



Topic Continuity in Song Lyrics: A Quantitative Discourse Analysis of “Perfect” by Simple Plan

Deliana^{1*}, Ivan Fernando Simanjuntak², Dzikri Ilma³

Department of English, Faculty of Cultural Science, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Deliana, deliana413@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Topic Continuity, Discourse Analysis, Song Lyrics

Received: 1, July

Revised: 15, July

Accepted: 17, August

©2025 Deliana, Simanjuntak, Ilma:
This is an open-access article
distributed under the terms of the
[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study investigates topic continuity and referential cohesion in the song “Perfect” by Simple Plan using Givón’s quantitative model. The objective is to analyze how various types of anaphoric references, including zero anaphora, definite pronouns, third-person pronouns, and possessive pronouns, function to maintain coherence and convey emotional meaning within the lyrics. Employing a qualitative descriptive design supported by quantitative analysis, the research examines the referential distance (JR), potential interference (PI), and topic continuity (TC) in each clause of the song. The data consist of all anaphoric expressions identified in the lyrics, collected through close reading and clause segmentation. The findings reveal that the song heavily relies on first and second person pronouns to construct an intimate and emotionally charged discourse. Zero anaphora is used selectively to create immediacy, while third-person and possessive pronouns support abstract and personal references. The absence of indefinite pronouns reflects the song’s focus on specific interpersonal conflict. These results suggest that Givón’s model is applicable to expressive, non-traditional texts such as song lyrics. The study contributes to the field of stylistics and discourse analysis by demonstrating how referential cohesion shapes meaning in emotionally driven narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication in any language depends heavily on discourse coherence, with maintaining topic continuity playing a crucial role in helping audiences understand the intended message. Coherence in a text reflects the underlying social order and is shaped, recognized, or contested by individuals situated within social contexts, where power dynamics influence how coherence is attributed (Gee & Handford, 2012). As a field of linguistic inquiry, discourse analysis has extensively explored how topics are introduced, maintained, and shifted across various spoken and written genres, including news reports, academic writing, and everyday conversations. These studies have developed theoretical frameworks and quantitative measures to explain how topic continuity contributes significantly to overall textual cohesion.

Textual cohesion itself is a key mechanism that connects different parts of a text, ensuring smooth transitions and logical flow. It operates through lexicogrammatical devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, which together bind sentences and clauses without changing the underlying grammatical structure. (Matthiessen et al., 2010) emphasize that textual cohesion is not only central to systemic functional linguistics but also recognized across different linguistic theories as essential for creating unified and comprehensible discourse.

Among these cohesion devices, anaphoric reference - a type of endophoric reference that points back to elements already introduced in the unfolding text - plays a particularly crucial role in maintaining textual cohesion and continuity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). However, despite the extensive research in discourse analysis on many text types, certain genres - especially those from popular culture such as song lyrics - have received comparatively less scholarly attention. Song lyrics combine poetic creativity with narrative expression, and their unique constraints - such as rhythm, rhyme, and repetition - affect how topics are structured and developed. This distinctiveness calls for deeper linguistic study on how coherence and topic continuity are preserved in lyrics.

The song *Perfect* a song by Simple Plan, co-written with composer Arnold Lanni, provides a rich case for this study. It expresses the struggle of not meeting parental expectations. Drummer Chuck Comeau explained that the song reflects his desire to tell his parents he cannot be perfect, particularly because of their lack of support for his music career. Through the song, Comeau aims to show that despite imperfections, he has found success. Bassist and backing vocalist David Desrosiers also related the song to his personal experiences before performing its acoustic version. Additionally, Comeau described the 2016 song *Problem Child* as a "part two of *Perfect*," portraying his brother's support for his music career (Wikipedia contributors, 2025). This personal and emotional background enhances the importance of maintaining clear topical coherence in the lyrics to effectively convey the intended narrative.

