

NOUN PHRASE IN THE LYRICS OF BILLIE EILISH: VISUALIZING AND TREE DIAGRAMS ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines noun phrases (NPs) in selected lyrics by Billie Eilish, namely *Lovely*, *Iloilo*, and *What Was I Made For?*. Previous studies have mainly focused on discourse analysis, thematic interpretation, and sentence-level syntax, while limited attention has been given to noun phrases, particularly their internal structure and role in meaning construction. This gap indicates the need for a focused syntactic analysis of noun phrases in lyrical discourse. The study aims to identify types of noun phrases, analyze their internal structures, and explain their contribution to emotional meaning. A descriptive qualitative method was applied, with data collected through documentation of song lyrics. The analysis covers 23 noun phrases, consisting of 8 from *Lovely*, 4 from *What Was I Made For?*, and 11 from *Iloilo*. The data were analyzed using identification, classification of structural patterns, and phrase structure rules based on generative grammar. Findings show that noun phrases appear in various forms such as determiner + noun (e.g., a way), possessive constructions (e.g., my fear), and complex structures with post-modifiers (e.g., a place to hide, the friends I've had to bury). These noun phrases function not only as grammatical units but also as carriers of emotional meaning, expressing uncertainty, loss, identity, and longing. The study concludes that noun phrases bridge syntactic structure and emotional expression in song lyrics.

Keywords: Billie Eilish, Noun phrase, Syntax, Tree diagram

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in the expression of meaning, emotion, and human experience. Rather than being a random system, language is structured and governed by rules that determine how linguistic elements are organized. One of the central branches that studies this system is syntax, which examines how words are combined into phrases, clauses, and sentences (Chomsky, 2002). Through phrase structure rules, syntax reveals that language is not linear in nature, but hierarchical, where elements are embedded within larger structural units.

Within syntactic structure, noun phrases (NPs) occupy a crucial position. They function not only as basic constituents of sentences but also as primary carriers of reference and meaning. According to Yule (2006), a noun phrase typically consists of a head noun accompanied by optional modifiers that specify or restrict its meaning. Similarly, Biber et al. (1999) highlight that noun phrases can function in various syntactic roles such as subjects,

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objects, and complements, making them essential in organizing information within discourse. However, beyond their grammatical function, noun phrases also play a significant role in shaping meaning representation, particularly in texts where meaning is condensed and implicitly constructed.

Understanding noun phrases requires attention to their internal structure. Within the framework of generative grammar, phrase structure rules explain how smaller linguistic units combine into hierarchical configurations (Chomsky, 2002). This structural organization can be further represented through tree diagrams, which visually illustrate the relationships between constituents. Unlike linear representations of language, tree diagrams make the hierarchical nature of syntactic structure explicit, allowing a more precise analysis of how meaning is constructed.

The relevance of this structural analysis becomes more evident when applied to song lyrics. Song lyrics differ from ordinary discourse in that they often compress meaning into short and selective linguistic forms. In such contexts, even small units such as noun phrases may carry significant semantic and emotional weight. Lyrics therefore represent a site where linguistic structure and artistic expression intersect. Billie Eilish's songs are particularly relevant in this regard, as her lyrics are widely characterized by minimalistic structures combined with strong emotional expression. This combination makes her work suitable for syntactic analysis at the level of noun phrases.

This study focuses on three selected songs by Billie Eilish, namely *Lovely*, *Ilomilo*, and *What Was I Made For?*. These songs are chosen due to their introspective themes and rich emotional expression, which provide appropriate data for analyzing noun phrases. The study investigates how noun phrases are structurally formed, how their internal components are organized, and how they contribute to the construction of meaning. By applying phrase structure rules and representing the analysis through tree diagrams, this study aims to demonstrate how relatively simple syntactic units can encode complex layers of meaning in artistic discourse.

Previous studies on Billie Eilish's lyrics have approached the topic from various perspectives. Putri (2024) examines mental health representation through discourse analysis, while Ananda (2023) focuses on syntactic complexity in her lyrics. Ilmiyah (2023) identifies recurring syntactic patterns such as repetition and variation. Other studies have specifically addressed syntactic structures: Sunardin (2022) applies tree diagrams in sentence analysis, while Mira (2021) uses syntactic theory to identify structural patterns in Eilish's lyrics. Lufiana (2021) investigates the relationship between sentence structure and emotional intensity, and Tamara (2021) highlights stylistic simplicity and repetition in *Bad Guy*. Earlier work by Selfanay (2019) discusses how syntactic variation influences meaning construction.

