts of the lyrics that contain verbs. 3) Rewriting pieces of lyrics that contain verbs and tenses in them. 4) Group the data in the song's lyrics according to the tense category. The data analysis techniques used in this study are as follows. 1) Reviewing the data that has been collected. 2) Classifying and regrouping the data in more detail based on the category and including excerpts of song lyrics. 3) Explain and describe the results of the analysis based on the object of study. 4) Provide conclusions on the results of the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The song '*Heaven*' tells the story of someone who managed to find his love. The couple's joy feels like being in heaven (Int, Zakaria, & Azasya, 2022). The song was written by Hayley Warner, Nolan Winfield Sipe, and Calum Scott. This song

was originally a single from Calum Scott's second album, *Bridges*, which was released on April 29th, 2022. Then Calum Scott collaborated with several singers from Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam, to release this song duet with him. One of them is a young singer from Indonesia named Lyodra Ginting. The duet song was released on June 9th 2022. As of December 2nd 2022, the music video for the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting has been watched 13 million times on the YouTube platform.

To facilitate the process of analyzing tense selection in the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting, the researcher includes the full lyrics of the song *Heaven* quoted from the Musixmatch website as follows.

[Calum Scot]

I used to count the stars in the sky
 Now I count the ones in your eyes
 I used to think that my paradise
 Was somewhere waiting on the other side
 But you, ooh-ooh
 Take me higher than I've been
 Laying hands on my skin
 It's true, ooh-ooh
 Nothing compares to you
 So tell me why, what good is life?
 If we're all just waiting to dance in the sky
 I'm already there, here in your eyes
 We climb the gates every time that you lie
 down next to me
 I rest in peace, they say it's better, but how
 could that be?
 If everyone had a love like us
 They wouldn't call that place above, Heaven
 [Lyodra Ginting]
 Waking up to you feels like a pinch-myself
 moment
 If we're only here for a while, I wanna spend
 All of it holding you, ooh-ooh
 Take me higher than I've been
 Got me questioning everything I knew, ooh-
 ooh
 'Cause nothing compares to you
 So tell me why, what good is life?

If we're all just waiting to dance in the sky
 I'm already there, here in your eyes
 We climb the gates every time that you lie
 down next to me
 I rest in peace, they say it's better, but how
 could that be?
 If everyone had a love like us
 They wouldn't call that place above, Heaven
 [Calum Scott Feat Lyodra Ginting]
 Nothing comes, nothing comes close to this
 Looking up, looking up even if it exists
 My Heaven is on your lips
 [Calum Scott]
 So tell me why, what good is life?
 If we're all just waiting to dance in the sky
 [Calum Scott Feat Lyodra Ginting]
 I'm already there, here in your eyes
 We climb the gates every time that you lie
 down next to me
 I rest in peace, they say it's better, but how
 could that be?
 If everyone had a love like us
 They wouldn't call that place above, Heaven.
 (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022)

On the table 1, The researcher have determined and grouped the verb selection used in each piece of the lyrics in the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting.

Based on the tense selection in the snippets of song lyrics shown in the table above, we can see that the present tense is the tense that appears most often in almost all of the song lyrics. There are 20 present tense verbs; the rest are seven past tense verbs, seven continuous tense verbs, and one perfect tense verb. In the table, verbs that show the future tense is not found.

Further explanation regarding the tense used in the lyrics of the song *Heaven* by Calum Scott and Lyodra Ginting can be described as follows:

Simple Present Tense

Formula: Subject + verb 1 + complement

“Now I count the ones in your eyes” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The piece of lyrics consists of one clause with one subject, namely 'I,' and one verb, namely 'count.' The lyrics also contain the adverb of time, 'now,' which relates to the lyrics of the previous song, "I used to count the stars in the sky." It can be seen that the songwriter uses the simple present tense to state that if he used to have the habit of counting the stars in the sky, now he has a new habit, namely counting the stars in the eyes of his lover. So it can be concluded that the author uses this tense to tell the listener the habits he is currently doing.

"So tell me why, what good is life?" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The lyrics consist of two clauses separated by a comma, and each clause shows the simple present tense. The simple present tense can be seen from the verb 'tell' in the first clause and to be 'is' in the second clause. This piece of lyrics is a question posed by the writer to his girlfriend about life.

"I'm already there, here in your eyes" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

This piece of lyrics has one subject, 'I' and to be 'am.' After to be, it is followed by a complement in the form of the adverb 'there.' This piece of lyrics shows that, at this time, the writer was already in his lover's eyes and will continue to be there.

"We climb the gates every time that you lie down next to me" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

This piece of lyrics has two clauses separated by 'that.' Each clause has a verb that shows the simple present tense. In the first clause, there is the verb 'climb' and the adverb of time, 'every time.' And in the second clause, there is the verb 'lie.' This piece of lyrics shows the

habit of the writer and his lover. The writer and his lover climb over the gate, and his lover lies next to the writer. The gate here can be interpreted as a barrier in their relationship.