Perfect offers an excellent opportunity to study how lyrical discourse manages topic continuity through an emotional dialogue marked by personal struggle and relational tension. The song's shifting perspectives and frequent use of pronouns and referential expressions raise questions about the linguistic

strategies used to maintain topical progression amid lyrical repetition and poetic form. This dynamic reflects the concept of instantiated selves in interaction, where self-representations may change but remain anchored by a stable continuity that allows multiple identities to be understood as one coherent self. Similarly, despite thematic shifts within the song, the topic stays coherent and recognizable, demonstrating how lyrical discourse achieves both cohesion and emotional impact (Van Dijk, 2008).

According to Givón (as cited in Deliana, 2010, cited in (Siregar et al., 2019)), discourse continuity can be divided into three types: thematic continuity, action continuity, and topic/participant continuity. Topic continuity is considered the most accessible and statistically significant in thematic paragraphs. To measure this, Givón proposed nine topic forms in English, from zero anaphora to referential indefinite noun phrases. This study focuses on measuring topic continuity in *Perfect* using three key parameters from Givón's model: referential distance, potential interference, and topic persistence. By analyzing how topics are maintained and reintroduced throughout the song, the research quantitatively assesses lyrical cohesion. However, the study does not include detailed identification of specific topic forms such as zero anaphora or dislocation, limiting the scope to quantitative evaluation rather than qualitative investigation of linguistic strategies.

Therefore, this research aims to explore how topic continuity is manifested and maintained throughout the lyrics of *Perfect* by Simple Plan, focusing on linguistic strategies that preserve coherence and topical flow. By examining parameters such as referential distance, potential interference, and topic persistence, the study seeks to deepen understanding of how lyrical discourse constructs meaning and emotional resonance. This inquiry will contribute to expanding discourse analytic frameworks into popular music lyrics and enhance appreciation of language use in contemporary cultural texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Givon (1987) defines topic continuity as the linguistic management of a main topic across a sequence of clauses or sentences, ensuring the discourse remains coherent and cohesive. Rather than simply repeating words, topic continuity involves how references to the topic are maintained so that listeners or readers can easily track and understand the flow of information. Givon proposes a quantitative model to measure topic continuity based on three key parameters: referential distance (the gap between mentions of the same topic, where shorter distances indicate stronger continuity), potential interference (the presence of intervening topics that may disrupt continuity), and topic persistence (how long a topic is continuously maintained without interruption).

Additionally, Givon outlines a hierarchy of topical referential forms, ranging from implicit references such as zero anaphora (ellipsis) to explicit ones like indefinite noun phrases. Forms that are more implicit generally indicate higher topic continuity, as they allow the discourse to flow smoothly without requiring explicit restatement. This framework emphasizes the crucial role of topic continuity in facilitating audience comprehension by maintaining discourse

cohesion and coherence - concepts that align closely with this study's focus on how topic continuity supports understanding and emotional resonance within lyrical discourse.

Furthermore, Hasan's definition states that "a text boundary is established semantically and in the lexicogrammar by cohesion: if a sentence is accessible from another, later sentence by some cohesive relation then it can be concluded that the two fall within the same text" (as cited in Halliday M.A.K & Webster 2003). This concept of cohesion and text boundaries provides a useful framework for analyzing lyrical texts, where maintaining coherence is often challenged by the artistic and emotive nature of songs. Unlike prose, song lyrics frequently use repetition, perspective shifts, and poetic devices that complicate topic tracking. Applying Givon's framework allows for a systematic study of how lyrics maintain coherence despite these features, revealing linguistic strategies that enhance listener engagement and understanding.

In analyzing such complex linguistic structures, understanding the fundamental syntactic unit - the clause - is essential. A clause is defined as a syntactic unit that sits above the phrase level and below the sentence level, composed of a sequence of words arranged predicatively (Chaer, 2009). Within this structure, key components such as subjects, objects, and other grammatical elements collaborate to form meaning. Recognizing how clauses function within lyrics helps clarify how topics are introduced and maintained, thereby supporting the overall coherence and cohesion necessary for effective lyrical discourse analysis. Furthermore, understanding discourse as a strategic act within ongoing social interaction requires the listener to infer the speaker's intentions, goals, desires, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and personality (Van Dijk T. A. & Walter, 1986).