Despite these contributions, existing research largely emphasizes sentence-level analysis or thematic interpretation. Studies that specifically focus on noun phrases remain limited, and when they do appear, they tend to stop at identification without exploring their internal hierarchical structure in detail. Furthermore, the integration of syntactic analysis with visual representation through tree diagrams and its contribution to meaning construction has not been sufficiently explored.

Based on this gap, this study analyzes noun phrases in selected Billie Eilish songs using phrase structure rules. The analysis does not only identify types of noun phrases, but also examines their internal syntactic configuration and their role in meaning construction, supported by tree diagram representation. This approach is expected to provide a more detailed understanding of how noun phrases function within lyrical discourse.

Thus, this study argues that noun phrases are not merely grammatical units, but structurally and semantically significant elements that contribute to the construction of meaning in song lyrics.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze linguistic structures in song lyrics, with a specific focus on noun phrases (NPs). This approach is used because the study does not aim to quantify data, but rather to describe and interpret linguistic phenomena as they naturally occur in context. Descriptive qualitative research is appropriate for examining how linguistic units are structured and how meaning is constructed through language use, particularly in literary or artistic texts. In this study, the analysis is directed at identifying noun phrases, examining their internal syntactic structure, and interpreting their contribution to meaning construction in the lyrics.

The data in this study are taken from three selected songs by Billie Eilish, namely *Lovely*, *Ilomilo*, and *What Was I Made For?*. These songs are chosen based on purposive sampling because they contain rich emotional expression and diverse syntactic realizations of noun phrases, which make them suitable for syntactic analysis. The lyrics are obtained from verified online lyric sources and cross-checked to ensure textual accuracy before analysis. After collection, the data are organized by segmenting the lyrics into clauses and potential noun phrase units to facilitate systematic analysis.

The data collection process is carried out through documentation technique. The researcher reads the lyrics repeatedly, identifies potential noun phrases based on syntactic criteria, and marks each noun phrase for further analysis. Each identified noun phrase is then recorded and classified according to its structural form. The data analysis is conducted through several systematic stages. First, noun phrases are identified based on the theoretical definition proposed by Yule (2006), in which a noun phrase consists of a head noun and its modifiers. Second, the identified noun phrases are classified into structural categories such as determiner + noun, noun + post-modifier, possessive constructions, numeral phrases, and noun phrases with clausal modification. Third, each noun phrase is analyzed in terms of its internal syntactic structure, including head, pre-modifier, and post-modifier elements. Fourth, phrase structure rules derived from generative grammar (Chomsky, 2002) are applied to describe the hierarchical organization of each noun phrase. Fifth, the syntactic structures are represented using tree diagrams to visualize constituent relationships. Finally, the analysis proceeds to interpretation, in which the syntactic structures are related to their contribution to meaning construction, particularly in expressing emotional and experiential content within the lyrics. A total of 23 noun phrases were identified and analyzed in this study, consisting of 8 noun phrases from *Lovely*, 4 noun phrases from *What Was I Made For?*, and 11 noun phrases from *Ilomilo*. These noun phrases were selected based on their syntactic relevance and contribution to meaning construction within the lyrics.

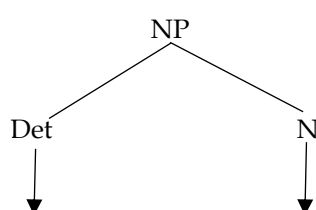
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of noun phrases identified in the selected song lyrics. A total of 23 data are analyzed, consisting of 8 data from *Lovely*, 4 data from *What Was I Made For?*, and 11 data from *Ilomilo*. Each data is examined in terms of its structure, tree diagram representation, and its contribution to emotional meaning.

Noun Phrases in Lovely

Datum 1

Thought I found a way

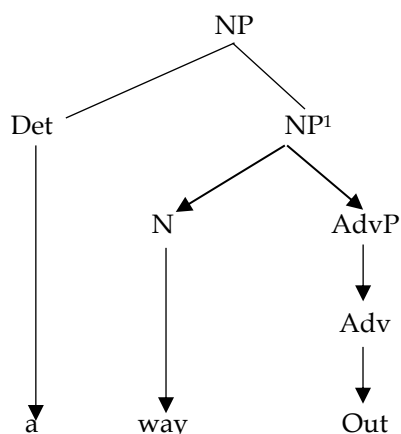


A way

The phrase “a way” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + N$, where “a” functions as an indefinite determiner and “way” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “found.” Structurally, the use of the indefinite determiner “a” indicates non-specific reference. In terms of meaning, the phrase suggests a possible solution or escape; however, its non-specific nature reflects uncertainty rather than certainty. In the context of the lyric, this conveys a sense of searching and emotional struggle, where the speaker attempts to find a way out but remains unsure. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing ambiguity, doubt, and fragile hope.