"I rest in peace, they say it's better" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

In this piece of lyrics, there are the verbs 'rest', 'say,' and to be 'is,' which shows the simple present tense. Still related to the previous lyrics, whenever his lover lies down next to him, he can rest comfortably, and people say that is a good thing.

"Cause nothing compares to you" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The song lyric excerpt contains the verb 'compare,' which is added 's,' which describes the third person singular function. The verb also shows that the clause is in the simple present tense. The lyric quote means that nothing compares to the writer's lover.

"Nothing comes, nothing comes close to this" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

This lyric quote uses the simple present tense, which can be seen from the appearance of the present form verb 'comes.' This lyric quote means that no one has approached the songwriter at this time.

Present Continuous Tense

Formula: Subject + to be (is, am, are) + verb 1 + ing + complement

"If we're all just waiting to dance in the sky" (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The lyric quote uses the present continuous tense formula as follows: subject (we) + to be (are) + verb 1+ing (waiting). The present continuous tense is used to express an event or action happening at the

current time but does not have to occur at that time. This quote relates to the previous lyrics: “So tell me why, what good is life?” The author uses the present continuous tense to tell his girlfriend about the point of living if they wait to dance in the sky.

It is unknown why the author uses the trope ‘dance in the sky.’ The predicate ‘are waiting’ is about progressive action as on-going and continuing. The process describes as being extended through time without any implication of completion. In the time of singers state this sentence, they believe many people are still doing this action and will continue to do so. Therefore they use simple present continuous.

Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Formula: Subject + have + been + verb 1 + ing + complement

“I’ve been laying hands on my skin” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The lyric quote uses the present perfect continuous tense formula as follows: subject (I) + have + been + verb 1+ing (laying). The present perfect continuous tense is used to express an event or action in the past that continues until now or after the speaker utters his words. This lyric quote relates to the following: “It’s true, nothing compares to you.” The author wants to convey that he has just or has laid hands on her skin, and at that time, he thought that nothing compares to his lover.

Simple Past Tense

Formula: Subject + verb 2 + complement

“I used to count the stars in the sky” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

There is the verb ‘used,’ the past form of the verb ‘use.’ The simple

past tense is used to express events or actions that were carried out in the past. In this case, the simple past tense used by the writer shows the habits that the writer did in the past. The excerpt of the lyrics contains the meaning that in the past, the writer used to count the stars in the sky. And then, there is a continuation of the lyrics showing his habit of using the simple present tense, “Now I count the ones in your eyes.”

“If everyone had a love like us” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

There is a past form of the verb ‘had’ in the quote from the lyrics of the song. The simple past tense in this quote is used as a clause in a conditional sentence. Meanwhile, the main sentence, a quote from the lyrics afterward, is the past future tense, “They wouldn’t call that place above, Heaven.” The author supposes that if everyone feels love like him and his lover, some people will not call the place above heaven.

This sentence is basically conditional sentence type two that indicates the unreal situation. It means that in reality, not everyone has a love like the speakers have.

Past Continuous Tense

Formula: Subject + was/were + verb 1 + ing + complement

“My paradise was somewhere waiting on the other side” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

This lyric quote uses the past continuous tense formula as follows: subject (my paradise) + was + verb 1+ing (waiting). This quote connects with the previous lyric, “I used to think.” The author wants to say that in the past, he thought that his paradise was somewhere waiting for him on the other side, but it was not.

The verb in the past tense here indicates the complete events.

Past Future Tense

Formula: Subject + would + verb 1 + complement

“They wouldn’t call that place above, Heaven” (Warner, Sipe, & Scott, 2022).

The lyric quote uses the past-future tense formula as follows: subject (they) + would + not + verb 1 (call). As previously explained, this quote is the main sentence of the previous song lyric quote, a clause containing a conditional sentence Type II. This conditional sentence is used to express unreal situation and things that are unlikely to happen. Basically, the quote indicated that the reality shows the situation otherwise.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the songwriter *Heaven* predominantly uses the simple present tense in creating the song’s lyrics. The simple present tense functions to express repeated events or actions and become a habit for the speaker. In each piece of lyrics that uses the simple present tense, the writer mentions the habits he often does with his girlfriend. The writer also uses other tenses, such as the present continuous tense to show the events that the writer is currently experiencing or doing, the present perfect continuous tense to show the events that the writer has just done, the simple past tense to establish the habits that the writer did in the past and also contains a conditional sentence, past continuous tense which shows events that took place for some time in the past, and past future tense which functions as the main clause of supposition.

