

# Implicature and Speech Acts in Taylor Swift's "Love Story" : A Pragmatic Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Using Grice's theory of conversational implicature and Searle's illocutionary taxonomy, this study examines speech acts and implicatures in Taylor Swift's lyrics for "Love Story." A qualitative descriptive method is applied to analyse 43 utterances, identifying the song's implied meanings and communicative functions. The results show that assertive speech acts predominate at 58.1%, followed by directives (30.2%), expressive (25.6%), commissive (11.6%), and declaratives (2.3%); these percentages reflect frequency of occurrence and do not sum to 100% because a single utterance may realize more than one speech act simultaneously. For implicatures, classification follows criteria: Generalized Conversational Implicature (65.1%) conveys meaning understandable without specific background knowledge, whereas Particularized Conversational Implicature (34.9%) depends heavily on context and intertextual references – mainly to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. Combined, these pragmatic strategies construct a multi-layered romantic narrative accessible at both universal and context-specific levels. This study demonstrates that song lyrics constitute a rich form of pragmatic discourse, in which speech acts and implicatures interact to convey narrative meaning and emotional depth beyond literal expression.

**Keywords:** *Speech Acts, Implicature, Pragmatics, Song Lyrics, Taylor Swift*

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## INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the most fundamental medium through which human beings' express thoughts, emotions, and intentions across diverse social contexts (Tauchid et al., 2022). However, what speakers communicate is frequently more than what is explicitly stated, as meaning in real discourse depends heavily on contextual inference and shared knowledge. This gap between what is said and what is meant constitutes the central concern of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that investigates how meaning is constructed and interpreted within communicative situations. Pragmatics focuses on speaker-intended meaning rather than the literal content of words, emphasizing that understanding an utterance requires more than decoding its linguistic form (Halenko & Wang, 2022). Similarly, Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of the principles guiding language use and the inferential processes by which hearers arrive at the intended meaning. These principles are not confined to face-to-face conversations but extend across a broad range of discourse types, including written texts, poetry, and artistic compositions such as song lyrics.

Song lyrics represent a distinct and culturally significant form of discourse that merits focused pragmatic investigation. Unlike everyday conversation, which is spontaneous and interactive, song lyrics are carefully crafted, structured, and intended for broad public consumption. They function not only as artistic expression but also as a powerful medium that reflects social values, cultural norms, and collective experiences. As a widely accessible form

of communication, lyrics shape public perception and allow listeners to connect with emotions and narratives across different backgrounds and generations. Because songwriters often rely on indirectness, figurative language, symbolism, and intertextuality to convey complex ideas in condensed form, lyrics offer a rich site for examining how pragmatic principles operate to create meaning beyond literal expression. Analysing lyrics as discourse thus reveals how language works to construct narratives, evoke emotion, and transmit cultural meaning—dimensions that are often overlooked in purely formal or thematic analysis.

The growing body of research in pragmatics has demonstrated that creative forms of language, particularly song lyrics, are especially rich sites for examining how meaning operates beyond the literal. Oshima (2010) notes that pragmatic interpretation depends on the interplay among linguistic form, contextual clues, and the communicative conventions shared by speakers and listeners. This insight is particularly relevant when analysing popular music, where songwriters frequently rely on implicature, figurative language, and intertextual reference to communicate complex emotional and narrative content in condensed lyrical form. Recent studies over the past five years further confirm the value of this approach. For instance, Aprilliani et al. (2022) analysed pop song lyrics and found that pragmatic analysis effectively uncovers hidden meanings and cultural messages that remain inaccessible through literal reading alone. Similarly, Wardana et al. (2022) demonstrated that speech acts and implicature work together to shape the persuasive and emotional impact of contemporary song lyrics, highlighting how language choices serve specific communicative goals in popular music discourse.

The interaction between speech acts and implicature is most clearly observable in song lyrics, where language is simultaneously artistic and communicative. In many lyrical contexts, the illocutionary force of an utterance is conveyed not through direct expression but through implication, making implicature a central mechanism for understanding the communicative purpose of songs (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969). This dynamic has been explored in a growing number of pragmatic studies on popular music, which have consistently shown that song utterances carry communicative functions that operate largely through indirect meaning, emotional suggestion, and cultural reference (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Song lyrics, therefore, represent a form of pragmatic discourse that demands both linguistic competence and contextual knowledge from listeners. Understanding what a lyric truly means requires awareness of the speaker's communicative intention, the broader discourse context, and the cultural or intertextual references embedded in the text (Cutting, 2002). Because song lyrics frequently rely on implied rather than explicitly stated meanings, pragmatic analysis provides an appropriate framework for explaining how listeners infer speakers' intentions and interpret meanings that extend beyond the literal content of the lyrics (Thomas, 1995).