The exploring the linguistic features of song lyrics, previous research has highlighted the importance of various language aspects - such as grammar, vocabulary, and discourse structures - in shaping meaning and coherence. Songs, as a unique form of textual and oral expression, combine poetic creativity with narrative elements, making them rich sites for linguistic analysis. Understanding how language functions within lyrics not only sheds light on artistic expression but also reveals how cultural values and personal experiences are communicated to listeners. Building on this foundation, the current study focuses specifically on the concept of topic continuity to examine how lyrical discourse maintains coherence and guides listener comprehension throughout a song.

Several recent studies have explored various linguistic aspects of song lyrics to better understand how language functions to create meaning and coherence in musical discourse. For example, Hutajulu et al. (2023) analyzed the contextual, grammatical, and lexical features of Michael Jackson's *Heal The World*. Their findings reveal that the songwriter's personal experiences are closely reflected in the lyrics, while grammatical elements such as pronouns ("you" and "me") and frequent conjunctions contribute significantly to the cohesion and coherence of the song. The strategic repetition of the phrase "Heal The World" serves to emphasize the song's central message and engage listeners emotionally, encouraging collective responsibility for peace.

Similarly, Erna, Zasrianita, F., & Wediasti (2024) investigated the functions of language in the Rejang regional song *Anak Kunang* using the theories of Chaer and Agustina as well as Jakobson. Their qualitative descriptive analysis identified multiple language functions including personal, directive, phatic, referential, and metalingual, demonstrating that the song operates beyond entertainment to communicate social and cultural values embedded in the Rejang community. This study highlights the role of language in reinforcing social bonds and expressing cultural identity through musical texts, emphasizing the multifunctional nature of song lyrics in discourse.

While these studies focus on broader linguistic and functional dimensions of song lyrics, the present research narrows its focus specifically on topic continuity within Simple Plan's *Perfect*. By applying Givón's (1983) quantitative framework - which measures referential distance, potential interference, and topic persistence - this study examines how topics are introduced, maintained, and shifted throughout the lyrics to ensure discourse coherence. This approach provides a detailed insight into the management of topical flow, filling a gap in the study of lyrical discourse by emphasizing the structural strategies that sustain narrative progression and emotional resonance in popular music.

In addition, research across various text genres has investigated topic continuity using diverse theoretical frameworks and methodologies to better understand how topics are maintained and support discourse coherence. For instance, (Siregar et al., 2019) applied Givón's topic continuity theory to analyze news discourse from okezone.com, revealing that moderate referential distance and topic persistence, combined with low potential interference, effectively uphold the flow and coherence of the text. Such quantitative analyses underscore the fundamental role of topic continuity in sustaining clear communication across different types of discourse.

Building on this, Zein, T. T & Prayogo (2022) conducted a quantitative-descriptive study of topic continuity in the Malay folk tale *Batu Batangkep*. By examining grammatical devices such as zero anaphora and various pronouns and noun phrases, they found that zero anaphora most effectively sustains topic flow, whereas definite noun phrases contribute least to continuity. Their findings deepen the understanding of how specific linguistic forms function in narrative coherence, emphasizing the hierarchical nature of grammatical devices in maintaining topics.

Complementing these insights, Moya Guijarro (2006) compared topic continuity strategies in two distinct subgenres: news items and tourist brochures. The study revealed that news texts favor active voice and anaphoric proforms to keep topics cohesive, while tourist brochures rely more on nominal expressions like definites and possessives. These differing linguistic strategies reflect the distinct communicative goals of each genre, demonstrating how topic continuity adapts to context and purpose.

Additionally, Wahyu (2022) addressed complexity in topic continuity analysis by focusing exclusively on the theme within clauses, excluding the rheme, based on Systemic Functional Linguistics. Applying Leong's method to a news article about waste management in Jakarta, the study identified three

equally dominant topics and a high Topic Development Index, underscoring the significance of thematic consistency for effective topic maintenance.