Datum 2

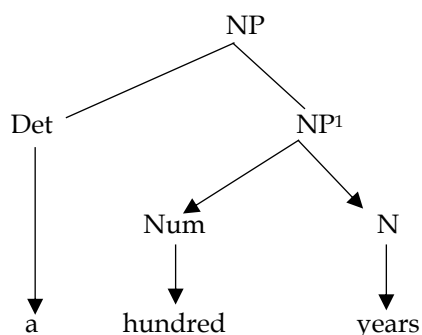
Thought I found a way out



The phrase “a way out” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + N + \text{post-modifier}$, where “a” functions as an indefinite determiner, “way” as the head noun, and “out” as a post-modifier that specifies direction. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “found.” Structurally, the addition of the post-modifier “out” makes the noun phrase more specific compared to “a way”, as it clearly indicates a direction of escape. However, the use of the indefinite determiner “a” still signals non-specific reference, suggesting that the solution is not fully defined. In the context of the lyric, “a way out” conveys a stronger sense of urgency and desire to escape from a difficult emotional state. While it expresses the idea of finding a solution, it simultaneously reflects uncertainty and instability. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing a combination of hope, desperation, and the need for escape.

Datum 3

Even if it takes all night or a hundred years

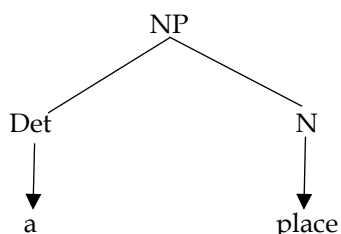


The phrase “a hundred years” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + Num + N$, where “a” functions as an indefinite determiner, “hundred” as a numeral modifier, and “years” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as a temporal expression within the sentence. Structurally, the presence of the numeral “hundred” specifies quantity, giving a sense of magnitude or duration. However, the use of the determiner “a” still indicates

approximation rather than exactness, suggesting that the number is not meant to be interpreted literally. In the context of the lyric, “a hundred years” conveys an exaggerated sense of time, reflecting emotional intensity rather than actual duration. It suggests that the speaker feels as though a long period has passed, which may represent feelings of exhaustion, longing, or emotional burden. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing a sense of prolonged struggle and overwhelming experience.

Datum 4

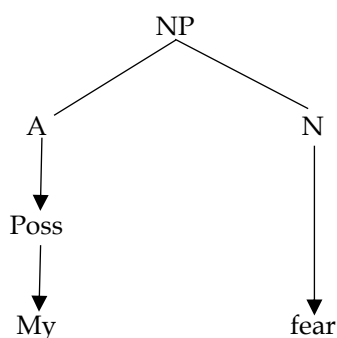
*Need **a place** to hide*



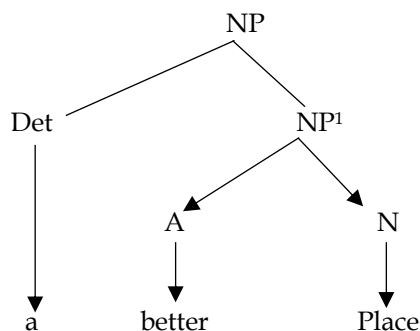
The phrase “a place” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Det + N + Inf Clause, where “a” functions as an indefinite determiner, “place” as the head noun, and “to hide” as an infinitive clause functioning as a post-modifier. Within this clause, “to” acts as an infinitival marker (T), and “hide” functions as the main verb. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “need.” Structurally, the infinitive clause “to hide” specifies the function of the noun “place,” indicating that it refers to a location intended for hiding rather than just any place. At the same time, the use of the indefinite determiner “a” signals non-specific reference, suggesting that the place is not clearly defined. In the context of the lyric, “a place to hide” reflects a strong emotional need for protection and withdrawal. It suggests that the speaker feels vulnerable or overwhelmed and is seeking a safe space to escape. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing fear, insecurity, and the need for safety.

