

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of verb tenses in Jamie Miller's Broken Memories album to explore how grammatical choices contributed to emotional expression and narrative structure in song lyrics. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, six songs were analyzed through corpus analysis using TagAnt software to identify verb tense types and calculate their frequencies. Additionally, a qualitative narrative analysis based on Labov's theory was applied to examine how tenses supported storytelling. The results showed that the most frequently used tense was the simple present (118 times), followed by simple past (53 times), present continuous (11 times), simple future (11 times), past future (11 times), present unreal conditional (9 times), past future perfect (7 times), present perfect (5 times), past continuous (1 times), and past future continuous (1 times). Simple present and past tenses dominated in expressing emotional immediacy and memory, while less frequent tenses (e.g., conditional and future forms) conveyed hope, regret, or imagined outcomes. Labov's theory revealed that verb tenses aligned with narrative components like Abstract, Orientation, and Evaluation, guiding emotional progression. The findings affirmed that verb tenses functioned not only grammatically but also as narrative and expressive tools that enriched listener engagement and lyrical depth.

Keywords: verb tenses, song lyrics, narrative theory, emotional expression, Jamie Miller