REFERENCES

- Abdulmughni, S. A. S. (2019). Stylistics, Literary Criticism, Linguistics and Discourse Analysis. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(2), 412-428. Retrieved December 3rd, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n2p412>
- Aprianti, I. N., & Parmawati, A. (2020). Derivational and Inflectional Morpheme Analysis on the Song Lyrics of Lady Gaga “A Star is Born” Album. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 3(3), 322–328. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v3i3.p322-328>
- AZLyrics (2022). *Calum Scott Lyrics*. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from AZLyrics website: <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/calumscott/heaven.html>
- Brewster, S. (2009). *Lyric: The New Critical Idiom* (1st ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Candria, M. (2019). Stylistics and Linguistic Analysis of Literary Works. *CULTURALISTICS: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies*, 3(1), 29-34. Retrieved December 3rd, 2022 from <https://doi.org/10.14710/culturalistics.v3i1.4176>
- Chetioui, F., & Hammami, A. (2021). *The Difficulties Students Face in Applying Past Complex Tenses in Written Expression Classes*. Dissertation. University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel
- Corke, M. (2012). *Approaches to Communication Through Music*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Firdaus, E. A. (2013). Textual Meaning in Song Lyrics. *Passage E-Journal UPI*, 1(1), 99–106. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/349>
- Golzadeh, F. A., Mahdipoor, N. (2016). A Stylistic Analysis of the Beatles' 'Let It Be'. *Network Scientific Journal Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, 2(2). Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.18413/2313-8912-2016-2-2-56-60>
- Int, B. S., Zakaria, I., & Azasya, S. (2022). *Lirik Lagu Heaven, Calum Scott feat Lyodra yang Lagi Naik Daun*. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from IDN Times website: <https://www.idntimes.com/hype/entertainment/seo-intern/lirik-lagu-heaven-calum-scott-feat-lyodra>
- Manossoh, J. R., Samola, N., & Olii, S. T. (2022). A Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Patterns Used in Barack Obama Speech. *Journal of English Culture, Language, Literature and Education*, 10(1). 201-225. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.53682/eclue.v10i1.4172>
- Nugrahani, F. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dalam Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa 1*(1). Solo: Cakra Books.
- Purwaningsih, D. (2017). *Representation of Experiences through Transitivity and Tense Selection in the Song Lyrics of Twenty One Pilots' Blurryface Album (A Stylistic Study)*. Thesis. Universitas Jenderal Soedirman. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <http://repository.unsoed.ac.id/id/eprint/2869>
- Purwata, I. (2008). *A Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Patterns Used in Westlife's Song Lyrics*. Thesis. State Islamic University of Malang. Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from <http://etheses.uin.malang.ac.id/4752/>
- Rahman, F., Weda, S. (2019). Linguistic Deviation and the Rhetoric Figures in Shakespeare's Selected Plays. *Linguae: European Scientific Language Journal*, 12(1), 37-52. Retrieved December 3rd, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2019.12.01.03>
- Saputri, Y. M. T., Manalu, H. F., & Anggraeni, D. (2020). The Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in Avengers: End Game. *Scripta: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa*, 2(2), 233–244. Retrieved December 2, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.33019/scripta.v2i2.82>
- Sherstinova, T., Martynenko, G. (2020). *Linguistic and Stylistic Parameters for the Study of Literary Language in the Corpus of Russian Short Stories of the First Third of the 20th Century*. In *Proceedings of the III International Conference on Language Engineering and Applied Linguistics (PRLEAL-2019)*. Saint Petersburg, Russia, 2552, 105-120. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2552/>
- Stephens, O. S., Sanderson, I. J. (2021). Two Tenses: An Alternative to Teaching English Grammar Tense. *THAITESOL Journal*, 34(1), 25-44. Retrieved December 3rd, 2022, from <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/thaitesoljournal/article/view/252354>
- Warner, H., Sipe, N. W., & Scott, C. (2022). Lyrics Heaven (feat Lyodra). Retrieved December 2nd, 2022, from Musixmatch website: <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Calum-Scott-Lyodra/Heaven-Lyodra>

APPENDIX

Table 1 Verb Selection in Heaven's Song Lyric by Calum Scott

Lyric	Verb Selection				
	Past	Present	Future	Continuous	Perfect
"I used to count the stars in the sky"	Used	Count			
"Now I count the ones in your eyes"		Count			
"I used to think that my paradise"	Used	Think			
"Was somewhere waiting on the other side"	Was			Waiting	
"Take me higher than I've been"		Take			have been
"Laying hands on my skin"				Laying	
"It's true"		Is			
"Nothing compares to you"		compares			
"So tell me why, what good is life?"		tell, is			
"If we're all just waiting to dance in the sky"		are, dance		Waiting	
"I'm already there, here in your eyes"		Am			
"We climb the gates every time that you lie down next to me"		climb, lie			
"I rest in peace, they say it's better, but how could that be?"	Could	rest, say, is, be			
"If everyone had a love like us"	Had				
"They wouldn't call that place above, Heaven"	Would	Call			
"Waking up to you feels like a pinch-myself moment"		Feels		Waking	
"If we're only here for a while, I wanna spend"		are, wanna spend			
"All of it holding you"				Holding	
"Got me questioning everything I knew"	Got Knew			Questioning	
"Cause nothing compares to you"		compares			
"Nothing comes, nothing comes close to this"		Comes			
"Looking up, looking up even if it exists"		Exists		Looking	
"My Heaven is on your lips"		Is			