Datum 5

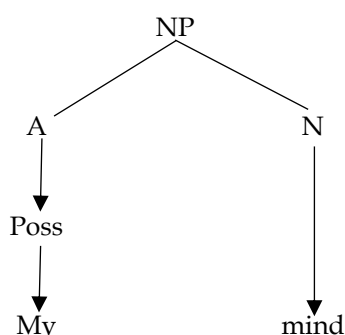
*I can't fight **my fear***



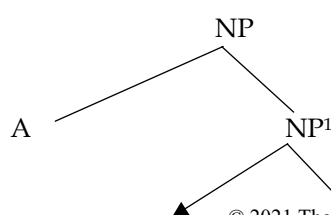
The phrase “my fear” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Poss Adj + N, where “my” functions as a possessive determiner and “fear” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “fight.” Structurally, the use of the possessive determiner “my” indicates ownership or personal association, showing that the noun “fear” is directly connected to the speaker. Unlike indefinite determiners such as “a,” which suggest generality, the possessive determiner makes the noun phrase more specific and personal. In the context of the lyric, “my fear” reflects an internal emotional state that belongs to the speaker. It emphasizes that the struggle is not external, but deeply personal and internalized. The verb “fight” further intensifies this meaning, suggesting an ongoing conflict with one’s own emotions. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing personal struggle, internal conflict, and vulnerability.

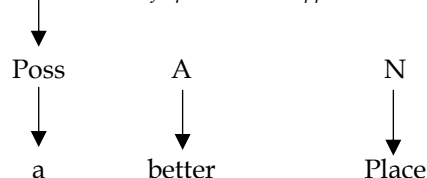
Datum 6*Lookin' for a better place*

The phrase "a better place" is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + Adj + N$, where "a" functions as an indefinite determiner, "better" as an adjective modifier, and "place" as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the preposition "for." Structurally, the adjective "better" acts as a comparative modifier that evaluates the noun "place," indicating improvement relative to a current or previous condition. Meanwhile, the use of the indefinite determiner "a" signals that the place is non-specific and not clearly defined. In the context of the lyric, "a better place" conveys a desire for change and improvement. It reflects the speaker's dissatisfaction with their current situation and their hope for something more positive or less painful. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing longing, dissatisfaction, and hope for a better condition.

Datum 7*Something's on my mind*

The phrase "my mind" is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Poss Det + N$, where "my" functions as a possessive determiner and "mind" as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the preposition "on." Structurally, the use of the possessive determiner "my" indicates personal ownership, showing that the noun "mind" belongs to the speaker and reflects an internal state. This makes the noun phrase highly specific and subjective. In the context of the lyric, "my mind" represents the speaker's thoughts or mental state. The expression "on my mind" suggests that something is occupying or troubling the speaker's thoughts. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing mental burden, concern, and internal preoccupation.

Datum 8*Always in my head space*

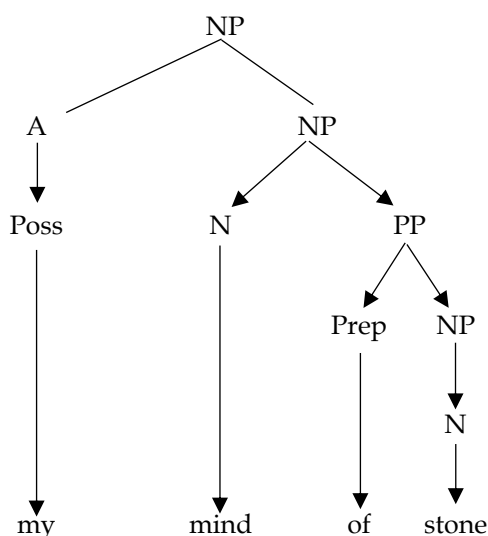


The phrase “my head space” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Poss Det + N + N, where “my” functions as a possessive determiner, “head” as a noun modifier, and “space” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the preposition “in.” Structurally, the combination of “head” and “space” forms a compound noun that refers to a mental or psychological state. The use of the possessive determiner “my” further personalizes the expression, indicating that this mental space belongs specifically to the speaker. In the context of the lyric, “my head space” represents the speaker’s internal mental condition. The phrase suggests that certain thoughts or emotions are constantly present within their mind. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing mental occupation, overthinking, and emotional persistence.

Noun Phrases in *What Was I Made For?*

Datum 9

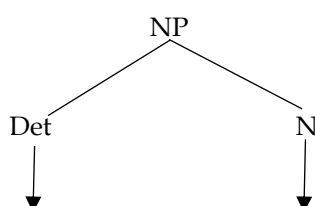
Heart made of glass, my mind of stone



The phrase “my mind of stone” is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Poss Det + N + PP, where “my” functions as a possessive determiner, “mind” as the head noun, and “of stone” as a prepositional phrase functioning as a post-modifier. Within the prepositional phrase, “of” functions as a preposition and “stone” as its complement. This noun phrase functions as part of the predicate in the clause, describing the state of the speaker’s mind. Structurally, the prepositional phrase “of stone” adds descriptive meaning to the noun “mind,” indicating a specific quality. The use of the possessive determiner “my” personalizes the expression, showing that the mental state belongs directly to the speaker. In the context of the lyric, “my mind of stone” suggests emotional hardness or numbness. The metaphor implies that the speaker’s thoughts or feelings have become rigid, unresponsive, or detached. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing emotional numbness, detachment, and psychological rigidity.