Taylor Swift's song "Love Story," released in 2008 on the album *Fearless*, presents a compelling case for this type of pragmatic analysis. Drawing its narrative from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the song explores themes of forbidden love, social conflict, and hopeful resolution through a richly layered lyrical narrative. The lyrics contain a variety of speech acts, including assertive, directives, expressive, and commissive, many of which simultaneously carry implicit meanings that extend well beyond their surface form. For example, when the narrator declares "I was a scarlet letter," the utterance functions both as an assertive communicative act and as a particularized implicature conveying feelings of shame and social exclusion, meanings accessible only to listeners familiar with Hawthorne's novel. Such intertextual implicatures, alongside more universally understood emotional expressions, make "Love Story" an especially productive text for examining how speech acts and implicature interact to construct narrative meaning. The present study is motivated by the observation that existing pragmatic analyses of Taylor Swift's work have tended to address either speech acts or implicature in isolation. By analysing both simultaneously through a unified pragmatic framework, this research aims to offer a more comprehensive account of how these two mechanisms operate in tandem to convey emotion, narrative depth, and communicative intent in song lyrics.

This study focuses on the pragmatic dimensions of Taylor Swift's song "Love Story," with particular attention to how language in the lyrics functions beyond its literal meaning. Rather than treating the words of the song as merely expressive or aesthetic, this research approaches the lyrics as a form of pragmatic discourse in which communicative intentions, implied meanings, and contextual nuances are actively at work. The study examines how speech acts and implicatures operate within the lyrics to construct emotional meaning, develop narrative, and convey the songwriter's communicative purpose to the listener. This study is guided by three research inquiries: (1) What kinds of speech acts appear in the lyrics of Taylor Swift's "Love Story"? (2) What types of implicatures can be identified in the lyrics of the song? (3) What pragmatic functions do the speech acts and implicatures serve in conveying meaning in the lyrics?

This study aims to examine the pragmatic elements found in the lyrics of "Love Story" by Taylor Swift through three main objectives. First, the study identifies and categorizes the types of speech acts present in the lyrics, including assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative acts based on Searle's illocutionary classifications, in order to reveal how each utterance reflects the songwriter's intentions and communicative purpose. Second, the study identifies and analyses the forms of implicature in the lyrics, covering both generalized and particularized conversational implicature, to uncover the implicit meanings embedded in the text and to explain how contextual and emotional factors shape interpretation. Third, the study investigates how speech acts and implicature interact to construct the song's overall meaning, express emotions, and develop narrative, aiming to demonstrate that meaning in song lyrics is shaped not only by literal expression but also by contextual and artistic usage.

This study is expected to offer both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of pragmatic analysis in the context of lyrical texts, particularly in the application of speech act theory and implicature theory to creative discourse, demonstrating how pragmatic frameworks can be used to interpret artistic works such as songs. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for students and scholars in the field of linguistics, especially those with an interest in pragmatics, and may help audiences develop a deeper understanding of the implied meanings and communicative purposes embedded in popular song lyrics.

Several previous studies provide important theoretical and analytical foundations for the present research. Saifudin (2020) analysed conversational implicature from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on how speakers convey implicit meanings not directly expressed in utterances, and demonstrated that implicature arises when speakers intentionally communicate information requiring interpretation beyond its literal form through cooperative principles and conversational maxims; however, his analysis was limited to conversational discourse rather than creative texts such as song lyrics. Asroriyah & Nurhana (2022) examined pragmatic elements in song lyrics using the frameworks of Austin and Searle, identifying all five types of illocutionary speech acts and showing that speech acts are central to communicating a speaker's intention, though their data were drawn primarily from conversational and written discourse rather than from lyrical texts in a sustained pragmatic analysis. Tanduk (2023) investigated the function of implicature from a cross-linguistic perspective, arguing that implicature interpretation depends on contextual factors such as the speaker-listener relationship, situational context, and communicative goals, and confirming that implicature enables more nuanced expression; yet the analysis similarly focused on conversational rather than artistic contexts. Taken together, these studies highlight the need for research that simultaneously examines both speech acts and implicature as they operate within the specific pragmatic discourse of song lyrics, which the present study aims to address.