Collectively, these studies provide a solid theoretical foundation for the analysis of topic continuity across diverse discourse contexts. Identification refers to the linguistic mechanisms used to introduce and consistently track participants within a discourse to maintain referential cohesion (Deborah et al., 2001). Building upon these established frameworks, the present research employs Givón's quantitative model to examine the management of topic continuity within the lyrical discourse of *Perfect* by Simple Plan. This study seeks to elucidate the linguistic strategies that uphold coherence and facilitate listener comprehension in popular music.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, supported by a quantitative framework based on Givón's model of topic continuity, to analyze the cohesion and referential structure in the song "Perfect" by Simple Plan. The study was designed as a discourse analysis, focusing on how anaphoric references contribute to the overall coherence and emotional tone of the lyrics. The method combined qualitative interpretation with quantitative measurement of referential distance (JR), potential interference (PI), and topic continuity (TC), as proposed by Givón (1983).

The object of the research was the lyrical text of "Perfect", chosen purposively for its rich use of pronouns and emotional narrative structure. The song was selected based on its thematic relevance—centered on interpersonal conflict and emotional expression—which made it a suitable case for examining how cohesion operates in emotionally driven discourse. No human participants were involved in this study, as the focus was solely on textual analysis. The selection of this single text was guided by its popularity, accessibility, and the presence of a clear narrative structure that allowed for referential tracking.

The data used in the study consisted of all clauses within the song lyrics that contained or implied anaphoric references. These included zero anaphora, definite pronouns, third-person pronouns, and possessive pronouns. The primary instrument for data collection was a close reading of the lyrics, supported by a manual coding process. Each clause containing anaphoric reference was extracted, numbered, and classified according to the type of reference and its corresponding referential reconstruction.

The data collection process involved segmenting the lyrics into clauses and identifying the referents within and across those clauses. Referential distance (JR) was calculated by counting how many clauses intervened between the initial mention of a referent and its subsequent anaphoric use. Potential interference (PI) was determined by assessing how many competing referents were active at the time of the reference, and topic continuity (TC) was measured by tracking how long a referent remained a focus in the text.

To ensure the credibility of the method and findings, the analysis followed the structured procedures outlined in Givón's model, which has been widely accepted in discourse studies. The use of clause-level analysis and transparent

coding enhances the replicability of the study. In addition, the interpretation was cross-checked with the linguistic context of the song to maintain accuracy in referent identification. The integration of quantitative measures with qualitative insights allowed the study to move beyond surface-level observations and provide an in-depth, systematic understanding of how cohesion is maintained in a personal and emotional text.

RESEARCH RESULT

Zero Anaphora

Table 1. Zero Anaphora and Their Referential Reconstructions

No	Clause Number	Zero Anaphora	Referential Reconstruction	JR	PI	TC
1	2	Ø	You (Father)	1	2	1
2	4	Ø	You (Father)	1	2	0
3	14	Ø	I (Speaker)	1	1	2
4	31	Ø	I (Speaker)	1	1	0

Total: JR = 4 | PI = 6 | TC = 3

Mean: JR = 1.00 | PI = 1.50 | TC = 0.75

Zero anaphora occurs when the subject is omitted but still understood. In "Perfect," this technique is used in emotionally charged lines like "Ø Think back" or "Ø Can't pretend." The mean JR (1.00) shows these references are very close to their antecedents, only one clause away, which helps maintain smooth cohesion. A low TC (0.75) indicates that these references are used briefly, often to express spontaneous thoughts or commands. This adds intimacy and immediacy, mirroring how people speak when emotional.

Definite Pronouns

Table 2. Definite Pronouns

No	Clause Number	Pronoun	Referential Reconstruction	JR	PI	TC
1	1	me	Speaker	20	2	0
2	3	me	Speaker	2	2	1
3	5	I	Speaker	1	2	0
4	6	you	Father	2	2	0
5	7	I	Speaker	2	2	1
6	8	I	Speaker	1	2	0
7	9	it	Situation/Pain	20	2	0
8	10	you	Father	4	2	0
9	11	I	Speaker	3	2	5
10	13	I	Speaker	1	2	4
11	14	you	Father	2	2	1
12	15	I'm	Speaker	1	2	3
13	17	I	Speaker	1	2	0