Datum 10

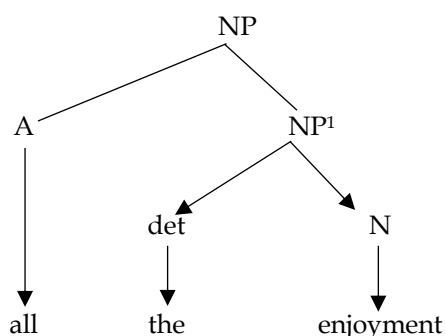
*Takin’ a drive, I was **an ideal***



The phrase “an ideal” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + N$, where “an” functions as an indefinite determiner and “ideal” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as a subject complement following the linking verb “was.” Structurally, the use of the indefinite determiner “an” indicates non-specific reference, suggesting that the identity expressed is not fixed or clearly defined. The noun “ideal” refers to a concept or a standard rather than a concrete entity, making the expression abstract. In the context of the lyric, “an ideal” suggests that the speaker sees themselves as something constructed, imagined, or expected rather than something real or authentic. It reflects a sense of identity shaped by external perception or unrealistic standards. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing uncertainty of identity, abstraction, and a sense of detachment from the self.

Datum 11

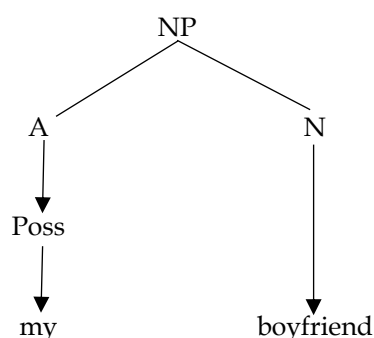
When did it end? All the enjoyment



The phrase “all the enjoyment” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Predet + Det + N$, where “all” functions as a predeterminer indicating totality, “the” as a definite determiner, and “enjoyment” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as part of an elliptical construction following the previous clause. Structurally, the combination of “all” and “the” emphasizes completeness and specificity, indicating that the enjoyment being referred to is both total and previously known or experienced. The noun “enjoyment” expresses an abstract concept rather than a physical entity. In the context of the lyric, “all the enjoyment” suggests a sense of loss, implying that the speaker once experienced happiness that has now disappeared. The phrase reflects a contrast between past pleasure and present emptiness. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing loss, nostalgia, and emotional emptiness.

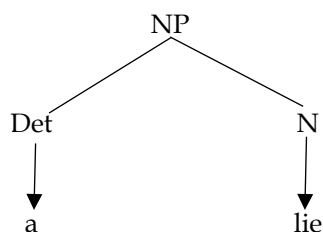
Datum 12

Don't tell my boyfriend

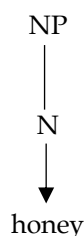


The phrase “my boyfriend” is a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Poss Det + N$, where “my” functions as a possessive determiner and “boyfriend” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “tell.” Structurally, the possessive determiner “my” indicates a personal relationship, making the noun phrase specific and directly connected to the speaker. The noun “boyfriend” refers to a particular individual within the speaker’s personal life. In the context of the lyric, “my boyfriend” introduces an interpersonal dimension to the emotional narrative. The phrase suggests secrecy or hesitation, as the speaker explicitly asks not to reveal something to this person. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing intimacy, secrecy, and personal conflict.

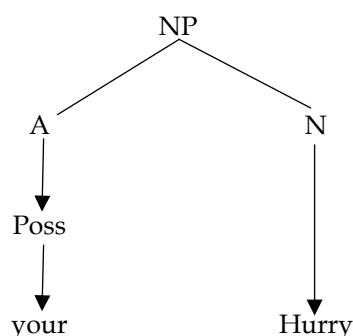
Noun Phrases in *Ilomilo*

Datum 13*But maybe that's a lie*

The phrase "a lie" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Det + N$, where "a" functions as an indefinite determiner and "lie" as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as a subject complement following the linking verb "is" (contracted in "that's"). Structurally, the use of the indefinite determiner "a" indicates non-specific reference, suggesting that the statement being referred to is not clearly defined or may be one among many possibilities. The noun "lie" expresses an abstract concept related to truth and falsehood. In the context of the lyric, "a lie" reflects doubt and uncertainty. The phrase suggests that the speaker questions the truth of something previously assumed or believed. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing uncertainty, doubt, and self-questioning.