Pragmatics is a field within linguistics concerned with how meaning is expressed and understood in communication, considering the role of context. It emphasizes the interaction between language and its users, particularly how speakers deliver messages and how listeners interpret them in real-life situations. According to George Yule, pragmatics deals with meaning as it is conveyed by a speaker and decoded by the listener. In other words, this field

not only focuses on the literal meaning of words but also on the intended meaning of an utterance. In a similar vein, Stephen C. Levinson explains that pragmatics examines language use and the principles that guide interpretation in context (Levinson, 1983). From this perspective, pragmatics helps explain how indirect meanings are communicated and how listeners infer them. It is widely used to analyse various forms of discourse, including conversations, written texts, and creative works such as song lyrics. In the context of songs, meaning is often delivered through figurative expressions and implicit messages, making pragmatic analysis essential for understanding how those meanings are constructed.

Speech act theory suggests that speaking is not merely about producing words, but also about performing actions through language. In communication, utterances reflect the speaker's intentions within a particular context. This concept was first introduced by Austin (1962), who proposed that speaking itself can be regarded as a form of action. He argued that every utterance carries different functions depending on what the speaker intends to achieve. Austin further divided speech acts into three distinct levels: (1) Locutionary Act: refers to the actual or the literal meaning of a spoken expression. (2) Illocutionary Act: the underlying purpose behind the utterance. (3) Perlocutionary Act: the resulting impact produced on the listener.

Extending Austin's ideas, John Searle further developed the theory by classifying illocutionary acts into several categories. These include: (1) Assertive: utterances that present information or describe situations. (2) Directive: expressions aimed at influencing the listener's actions. (3) Commissive: statements that bind the speaker to perform certain actions in the future. Speech acts are widely used in everyday communication because they help explain how language functions beyond its literal meaning. In song lyrics, speech acts can reveal the songwriter's intentions and emotions. Implicature represents a significant notion within pragmatic studies, focusing on meanings that are suggested rather than clearly articulated. During interactions, communicators frequently express ideas in roundabout ways, prompting recipients to discern the underlying significance. H. P. Grice put forth the term implicature. Grice notes that speakers usually adhere to what he calls the cooperative principle, which holds that individuals engaging in dialogue typically work together to facilitate successful communication. Four conversational maxims back this cooperative principle: (1) Maxim of Quantity: sufficient information without excess. (2) Maxim of Quality: only state what is believed to be true. (3) Maxim of Relation: keep contributions relevant to the topic. (4) Maxim of Manner: express ideas clearly and in an organized way.

Whenever speakers appear to violate those maxims, hearers might infer additional meanings, known as implicatures. Grice also distinguishes two primary categories of implicature that are commonly identified: (1) Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI). This category of implicature does necessitate a particular context for understanding, since its significance can typically be derived. (2) Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI). This type of implicature depends heavily on context and requires deeper interpretation to understand its intended meaning. In song lyrics, implicature often appears through metaphorical expressions, emotional statements, and narrative elements that suggest meanings beyond the literal words. Song lyrics can be considered a form of discourse that conveys meaning, emotion, and narrative through language. Unlike ordinary conversations, song lyrics often contain figurative language, symbolism, and implied meanings that require interpretation. Through lyrics, songwriters communicate their feelings, experiences, and stories to listeners. As a result, pragmatic analysis can help uncover how meaning is constructed within the lyrics. Taylor Swift's love story presents an appropriate romantic narrative inspired by the classic story of Romeo and Juliet. The lyrics portray themes of love, conflict, and hope, making them a suitable object for pragmatic analysis. By analysing speech acts and implicature in the lyrics, researchers can better understand how the songwriter conveys emotions, intentions, and narrative meaning.

This study uses pragmatic theory to analyse the lyrics of *Love Story*. The analysis focuses on identifying the various forms of speech acts in the song lyrics and examining the implied meanings they convey. The theoretical framework combines speech act theory and implicature

theory to explain how meaning is expressed and interpreted in the song. Speech acts are used to identify the communicative functions of the utterances, while implicature analysis helps reveal the implied meanings behind the lyrics. Through this framework, the research seeks to explore how speech acts and implicature work together to convey narrative and emotional messages in the song.

## METHOD

The present study employs a qualitative descriptive design, suitable for examining pragmatic phenomena such as speech acts and implicatures, as the focus is on describing linguistic expressions rather than measuring numerical values.

### Research Data

The data for this research are drawn from the official, verified lyrics of Taylor Swift's song "Love Story," retrieved from licensed music platforms and copyrighted lyric databases. The data consist of all words, phrases, and sentences within the 43 total lines of lyrics that contain identifiable speech acts and implicatures relevant to the study.