14	18	you	Father	3	2	0
15	21	we	Father & Speaker	20	2	0

Total: JR = 84 | PI = 30 | TC = 16

Mean: JR = 5.6 | PI = 2.00 | TC = 1.07

Definite pronouns like "I," "you," and "we" dominate the song. The high JR (5.6) shows that pronouns often refer to earlier parts of the text, especially in repeated lines (like "I can't be perfect"). PI (2.00) is moderate, meaning multiple subjects might be active, but the speaker-father relationship keeps meaning clear. The relatively low TC (1.07) suggests that the referents (especially "you") appear frequently but shift quickly, mirroring the changing emotions in the song, from blame to sorrow to apology.

Indefinite Pronoun

There are no indefinite pronouns (like "someone," "anything," or "nobody") in the song. This makes sense because the lyrics are deeply personal and specific, focused entirely on the speaker's emotional relationship with their father. This absence reinforces the directness and specificity of the confrontation.

Third-Person Pronouns

Table 4. Third-Person Pronouns

No	Clause Number	Pronoun	Referential Reconstruction	JR	PI	TC
1	9	it	Pain/Situation	20	2	0
2	28	it	Relationship	1	2	1
3	38	it	Difficulty	9	2	0

Total: JR = 30 | PI = 6 | TC = 1

Mean: JR = 10.00 | PI = 2.00 | TC = 0.33

The song rarely uses third-person pronouns like "it." When used, "it" refers to abstract ideas like pain or emotional struggles. The high JR (10.0) reflects how far apart the original topic and its mention might be, which can lead to weaker cohesion. However, this also mirrors the distance or disconnection the speaker feels. The low TC (0.33) suggests these references are not sustained but appear for quick emotional effect.

Possessive Pronouns

Table 5. Possessive Pronouns

No	Clause Number	Possessive Pronoun	Referential Reconstruction	JR	PI	TC
1	1	me	Speaker	20	2	0
2	3	me	Speaker	2	2	1
3	13	you	Father	2	2	1
4	24	my	Speaker	1	1	2
5	38	your	Father	1	1	1

Total: JR = 26 | PI = 8 | TC = 5
Mean: JR = 5.20 | PI = 1.60 | TC = 1.00

Possessive pronouns like “my” and “your” emphasize emotional ownership and personal connection. In this song, they underline the conflict “my hero,” “your back,” and express feelings of loss and disappointment. The moderate JR (5.20) means referents are not always right next to the pronouns, but listeners still understand the meaning due to the clear emotional context. The low PI (1.60) suggests minimal confusion, and TC (1.00) shows that these references are used for specific lines, not extended sequences.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the song “Perfect” by Simple Plan utilizes a range of anaphoric references that contribute significantly to the text’s cohesion and emotional resonance. The analysis based on Givón’s model revealed a dominant use of definite pronouns, primarily first and second person (“I” and “you”), accompanied by a smaller but meaningful use of zero anaphora, third-person pronouns, and possessive pronouns. No indefinite pronouns were found in the song, emphasizing its personal and specific communicative focus.

Definite pronouns demonstrated the highest frequency of occurrence, reflecting a continuous emotional dialogue between the speaker and the father figure. The average referential distance (JR) for these pronouns was relatively moderate at 5.6, while the topic continuity (TC) was low at 1.07, indicating that while the referents reappear frequently, they do so in emotionally fragmented contexts. This pattern is consistent with the lyrical structure of the song, which foregrounds shifting emotional states over extended thematic development.

Zero anaphora appeared in imperative and emotionally charged clauses such as “Ø Think back” and “Ø Can’t pretend.” These omitted but understood subjects contribute to the immediacy and conversational tone of the lyrics. The referential distance for zero anaphora was consistently low (JR = 1.00), suggesting that referents are introduced and then immediately omitted in subsequent clauses without loss of coherence. This supports Givón’s (1983) assertion that discourse with low referential distance typically signals high topical continuity and speaker involvement.

