

ANALYSIS OF TENSES IN COLDPLAY SONGS LYRICS

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Article Info	Abstract
Received : 24 June 2026 Accepted : 1 July 2026 Revised : 8 July 2026	This study examines the linguistic subtleties found in the lyrics of four well-known Coldplay songs: "Yellow," "Paradise," "Viva la Vida," and "Fix You." It focuses on the use of tenses in these songs. The goal is to investigate how the band's use of verb tenses affects the emotional range and narrative coherence of their songs. The qualitative approach entails a thorough examination of the lyrics in order to identify, classify, and interpret the use of tenses. Guy Berryman, Jonny Buckland, Will Champion, and Chris Martin, collectively known as Coldplay, are the subject of this analysis because of their profound influence on the music business over the course of more than 20 years. The results show that every song has unique tense patterns. For example, "Yellow" uses the simple past tense 53% of the time, whereas "Paradise" uses it 73% of the time. "Viva la Vida" exhibits a wide variety of tenses, such as past perfect, present, simple past, and others. The present tense is most prevalent in "Fix You," at 65%. All things considered, Coldplay masterfully uses tense variation to portray a range of feelings and viewpoints, which adds to the song's timeless appeal. Our knowledge of the function of language in song writing storytelling is improved by this study.
Keywords: Tenses, Songs, Lyrics	

Introduction

English is currently the most significant language in the world. In this world, language is the foundation of communication. There are countless languages spoken throughout the world (Arba et al., 2023). Humans use language to communicate thoughts, sensations, and ideas in a variety of contexts (Gina Anggraeni, M. Bahri Arifin, 2022). Language has become a tool for communication, both written and verbal (Ni Wayan Swarniti, 2022). English is a language that many people speak as a first, second, or foreign language worldwide (Imliyana et al., 2015). Being a universal language, music has the unmatched power to tell tales, arouse emotions, and cut through time. Harmonious wordplay is a form of artistic expression found in music (Harnia, 2021). As art evolves in today's world, song lyrics serve as a means for people to communicate their opinions (Permatajaya, 2015). In the context of songwriting, artists can effectively communicate their stories and feelings through the careful selection of words. Song lyrics serve as a vehicle for the songwriter's ideas to be communicated to listeners in order to deliver messages (Hidayah, 2022). Of all the bands whose songs have become part of the world's soundtrack, Coldplay is one of the most well-known, beloved for their ethereal arrangements and moving lyrics. We take a close look at the linguistic fabric of Coldplay's song lyrics in this scholarly investigation, paying particular attention to the subtle usage of tenses.

The members of the British rock group Coldplay are Guy Berryman on bass, Jonny Buckland on guitar, Will Champion on drums, and Chris Martin on vocals and piano (Ditharifiasari & Putri, 2022). The lyrics to Coldplay songs have particular meaning because the verb tense used can create the sense of place and emotion in the narrative. The group has been recording music for over 20 years, and the songs they have released explore a wide range of topics, including love, grief, hope, and existential concerns. We'll see how Coldplay employs tension to accentuate the beauty and significance of their lyrics.

The goal of this study is to investigate Coldplay song tenses in detail. Four of their well-known songs will be examined: "Yellow," "Paradise," "Viva la Vida," and "Fix You." These songs were picked because they are well-liked and have a variety of themes. The research methodology involves a thorough analysis of the lyrics using a linguistic framework to identify and categorize the tenses used. This study looks closely at Coldplay's choice of time in an attempt to identify any patterns, reoccurring themes, or emotions. The use of tenses to indicate when events occur is an essential part of mastering the English language (Wilson, 2021).

As we delve into Coldplay's songs, we expect to discover different time-related aspects in their lyrics. A song is composed of a person's voice and a musical instrument (Lembu et al., 2022). A song also can convey a lot of different messages (Akbar, 2020). Examining the use of verb tenses is not just about checking grammar; it's like taking a trip into the heart of their stories. Songs are also a great way to decompress and reenergize. You can listen to a song that can calm you down if you're depressed (Akbar, 2020). It's a journey where time is like a flexible canvas, and the verb tenses create feelings that connect with many people. In the next parts of this study, we will go through the time-related elements in "Yellow," "Paradise," "Viva la Vida," and "Fix You," unraveling the language details that add to the lasting charm of Coldplay's music.