### Unit of Analysis

This study defines the utterance as the basic unit of analysis. An utterance is identified as any meaningful linguistic unit, whether a complete sentence, independent clause, or phrase, within a line of lyrics that carries a single communicative purpose. One line of lyrics may contain more than one utterance if it expresses distinct meanings or functions; conversely, a single utterance may sometimes span across related clauses. This unit is chosen because it best reflects the actual communicative function and intended meaning, rather than relying solely on grammatical or visual boundaries.

### Research Instrument

The researcher acts as the main instrument, responsible for selecting, coding, and interpreting data consistently. Supporting tools include classification tables based on Searle's speech act categories and Grice's types of conversational implicature, used to organize and label each utterance systematically.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data are gathered through a systematic documentation technique following these detailed steps: (1) Obtain the complete lyric text exclusively from credible, authorized sources to ensure accuracy and avoid modified or incorrect versions. (2) Read and re-read the entire lyrics repeatedly to gain full familiarity with the narrative flow, emotional tone, and linguistic details. (3) Identify and segment each utterance as the unit of analysis, marking every unit that potentially contains speech acts or implicit meanings, and noting its exact position in the song. (4) Transcribe the selected utterances into a separate data sheet, accompanied by brief contextual notes to preserve their original narrative and situational background. (5) Group the collected excerpts into preliminary classifications corresponding to speech act types and implicature categories before proceeding to formal analysis.

### Data Analysis Technique

The analysis is carried out using a qualitative content analysis method. The steps include: (1) Reading the compiled utterances thoroughly. (2) Identifying utterances containing speech acts and implicatures. (3) Categorizing each utterance based on speech act types and implicature categories. (4) Interpreting the intended meaning and communicative function using relevant pragmatic theories. (5) Drawing conclusions regarding recurring patterns and findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of a pragmatic analysis conducted on 43 lines of lyrics from the song Love Story by Taylor Swift are presented in this chapter. The analysis draws on two primary theoretical frameworks, namely Searle's speech act theory and Grice's theory of conversational implicature. The comprehensive results of this analysis are summarized in two main tables below. (1) a classification of speech act types, and (2) a classification of implicature types, which covers the implied meanings of each lyric.

**Types of Speech Acts in the Lyrics of Love Story**

The table presents a classification of the 43 lyric lines from the song "Love Story" based on the five categories of illocutionary acts introduced by Searle: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

Table 1. Categorization of Speech within Lyrics of Love Story (Taylor Swift)

| No. | Lyric                                                 | Assertive | Directive | Commissive | Expressive | Declarative |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1.  | "We were both young when I first saw you."            | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 2.  | "I close my eyes, and the flashback starts."          | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 3.  | "I am standing there on a balcony in the summer air." | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 4.  | "See the lights, see the party, the ball gowns."      | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 5.  | "See you make your way through the crowd."            | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 6.  | "And say, 'Hello.'"                                   |           |           |            | ✓          |             |
| 7.  | "Little did I know"                                   | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 8.  | "That you were Romeo, throwing pebbles"               | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 9.  | "My daddy said, 'Stay away from Juliet.'"             |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 10. | "I was crying on the staircase."                      |           |           |            | ✓          |             |
| 11. | "Begging you, 'Please do not go.'"                    |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 12. | "Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone."           |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 13. | "I will be waiting"                                   |           |           | ✓          |            |             |
| 14. | "All that's left to do is run."                       |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 15. | "You will be the prince, and I will be the princess." |           |           | ✓          |            |             |
| 16. | "It is a love story, baby, just say 'Yes.'"           |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 17. | "I sneak out to the garden to see you."               | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 18. | "We keep quiet because we are dead if they knew."     | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 19. | "Close your eyes"                                     |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 20. | "Escape this town for a little while"                 |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 21. | "You were Romeo, I was a scarlet letter."             | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 22. | "My daddy said stay away from Juliet."                |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 23. | "However, you were everything to me."                 |           |           | ✓          |            |             |
| 24. | "Romeo, save me"                                      |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 25. | "They are trying to tell me how to feel."             | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 26. | "This love is difficult, but it is real."             | ✓         |           |            |            |             |
| 27. | "Do not be afraid"                                    |           | ✓         |            |            |             |
| 28. | "We will make it out of this mess."                   |           |           | ✓          |            |             |
| 29. | "I got tired of waiting."                             |           |           |            | ✓          |             |
| 30. | "Wondering if you were ever coming around"            | ✓         |           |            |            |             |