The absence of indefinite pronouns aligns with the intensely personal nature of the song. Rather than referring to abstract or generalized entities, the lyrics focus entirely on the speaker’s individual experience and his strained relationship with a specific other person, his father. This confirms that the linguistic choices in the song serve to reinforce the specificity and intimacy of the emotional message.

The third-person pronoun “it” is used sparingly, and only in reference to abstract concepts such as emotional pain or the relationship breakdown itself (e.g., “It hurts,” “It’s too late”). These instances exhibit higher referential distance (mean JR = 10.00) and very low topic continuity (TC = 0.33), indicating that third-person references are not central to the narrative but are used for momentary emotional emphasis.

Possessive pronouns such as “my” and “your” further highlight the emotional stakes of the discourse. References like “my hero” and “your back” encapsulate deeply personal meanings that shape the speaker’s identity and emotional memory. The average topic continuity for these references was 1.00, and the referential distance was low, supporting the argument that these pronouns help sustain topical focus in emotionally expressive clauses.

When compared to previous studies, this research both aligns with and expands upon earlier findings. Siregar et al. (2019), who examined topic continuity in a health article using Givón’s framework, found medium referential distance and topic persistence, with low potential interference. These results are partly echoed in the present study, particularly regarding the low potential interference, but differ in the area of topic persistence, which is lower in the song. This contrast is likely due to genre differences: whereas news articles aim for clarity and continuity across information units, lyrics prioritize emotive expression, often leading to rapid topical shifts.

Wahyu (2022) approached topic continuity through thematic progression in a news text and reported a high TDI (Thematic Development Index) score, suggesting structured thematic chains across the discourse. In contrast, “Perfect” relies less on structured thematic development and more on repetitive emotional motifs, which is reflected in its lower TC values. Thus, while Wahyu emphasizes logical textual movement, this study demonstrates cohesion through the emotional repetition of pronouns and referents.

Erna et al. (2024), in their study of the Rejang song “Anak Kunang,” focused on language functions such as emotive, directive, and referential functions. Although the theoretical basis differs, both Erna’s and the current study reveal that song lyrics carry a communicative load that extends beyond aesthetic expression. The present study complements Erna et al. by quantitatively measuring how cohesion is achieved through referential forms, especially in contexts of emotional communication.

The novelty of this study lies in its application of Givón’s quantitative model to a contemporary English pop song. While Givón’s model has been extensively used in academic or journalistic texts, its application to emotionally expressive and less formally structured discourse such as music lyrics is rare. This analysis offers an original contribution by demonstrating that discourse cohesion, referential management, and topic continuity are equally applicable and insightful in stylistic and popular cultural texts.

The significance of the study rests in its ability to bridge linguistic theory with popular music discourse. It underscores how anaphoric reference contributes not only to grammatical cohesion but also to emotional depth and narrative voice in music. This work is particularly valuable for scholars in stylistics, discourse analysis, and applied linguistics who seek to understand how linguistic features operate in non-academic genres.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to the ongoing discourse in applied stylistics and language education. The song can serve as authentic material in the classroom for demonstrating pronoun use, cohesion, and emotional expression,

particularly for learners studying narrative structure, stylistic devices, or interpersonal communication through text.

Nevertheless, the study is not without limitations. First, it is restricted to a single text, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the analysis is confined to pronoun-based reference; other cohesion strategies such as conjunction, lexical reiteration, and substitution were not examined. Additionally, the emotional and performative dimensions of the song, which may influence referent interpretation, are not accounted for in this textual analysis.

Future research could address these limitations by analyzing a larger corpus of song lyrics across genres or artists, exploring multimodal elements such as sound and visuals, or combining this referential analysis with critical discourse approaches. Such studies would further enrich the understanding of how referential systems shape meaning, emotion, and identity in music and popular discourse.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aimed to examine referential cohesion and topic continuity in the song “Perfect” by Simple Plan using Givón’s quantitative model. The focus was on how different types of anaphoric references, zero anaphora, definite pronouns, third-person pronouns, possessive pronouns, and the absence of indefinite pronouns, contribute to the song’s coherence and emotional structure.