Datum 14*Honey, what's your hurry?*

The word "honey" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow N$, where "honey" functions as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as a vocative expression, used to address another person directly. Structurally, the absence of determiners or modifiers makes the noun phrase simple and direct. As a vocative, it does not function as a subject or object within the clause, but rather as a discourse element. In the context of the lyric, "honey" expresses familiarity and emotional closeness. It suggests an intimate or affectionate relationship between the speaker and the addressee. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing intimacy, affection, and personal connection.

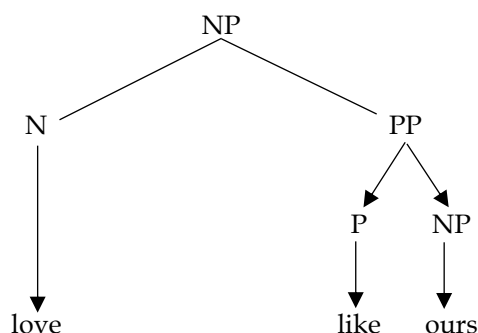
Datum 15*Honey, what's **your** hurry?*

The phrase "your hurry" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow Poss Det + N$, where "your" functions as a possessive determiner and "hurry" as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the complement in the interrogative clause "what is your hurry?" Structurally, the possessive determiner "your" indicates that the state of urgency belongs to the addressee, making the expression directly personal. The noun "hurry" represents an abstract concept referring to a sense of urgency or haste. In the context of the lyric, "your hurry" suggests that the speaker is questioning or challenging the urgency of the other person. It reflects a tone of concern or confusion about why the

addressee is rushing. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing concern, curiosity, and interpersonal tension.

Datum 16

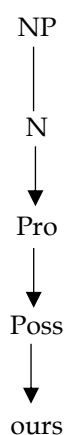
They're never gonna give you love like ours



The phrase "love like ours" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow N + PP$, where "love" functions as the head noun and "like ours" as a prepositional phrase functioning as a post-modifier. Within the prepositional phrase, "like" functions as a preposition and "ours" as its complement. Structurally, the prepositional phrase "like ours" specifies the type of love being referred to, making the noun phrase more specific and comparative. The construction indicates that the "love" in question is not general, but a particular kind defined by similarity to "ours." In the context of the lyric, "love like ours" emphasizes uniqueness and exclusivity. It suggests that the emotional bond shared by the speaker is special and cannot be replicated by others. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing uniqueness, exclusivity, and deep emotional connection.

Datum 17

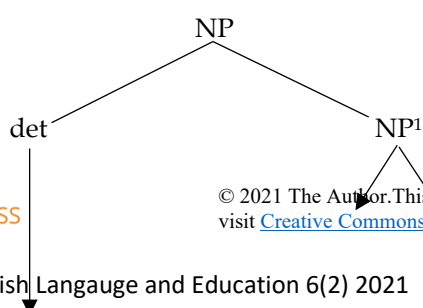
They're never gonna give you love like ours



The word "ours" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow$ Pronoun, where "ours" functions as a possessive pronoun. This noun phrase functions as the complement of the preposition "like." Structurally, the pronoun replaces a fuller noun phrase such as "our love," making the expression more concise while retaining its meaning. In the context of the lyric, "ours" refers to a shared emotional bond between the speaker and another person. It highlights a sense of belonging and shared identity. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing shared identity, intimacy, and emotional ownership.

Datum 18

So show me the way home

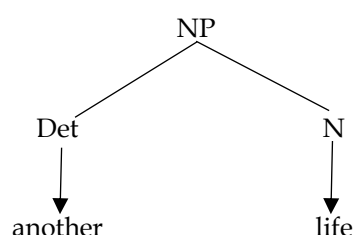




The phrase “the way home” is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Det + N + modifier, where “the” functions as a definite determiner, “way” as the head noun, and “home” as a post-modifier indicating direction or destination. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “show.” Structurally, the definite determiner “the” indicates that the referent is specific and known, suggesting that the “way” is not arbitrary but meaningful or familiar. The element “home” modifies the noun “way” by specifying its endpoint or purpose. In the context of the lyric, “the way home” symbolizes guidance, direction, or a return to a place of comfort or belonging. It reflects a desire for reassurance and clarity. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing longing for direction, safety, and a sense of belonging.