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|     |                                                 |   |   |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 31. | "My faith in you was fading."                   |   |   | ✓ |
| 32. | "When I met you on the outskirts of town"       | ✓ |   |   |
| 33. | "Romeo, save me. I have been feeling so alone." |   | ✓ |   |
| 34. | "I keep waiting for you, but you never come."   | ✓ |   |   |
| 35. | "Is this in my head?"                           |   |   | ✓ |
| 36. | "He knelt to the ground and pulled out a ring." | ✓ |   |   |
| 37. | "Marry me Juliet"                               |   | ✓ |   |
| 38. | "You will never have to be alone."              |   |   | ✓ |
| 39. | "I love you, and that is all I really know."    |   |   | ✓ |
| 40. | "I talked to your dad."                         | ✓ |   |   |
| 41. | "Go pick out a white dress."                    |   | ✓ |   |
| 42. | "It is a love story, baby, just say yes."       |   | ✓ |   |
| 43. | "Cause we were both young when I first saw you" | ✓ |   |   |

Table 2. Summary of Speech Act Frequency

| Types of Speech Act | Data Count | Percentage  | Representative Lyric Excerpt                                                                         |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assertive           | 25         | 58,1%       | "We were both young when I first saw you."                                                           |
| Directive           | 13         | 30,2%       | "Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone."                                                          |
| Expressive          | 11         | 25,6%       | "I love you, and that is all I really know."                                                         |
| Commissive          | 5          | 11,6%       | "I will be waiting."                                                                                 |
| Declarative         | 1          | 2,3%        | "Marry me, Juliet."                                                                                  |
| <b>Total Data</b>   | <b>43</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>(Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because a single line may contain multiple speech acts)</b> |

**Types of Implicature in the Lyrics of Love Story**

Based on Grice's two broadly understood conversational implicatures (GCIs) and context-specific conversational implicatures (PCIs), which are two categories of conversational implicatures, the following table classifies the implicatures of 43 lines from the song "Love Story." Along with the meaning of each implicature.

Table 3. Classification of Implicature within the Lyrics of Love Story by Taylor Swift

| No. | Lyric                                                 | GCI | PCI | Meaning                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | "We were both young when I first saw you."            | ✓   |     | The first meeting took place in their youth; it generally evokes fond memories and the pure feelings of first love.                                                |
| 2.  | "I close my eyes, and the flashback starts."          | ✓   |     | The character is reminiscing; it is implied that the memory is deeply meaningful and has left a lasting impression.                                                |
| 3.  | "I am standing there on a balcony in the summer air." |     | ✓   | The "summer balcony" refers to Juliet's iconic balcony in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet"; this reference will only make sense to readers familiar with the play. |
| 4.  | "See the lights, see the party, the ball gowns."      | ✓   |     | A lavish, formal party atmosphere; it is implied that this gathering was a special, memorable event.                                                               |
| 5.  | "See you make your way through the crowd."            | ✓   |     | The figure of "you" stands out in the crowd; the character implies that this person is attractive and special.                                                     |
| 6.  | "And say, 'Hello.'"                                   | ✓   |     | A simple greeting that signals the beginning of a meaningful relationship; a small word with a profound emotional impact.                                          |