The findings show that definite pronouns “I” and “you” dominate the lyrics, reflecting a direct and emotional interaction between the speaker and the father figure. Zero anaphora adds a natural, spoken quality to the lyrics, while possessive and third-person pronouns reinforce emotional ownership and abstract references. The absence of indefinite pronouns emphasizes the personal nature of the discourse. Low referential distance and moderate potential interference indicate strong cohesion despite the speaker’s shifting emotional tone.

These results demonstrate that Givón’s model can effectively analyze non-traditional texts like song lyrics, offering new insights into how language expresses emotion and identity. The study is useful for discourse analysts, stylistics researchers, and language educators, particularly those exploring cohesion in creative texts.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The research is limited by its focus on a single song and on pronoun-based references only. Future studies should explore a larger set of lyrics across genres and integrate other cohesive devices and multimodal features to build on these findings.

In essence, this study shows that emotional cohesion in song lyrics is achieved through strategic referential choices, offering a deeper understanding of how language works in expressive, personal texts.

REFERENCES

- Chaer, A. (2009). Pengantar semantik Bahasa Indonesia. Rineka Cipta.
- Deborah, S., Deborah, T., & E, H. H. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In *Blackwell Publisher. Blackwell Publisher.*
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003107774-17>
- Erna, Zasrianita, F., & Wediasti, W. (2024). JKIP : Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan By Idil /Widison Analisis Fungsi Bahasa Dalam Lirik Lagu Daerah Rejang " Anak Kunang " Karya Idil /Widison. 5(3), 545–554.
- Halliday, M. A. ., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394207305.ch1>
- Halliday M.A.K, & Webster, J. J. (2003). On language and linguistics. In *Language and Communication* (Vol. 4, Issue 2). Continuum International Publishing Group. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309\(84\)90003-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309(84)90003-X)
- Hutajulu, W. C., Butarbutar, O. P., Situmorang, J., Torong, S., Situmeang, V. S., & Herman, H. (2023). Examining the Discourse Analysis on the Song Lyric Entitled "Heal the World" By Michael Jackson. *Jurnal Scientia*, 12(1), 2023. <http://infor.seaninstitute.org/index.php>
- Matthiessen, C. M. I. M., Teruya, K., & Lam, M. (2010). *Key Terms in Systematic Functional Linguistics*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Moya Guijarro, A. J. (2006). The continuity of topics in journal and travel texts. *Functions of Language*, 13(1), 37–76. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fol.13.1.03moy>
- Paul, G. J., & Michael, H. (2012). The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis. In *The Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.*
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203809068-15>
- Siregar, U. D., Lubis, I. S., & Deliana. (2019). KESINAMBUNGAN TOPIK DALAM TEKS EKSAKTA: □Hepatitis A Bisa Menular Lewat Jenis Hubungan Seks□, okezone.com. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia*, 7(2), 187. <https://doi.org/10.30659/j.7.2.187-198>
- Talmy, G. (1987). Topic Continuity in Discourse: A Quantitative Cross-Language Study. *Language*, 63(1), 160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/415396>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). Discourse and Context A Sociocognitive Approach. In *Cambridge University Press* (Vol. 11, Issue 1). Cambridge University Press.
- van Dijk Teun A., & Walter, K. (1986). Strategies of Discourse Comprehension. *Language*, 62(3), 664. <https://doi.org/10.2307/415483>
- Wahyu, M. (2022). Keberterusan Topik dalam Berita Skyscraper of waste Greater Jakarta Drowning in Mountains of Trash. ... *Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts ...*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.32734/lwsa.v5i2.1376>
- Wikipedia contributors. (2025). *Perfect (Simple Plan song)*. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perfect_\(Simple_Plan_song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perfect_(Simple_Plan_song))
- Zein, T. T., & Prayogo. (2022). Analysis of Topic Continuity in Malay Folklore Batu Batangkup. *Jurnal Bahasa*, 22(2), 251–272. [https://doi.org/10.37052/jb22\(2\)no4](https://doi.org/10.37052/jb22(2)no4)