

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design, which aims to describe and interpret phenomena in depth and in a natural setting based on data in the form of words, sentences, and meanings derived from song lyrics. According to Sudjana and Ibrahim (2001), descriptive research seeks to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the characteristics or relationships of phenomena under study³³. Furthermore, Sugiyono (2015) explains that qualitative research is conducted to understand social phenomena holistically, using descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words in a natural context³⁴.

In this study, this approach is applied to types of illocutionary Act found in Ed Sheeran's song lyrics. The lyrics are regarded as authentic discourse that are not only artistic expressions, but also serve as interpersonal communication that can be pragmatically interpreted.

³³ Sudjana, N., & Ibrahim. (2001). *Educational Research and Assessment*. Bandung: Sinar Baru Algensindo.

³⁴ Sugiyono. (2015). *Educational Research Methods: Quantitative, Qualitative, and R&D Approaches*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

B. Data Sources

1. Primary Data

The primary data of this research consist of the official lyrics of three selected Ed Sheeran songs, namely Thinking Out Loud, Perfect, and Photograph. These songs were chosen because they contain dominant and varied expressions of love, which are relevant to the focus of this study that analyzes expressive and commissive speech acts in song lyrics.

The details of the primary data are as follows:

- b. Thinking Out Loud with a duration of 4 minutes 41 seconds, accessed from Ed Sheeran's official YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp-EO5I60KA>. This song was selected because it portrays romantic love expressed through promises and long-term commitment.
- c. Perfect with a duration of 4 minutes 23 seconds, accessed from Ed Sheeran's official YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Vv-BfVoq4g>. This song was selected because it describes an ideal form of love, filled with admiration and beauty, expressed through expressive speech acts.
- d. Photograph with a duration of 4 minutes 19 seconds, accessed from Ed Sheeran's official YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSDgHBxUbVQ>. This song was selected because it highlights love expressed through longing and

emotional memories, which can be examined from the perspective of speech acts.

The lyrics of these three songs were obtained from Ed Sheeran's official YouTube channel and further validated by cross-checking with Genius Lyrics to ensure data accuracy before proceeding to analysis.

2. Secondary Data

The secondary data of this study consist of written sources that support the analysis of the primary data. These include academic books, journal articles, and previous studies relevant to pragmatics and Speech Act Theory. The secondary data serve to strengthen the theoretical foundation of the research, provide a clear analytical framework, and support the interpretation of love expressions in Ed Sheeran's song lyrics.

C. Research Location

1. Time

This research conducted from January to February 2026. This time frame is projected to cover all essential stages, including the selection of song lyrics, data collection and coding, pragmatic analysis of speech acts, and the writing of the final research report. The chosen duration is considered sufficient to carry out a thorough and systematic analysis based on the qualitative approach.

2. Place

This research is conducted in a flexible setting, not limited to a single physical location. Since it is a document-based qualitative study, all

research activities such as data collection, analysis, and writing can be carried out in various locations, as long as access to data sources such as song lyrics, academic journals, and references is available.

The place of research may include home, libraries, or academic environments that support the research process. This flexibility allows the researcher to manage time and resources efficiently while maintaining the academic rigor and quality of the study.

D. Data Collection

The data in this research were collected using two qualitative research techniques, namely documentation and literature review.

1. Documentation

The documentation technique was used to collect the primary data, consisting of the official lyrics of three Ed Sheeran songs (*Thinking Out Loud*, *Perfect*, and *Photograph*). These lyrics were accessed through Ed Sheeran's official YouTube channel and validated using Genius Lyrics to ensure accuracy before analysis. According to Nilamsari (2014), document study is a data collection technique that involves gathering and analyzing documents whether in the form of written texts, images, works, or electronic sources which are then synthesized into a systematic and integrated study³⁵. Therefore, documentation is considered appropriate for this study, which focuses on analyzing song lyrics.

³⁵ N. Nilamsari, "Memahami Studi Dokumen dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Wacana*, 13(2), (2014): 177–182.