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|     |                                                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.  | "Little did I know"                                   | ✓ | It is implied that the character does not realize how significant that moment is; there is an irony between his previous ignorance and his current awareness.                                                                                                                                                            |
| 8.  | "That you were Romeo, throwing pebbles"               | ✓ | Referring to the scene where Romeo throws a pebble at Juliet's window to get her attention, this carries only implied meaning if the reader is already familiar with the story of Romeo and Juliet – namely, their secret, risky love.                                                                                   |
| 9.  | "My daddy said, 'Stay away from Juliet.'"             | ✓ | The father mentions the name "Juliet," suggesting that the female character is cast as Juliet, while her lover is Romeo; this implies a family conflict akin to that in Shakespeare's play, which can only be understood within that context.                                                                            |
| 10. | "I was crying on the staircase."                      | ✓ | Crying on the stairs generally implies deep sadness and despair; the "stairs" position suggests being trapped between two choices.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 11. | "Begging you, 'Please do not go.'"                    | ✓ | In general, there is an underlying fear of loss and a strong emotional dependence on one's partner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 12. | "Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone."           | ✓ | There is an underlying desire to escape pressure and restrictions; a longing to be free with the one you love.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 13. | "I will be waiting"                                   | ✓ | It implies loyalty and patience; it is generally understood as a promise to stay no matter how difficult the situation may be.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14. | "All that's left to do is run."                       | ✓ | It implies that all other options have been exhausted; fleeing is the only choice left.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 15. | "You will be the prince, and I will be the princess." | ✓ | It implies an idealized vision of love, like a fairy tale; it is generally understood as the hope of a perfect, happy relationship.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 16. | "It is a love story, baby, just say 'Yes.'"           | ✓ | "Just say yes" is implied as a request for a commitment; it is generally understood that the character wants the relationship to move forward seriously.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 17. | "I sneak out to the garden to see you."               | ✓ | "Sneaking off to the garden" refers to Romeo and Juliet's secret meeting in the garden; it implies that this relationship is forbidden and fraught with danger—a meaning that is only understood if one is familiar with the context of Shakespeare.                                                                     |
| 18. | "We keep quiet because we are dead if they knew."     | ✓ | "Dead" literally means "dead," but in this context it implies the fatal consequences for the family if their relationship is discovered—reinforcing the parallel with the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, in which both characters actually die.                                                                            |
| 19. | "Close your eyes"                                     | ✓ | There is an implicit invitation to forget the oppressive reality momentarily; this is generally understood as a mental escape from a difficult situation.                                                                                                                                                                |
| 20. | "Escape this town for a little while"                 | ✓ | There is an implied desire to break free from social and family pressures; the "city" serves as a common symbol of a restrictive environment.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 21. | "You were Romeo, I was a scarlet letter."             | ✓ | "The Scarlet Letter" refers to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel of the same name—a symbol of a woman who is ostracized for allegedly violating social norms; it implies that the character feels judged and alienated by those around her. This implication can only be understood if one is familiar with the literary work. |
| 22. | "My daddy said stay away from Juliet."                | ✓ | Just like line 9, this repetition reinforces the character's position as the forbidden Juliet—Shakespeare's context remains key to understanding it.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 23. | "However, you were everything to me."                 | ✓ | It is generally implied that love for that person transcends all prohibitions and external pressures.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 24. | "Romeo, save me"                                      | ✓ | The cry of "save me" is not just a casual plea for help; in the context of Romeo & Juliet, it implies a plea to be saved from a tragic situation—a parallel to Juliet, who is caught in a family conflict.                                                                                                               |
| 25. | "They are trying to tell me how to feel."             | ✓ | Implies criticism of others' control over one's personal feelings; it is generally understood as resistance to social or family pressure.                                                                                                                                                                                |

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|     |                                                 |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26. | "This love is difficult, but it is real."       | ✓ |   | It implies that difficulties are no reason to end a relationship; it is generally understood as a defense of a relationship that others consider unworthy.                                                        |
| 27. | "Do not be afraid"                              | ✓ |   | There is a palpable fear at play here; it is generally understood as a drive to maintain the relationship courageously.                                                                                           |
| 28. | "We will make it out of this mess."             | ✓ |   | "This mess" is understood to refer to the complicated situation caused by the family ban; it is generally interpreted as an expression of optimism that things will get better.                                   |
| 29. | "I got tired of waiting."                       | ✓ |   | There is an underlying sense of frustration after a long period of patience; it is generally understood as the breaking point of one's patience while waiting for certainty.                                      |
| 30. | "Wondering if you were ever coming around"      | ✓ |   | There is an underlying sense of doubt and uncertainty – whether the partner is truly serious – generally understood as a crisis of trust.                                                                         |
| 31. | "My faith in you was fading."                   | ✓ |   | It is implied that trust is slowly eroding; this is generally seen as a sign that the relationship is beginning to falter.                                                                                        |
| 32. | "When I met you on the outskirts of town"       |   | ✓ | "The outskirts of town" is implied as a secret meeting place, far from the family's watchful eyes, reinforcing the story's sense of forbidden love.                                                               |
| 33. | "Romeo, save me. I have been feeling so alone." |   | ✓ | Loneliness here is not merely about being physically alone; in this story, it implies a sense of isolation stemming from an unapproved relationship – much like Juliet, who is confined by her family's decision. |
| 34. | "I keep waiting for you, but you never come."   | ✓ |   | There is an underlying sense of pain from a futile wait; it is generally understood as an expression of deep disappointment and loneliness.                                                                       |
| 35. | "Is this in my head?"                           | ✓ |   | There is an underlying sense of self-doubt – whether this feeling is real or merely an illusion – generally understood as a moment of crisis in one's confidence in the relationship.                             |
| 36. | "He knelt to the ground and pulled out a ring." | ✓ |   | A marriage proposal is implied; generally, kneeling and the ring are understood as universal symbols of the highest commitment to love.                                                                           |
| 37. | "Marry me Juliet"                               |   | ✓ | Mentioning the name "Juliet" in the proposal turns Shakespeare's tragedy on its head – instead of ending in death, the two are united; the implication is that this story is a happy ending to Romeo & Juliet.    |
| 38. | "You will never have to be alone."              | ✓ |   | It implies a promise of lifelong protection and loyalty; it is generally understood as a commitment to always be there for one's partner.                                                                         |
| 39. | "I love you, and that is all I really know."    | ✓ |   | It is implied that love is the only certainty amid the confusion and obstacles faced.                                                                                                                             |
| 40. | "I talked to your dad."                         |   | ✓ | This is implied by Romeo's seeking Juliet's father's blessing – something impossible in Shakespeare's play due to the family feud – and it suggests that the greatest obstacle has been officially overcome.      |
| 41. | "Go pick out a white dress."                    | ✓ |   | "White dress" generally refers to a wedding dress; it is a symbol of marriage and the beginning of a new life together.                                                                                           |
| 42. | "It is a love story, baby, just say yes."       | ✓ |   | This repetition of the chorus serves as a final affirmation – all obstacles have been overcome, and now all it takes is a single "yes" to make everything perfect.                                                |
| 43. | "Cause we were both young when I first saw you" | ✓ |   | The repetition of the opening line creates a narrative circle; it implies that this love has transcended time – from youth to the moment of the proposal, the feeling remains just as strong.                     |