Datum 19

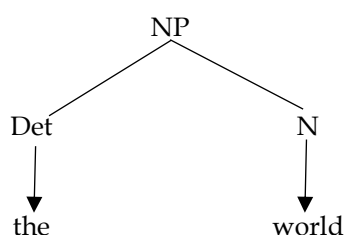
I can't lose another life



The phrase “another life” is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Det + N, where “another” functions as an indefinite determiner indicating an additional instance, and “life” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the object of the verb “lose.” Structurally, the determiner “another” suggests repetition or continuation, implying that the referent is not the first occurrence. The noun “life” represents an abstract or metaphorical concept, which may refer to a person, a relationship, or an emotional state. In the context of the lyric, “another life” conveys a sense of fear of loss and emotional consequence. The use of “another” implies that the speaker may have experienced loss before, intensifying the emotional weight of the statement. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing fear, loss, and emotional vulnerability.

Datum 20

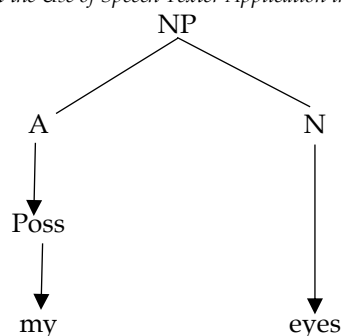
The world's a little blurry



The phrase “the world” is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Det + N, where “the” functions as a definite determiner and “world” as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the subject of the clause. Structurally, the definite determiner “the” indicates that the referent is specific and universally understood. The noun “world” refers to a broad and abstract concept encompassing reality or the speaker's surroundings. In the context of the lyric, “the world” represents the speaker's perception of reality. The description “a little blurry” suggests confusion or lack of clarity in how the world is experienced. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing confusion, uncertainty, and distorted perception of reality.

Datum 21

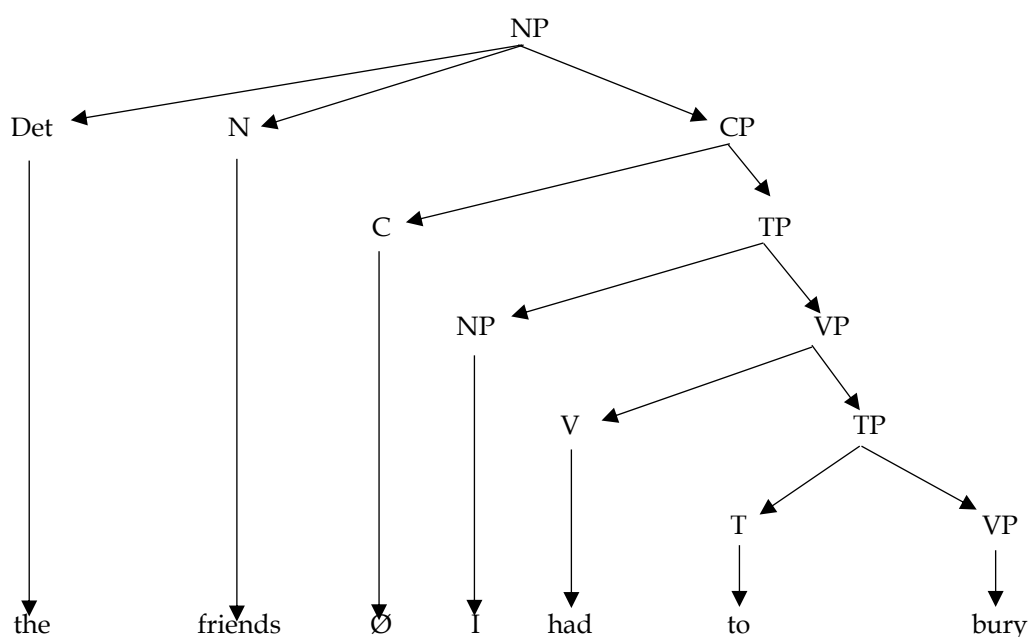
Or maybe it's my eyes



The phrase "my eyes" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow \text{Poss Det} + N$, where "my" functions as a possessive determiner and "eyes" as the head noun. This noun phrase functions as the subject complement following the linking verb "is" (contracted in "it's"). Structurally, the possessive determiner "my" indicates personal ownership, making the noun phrase directly related to the speaker. The noun "eyes" refers to the organ of perception, which metaphorically represents how the speaker sees or interprets reality. In the context of the lyric, "my eyes" suggests that the source of confusion or distortion may come from the speaker themselves rather than the external world. It reflects self-doubt and internal questioning. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing self-doubt, uncertainty, and introspection.