2. Literature Review

In addition to documentation, the researcher employed a literature review to collect secondary data, including academic books, journal articles, and previous studies related to pragmatics and Speech Act Theory. According to Furlong and Lester (2022), literature review is a key practice in qualitative research as it involves examining, evaluating, and synthesizing prior studies to strengthen the theoretical framework, identify research gaps, and support the analysis of primary data³⁶. Thus, literature review was selected in this study to reinforce the theoretical foundation as well as provide empirical support from existing scholarship.

By combining these two techniques, this study not only ensured the accuracy of the primary data through documentation but also strengthened the analysis with theoretical and empirical support through literature review.

E. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study employs the qualitative model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This model is appropriate for analyzing linguistic data such as utterances in song lyrics, particularly when the focus of the research is on interpreting pragmatic meanings and speech act functions. In addition, Creswell's (2022) principle of

³⁶ Furlong, D. E., & Lester, J. N. (2022). Toward a Practice of Qualitative Methodological Literature Reviewing. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 29(1).

qualitative analysis namely that the analytical process is continuous and interconnected is also used to strengthen the validity of the analysis in this study. Reading the full lyric³⁷

1. Data Reduction

The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting, simplifying, and focusing on the lines of lyrics containing love expressions to be examined further. At this stage, the researcher selects relevant utterances, classifies the data based on categories of illocutionary speech acts according to Searle's (2021) theory, and determines whether the emerging meaning represents emotional meaning or relational meaning.³⁸

2. Data Display

The second stage is data display, which refers to organizing the reduced data into tables, categories, or descriptive forms to facilitate interpretation. According to Miles and Huberman (2023), data display helps researchers observe patterns, relationships, and tendencies within the data. In this study, the data are presented in a table containing the lyric excerpts, types of speech acts, contextual information, and the interpretation of emotional and relational meanings.³⁹

³⁷ Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

³⁸ Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge University Press.

³⁹ Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

3. Conclusion Drawing And Verification

The third stage is conclusion drawing and verification. At this stage, the researcher interprets the data based on pragmatic and speech act theories to identify how love expressions are realized through illocutionary functions in the song lyrics. The conclusions are repeatedly verified to ensure consistency and alignment with the earlier analytical findings, following the principles of qualitative analysis described by Bogdan and Biklen (2024).⁴⁰

To answer the research questions, the researcher also applies Searle's (1979) theory of illocutionary speech acts as the analytical framework. The analysis is conducted through the following steps:

1. Reading and Understanding the lyrics

The researcher repeatedly reads the lyrics of Thinking Out Loud, Perfect, and Photograph to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context and expressions of love contained in the songs.

2. Identify Love Expression

The researcher identifies lyric lines that contain expressions of love, affection, commitment, admiration, longing, or emotional attachment.

3. Classifying the Data Based on Searle's Theory

Each selected lyric is classified into one of Searle's categories of illocutionary speech acts: representative, directive, commissive,

⁴⁰ Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Allyn & Bacon.

expressive, or declarative. The classification is based on the communicative intention reflected in the lyric.

4. Analyzing Emotional Meaning

After identifying the speech act type, the researcher analyzes the emotional meaning conveyed in each lyric, such as love, happiness, admiration, longing, hope, trust, or vulnerability.

5. Analyzing Relational Meaning

The researcher then examines how the speech acts reflect the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, including commitment, intimacy, loyalty, emotional connection, and interpersonal bonding.

6. Presenting and Interpreting the Findings

The analyzed data are presented in tables and descriptive explanations to show the relationship between speech act types, emotional meanings, and relational meanings.

7. Drawing Conclusions

Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the patterns found in the data to answer the research questions regarding the types of illocutionary speech acts and the emotional and relational meanings of love expressions in the selected songs.

By using this analytical model, the study systematically describes how emotional and relational meanings are expressed through illocutionary speech

acts in song lyrics, as well as how the communicative messages and moral values contained in the lyrics can be understood through a pragmatic approach.