Table 4. Summary of Implicature Frequency

| Types of Implicature | Data Count | Percentage | Characteristics                                           |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| GCI (Generalized)    | 28         | 65,1%      | <i>It can be understood without any specific context.</i> |
| PCI (Particularized) | 15         | 34,9%      | <i>Requires literary context (Shakespeare, Hawthorne)</i> |

|            |    |      |   |
|------------|----|------|---|
| Total Data | 43 | 100% | - |
|------------|----|------|---|

## Types of Speech Acts in the Lyrics of Love Story

The analysis confirms that Love Story contains all five categories of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle, as summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The findings show that assertive speech acts are the most frequent, followed by directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative acts.

## Detailed Explanation for Each Category

**Assertive Speech Acts:** These acts commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition, describing events, states, or facts. Example: *"We were both young when I first saw you"* (Line 1). Reason for classification: This utterance recounts a past event and describes the circumstances of the first meeting. It functions to provide information and establish the narrative background, which is the core characteristic of assertive acts. Example: *"I close my eyes, and the flashback starts"* (Line 2). Reason for classification: It states what the speaker does and experiences, presenting a factual description from the narrator's perspective rather than expressing a desire or emotion. Example: *"That you were Romeo, throwing pebbles"* (Line 8). Reason for classification: It describes an action performed by the other character, serving to narrate the story rather than requesting or promising anything.

**Directive Speech Acts:** These acts aim to get the listener to do something, expressing requests, commands, invitations, or pleas. Example: *"Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone"* (Line 12). Reason for classification: The utterance clearly intends to influence Romeo's action, asking him to go to a private place. It seeks a response or action from the addressee, which defines a directive act. Example: *"Close your eyes"* (Line 19). Reason for classification: It directly tells the listener to act, aiming to create a certain state or experience, thus fitting the function of directing behaviour. Example: *"Stay away from Juliet"* (Line 9). Reason for classification: This expresses a prohibition or instruction intended to control the listener's actions, which is a typical form of directive speech act.

**Expressive Speech Acts:** These acts express the speaker's psychological state, feelings, or attitudes toward something. Example: *"I was crying on the staircase"* (Line 10). Reason for classification: It conveys the speaker's emotional state, sadness, and distress rather than providing information or asking for action. Its main purpose is to communicate feeling, which is the function of expressive acts. Example: *"However, you were everything to me"* (Line 23). Reason for classification: It expresses deep affection and value placed on the other person, reflecting the speaker's inner attitude rather than describing an external fact. Example: *"I love you, and that is all I really know"* (Line 39). Reason for classification: It explicitly states an emotional feeling, serving to express affection rather than to narrate, command, or commit.

**Commissive Speech Acts:** These acts commit the speaker to a future course of action, involving promises, vows, or commitments. Example: *"I will be waiting"* (Line 13). Reason for classification: By using *"will"*, the speaker binds themselves to act in the future. This creates an obligation from the speaker's side, which is the defining feature of commissive acts. Example: *"We will make it out of this mess"* (Line 28). Reason for classification: It expresses a commitment to achieve a goal together, promising a future outcome and thus committing both speakers to a shared course of action. Example: *"You will never have to be alone"* (Line 38). Reason for classification: It functions as a promise of future support and presence, committing the speaker to ensure the other person will not be alone.