Datum 22

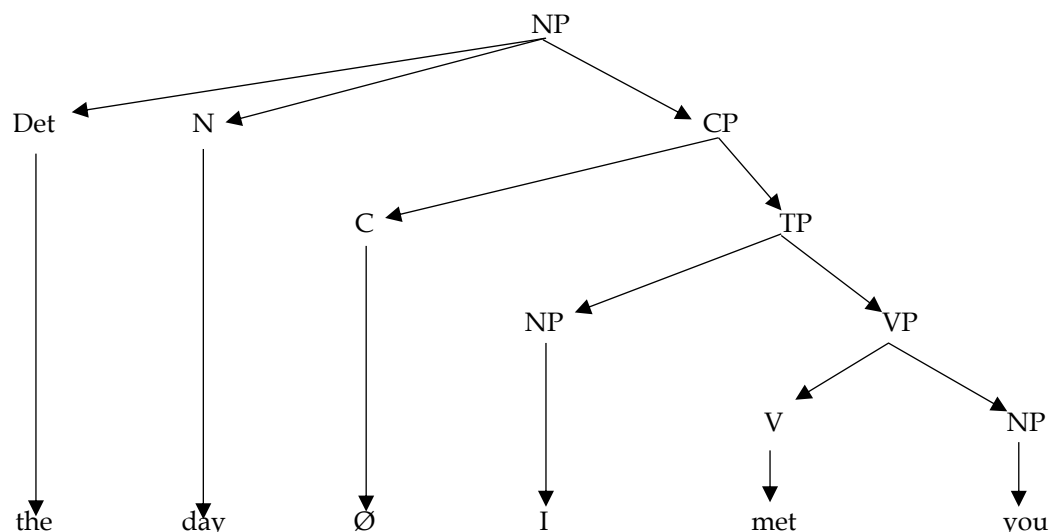
the friends I've had to bury



The phrase "the friends I've had to bury" is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure $NP \rightarrow \text{Det} + N + \text{Relative Clause}$, where "the" functions as a definite determiner, "friends" as the head noun, and "I've had to bury" as a relative clause functioning as a post-modifier. The relative clause contains an implied relative pronoun ($\emptyset$), which is omitted in the surface structure. Structurally, the relative clause provides additional information about the noun "friends," specifying which friends are being referred to. The use of the definite determiner "the" indicates that these referents are specific and known within the speaker's experience. In the context of the lyric, "the friends I've had to bury" expresses a deeply emotional and serious meaning. The phrase suggests loss, grief, and possibly trauma, as the speaker refers to friends who have passed away. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing loss, grief, and emotional pain.

Datum 23

Let you rescue me the day I met you



The phrase “the day I met you” is identified as a noun phrase (NP) with the structure NP → Det + N + Relative Clause, where “the” functions as a definite determiner, “day” as the head noun, and “I met you” as a relative clause functioning as a post-modifier. The relative pronoun is omitted in the surface structure. Structurally, the relative clause provides specific information about the noun “day,” indicating a particular moment in time. The use of the definite determiner “the” signals that this moment is unique and significant. In the context of the lyric, “the day I met you” refers to a meaningful turning point in the speaker’s life. It marks the beginning of an important relationship or emotional experience. Therefore, the noun phrase contributes to the emotional meaning of the lyric by expressing memory, significance, and emotional attachment.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis reveals that noun phrases in the data exhibit diverse structural patterns, ranging from simple constructions such as determiner + noun and possessive + noun to more complex forms involving pre- and post-modification, including infinitival and relative clauses. The structural variation of noun phrases indicates that lyric discourse allows flexibility in syntactic realization. While some noun phrases remain minimal and straightforward, others are expanded through modification to encode more specific reference and meaning. This variation demonstrates that noun phrases are not fixed units, but dynamic structures shaped by syntactic and discourse needs. The study shows that noun phrases in song lyrics function beyond grammatical roles. They operate as linguistic resources that encode emotional and experiential meanings. The presence of simple noun phrases often reflects immediacy and direct emotional expression, whereas more complex noun phrases tend to represent deeper, layered, and context-dependent emotional experiences such as loss, identity, uncertainty, and longing. Noun phrases play a significant role in bridging syntactic structure and meaning construction in lyrical discourse. Through phrase structure analysis and tree diagram representation, this study demonstrates that even small linguistic units can contribute to the formation of complex emotional expression in song lyrics.

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