**Declarative Speech Acts:** These acts change the state of affairs simply by being uttered; they create a new reality through words. Example: *"Marry me, Juliet"* (Line 37). Reason for classification: This utterance does not merely describe a state or request an action; it performs the act of proposing marriage itself. Within the narrative, it transforms the relationship dynamic and introduces a new status, which is the unique function of declarative speech acts.

The distribution shows that song lyrics primarily serve as a medium for storytelling and emotional expression, hence the dominance of assertive and expressive acts, while directives and commissive drive the plot forward by expressing desires and commitments.

### Types of Implicature in the Lyrics of Love Story

Of the 43 lines of lyrics, 28 lines (65.1%) contain Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI), and 15 lines (34.9%) contain Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI), according to the implicature analysis presented in Tables 3 and 4. Most lyrics convey implicit meanings that are universally understood without requiring specific contextual knowledge, as indicated by the dominance of GCI.

GCI can be observed in emotional expressions such as longing, loyalty, hope, and fear of separation. For example, the lyric "I will wait" (No. 13) implicitly conveys patience and loyalty without requiring a specific context. Saifudin (2020) explains that GCI appears in popular song lyrics through universal emotional expressions that are not tied to specific cultural or intertextual backgrounds. This makes the songs accessible and understandable to listeners from diverse backgrounds.

In the lyrics of "Love Story," PCI is always linked to literary intertextuality, particularly Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" and Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel "The Scarlet Letter". A listener of lyrics such as "That you were Romeo throwing pebbles" (No. 8), "I was a scarlet letter" (No. 21), "I sneak out to the garden to see you" (No. 17), and "Marry me, Juliet" (No. 37) can only fully grasp their meaning if they are familiar with the intertextual works.

The unique implications of a conversation often depend on mutual knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer, including knowledge of history, literature, and culture. In the case of the lyrics to "Love Story," Taylor Swift assumes that her listeners do not know much about the story of Romeo and Juliet. Therefore, these references serve as a means of communication that adds meaning without explicit explanation.

According to Wearing, conversational implicatures in artistic texts, such as song lyrics, help enhance meaning beyond the text. By using Shakespearean references in "Love Story," the story's meaning is enriched, and the narrator is identified as a woman trapped in a forbidden love, much like Juliet. This is a successful practical approach to conveying complex emotional messages within the limited space of lyrics.

In their study of the pragmatics of Muse's lyrics, Asroriyah & Nurhana (2022) found that PCI frequently employs social and political metaphors to convey implicit meanings in rock lyrics. On the other hand, the study found that PCI in "Love Story" relies more heavily on intertextual references to classical literature as a vehicle for implicature, reflecting the pop-country genre's unique narrative-romantic approach.

### Pragmatics Functions of Speech Acts and Implicatures in Conveying Meaning

Overall, the interaction between speech acts and implicatures in the lyrics of "Love Story" produces a pragmatically layered discourse. Tanduk (2023) argues that in cross-cultural analysis, song lyrics often serve as a space in which speech acts and implicatures reinforce one another, generating meaning that transcends the sum of its linguistic elements. Through the strategic use of explicit statements and implied meanings, "Love Story" constructs a narrative of love that is both universal and intertextually specific in this context.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examined pragmatic phenomena in the lyrics of Taylor Swift's *Love Story* using Searle's speech act theory and Grice's conversational implicature theory. Analysis of 43 lyric lines showed that all five speech act types contribute to the song's narrative. Assertive acts dominate the lyrics, emphasizing storytelling, while directives express longing and tension. Expressive and commissive acts strengthen emotional connection and commitment, whereas the declarative act marks the narrative climax. The findings also revealed that implicature enriches meaning through two levels. Generalized Conversational Implicature

conveys universal themes of love, hope, and devotion, making the song accessible to diverse audiences. Particularized Conversational Implicature, reflected in references to *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Scarlet Letter*, adds literary and cultural depth for informed listeners. The interaction between speech acts and implicature demonstrates how explicit and implicit meanings work together to create both emotional appeal and artistic complexity. Theoretically, this study confirms the applicability of pragmatic theories to song lyrics and extends previous research by integrating both frameworks. Practically, it offers useful insights for linguistic analysis, language teaching, and literary appreciation.

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