Research Methods

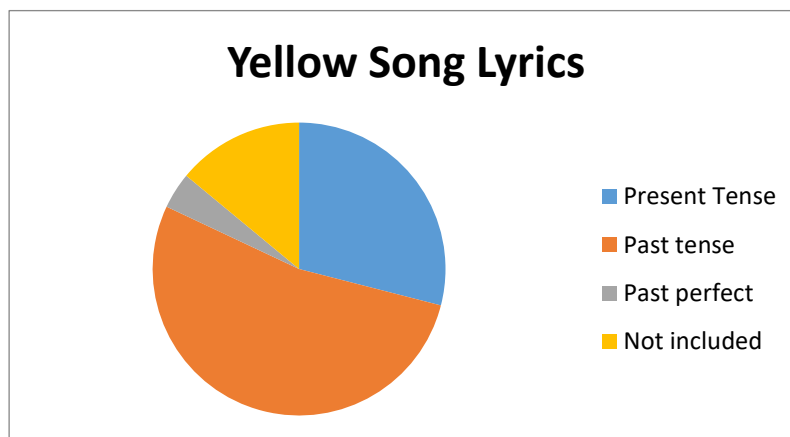
This research uses qualitative methods with the aim of describing the research results from the analyzed Coldplay song lyrics. Rather than quantifying data, the aim of this methodology is to explore and describe the intricacies of tenses in selected songs. From Coldplay's famous songs, namely the songs "Yellow", "Paradise", "Viva la Vida", and "Fix You". The lyrics of a few chosen songs serve as the main source of data for this study. Techniques for documentation are employed to gather and arrange textual information. This entails faithfully transcribing the lyrics so that the various tenses employed in each song can be carefully examined. The qualitative method of data analysis focuses on the recognition, categorization, and interpretation of the tenses used in each lyric.

Results and Discussion

The list of song lyrics from the four Coldplay songs that the author has chosen is provided below, along with a table that includes the song title, lyrics, and tenses.

No.	Song Title	Lyrics	Tenses
1.	Yellow	"Look at the stars"	Simple present tense
		"Look how they shine for you"	Simple present tense
		"And everything you do"	-
		"Yeah, they were all yellow"	Simple past tense
		"I came along"	Simple past tense
		"I wrote a song for you"	Simple past tense
		"And all the things you do"	-
		"And it was called yellow"	Simple past tense
		"So then I took my turn"	Simple past tense
		"Oh, what a thing to have done"	Past perfect
		"And it was all yellow"	Simple past tense
		"Your skin, oh yeah, your skin and bones"	-
		"Turn into something beautiful"	Simple present tense
		"And you know, you know I love you so"	Simple present tense
		"You know I love you so"	Simple present tense
		"I swam across"	Simple past tense
		"I jumped across for you"	Simple past tense
		"Oh, what a thing to do"	Simple present tense
		" 'Cause you were all yellow"	Simple past tense
		"I drew a line"	Simple past tense
		"I drew a line for you"	Simple past tense

From the results of the analysis of the types of tenses from the lyrics of the yellow song above, it can be seen that the lyrics that use simple present tense are 29%, those that use simple past tense are 53%, those that use past perfect tense are 3%, and those that do not use any tenses are 14% as data from the table above. For more details, please see the graph below:

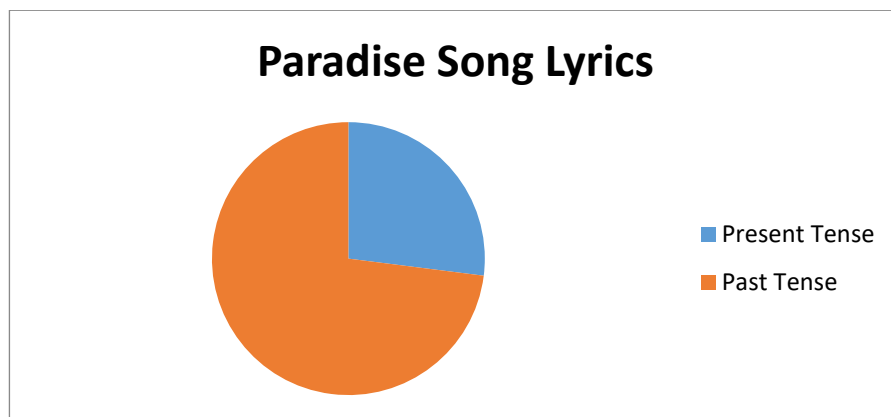


Analysis of Tenses in Coldplay Songs Lyrics

It can be concluded that the type of tense that is often used in the lyrics of the song Yellow is the simple past tense, where of the 21 lyric texts there are 11 lyrics that use the simple past tense with percentage 53%.

No.	Song Title	Lyrics	Tenses
2.	Paradise	"When she was just a girl, she expected the world"	Simple past tense
		"But it flew away from her reach"	Simple past tense
		"So she ran away in her sleep and dreamed of Para-para-paradise"	Simple past tense
		"Every time she closed her eyes"	Simple past tense
		"But it flew away from her reach and the bullets catch in her teeth"	Simple past tense
		"Life goes on, it gets so heavy"	Simple present tense
		"The wheel breaks the butterfly, every tear a waterfall"	Simple present tense
		"In the night, the stormy night, she'd close her eyes"	Simple past tense
		"In the night, the stormy night, away she'd fly"	Simple past tense
		"And dream of para-para-paradise"	Simple present tense
		"She'd dream of para-para-paradise"	Simple past tense

From the results of the analysis of the types of tenses from the lyrics of the Paradise song above, it can be seen that the lyrics that use simple present tense are 27%, those that use simple past tense are 73% as data from the table above. For more details, please see the graph below:

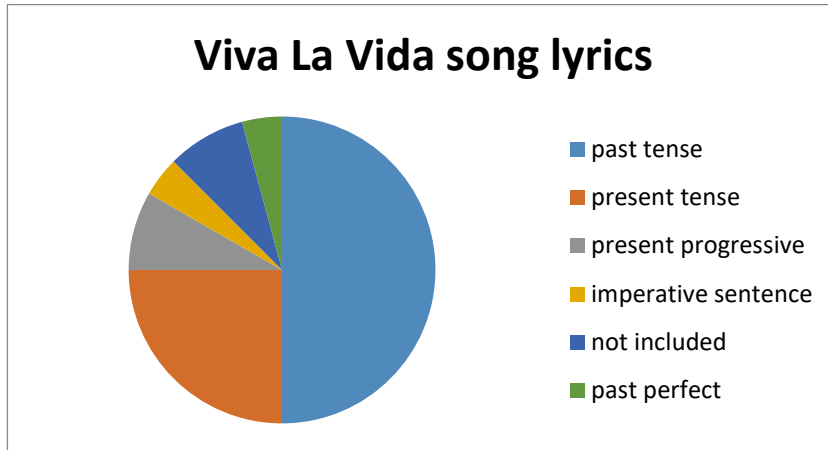


So, it can be concluded that the type of tense that is often used in the lyrics of the song Paradise is the simple past tense, where of the 11 lyric texts there are 8 lyrics that use the simple past tense with percentage 73%.

No.	Song Title	Lyrics	Tenses
3.	Viva La Vida	"I used to rule the world"	Simple past tense
		"Seas would rise when I gave the word"	Simple past tense
		"Now in the morning, I sleep alone"	Simple present tense
		"Sweep the streets I used to own"	Simple past tense
		"I used to roll the dice: Past tense"	Simple past tense
		"Feel the fear in my enemy's eyes"	Simple present tense
		"Listen as the crowd would sing"	Simple past tense
		"Now the old king is dead, long live the king"	Simple present tense
		"One minute, I held the key"	Simple past tense
		"Next the walls were closed on me"	Simple past tense
		" And I discovered that my castles stand"	Simple past tense
		"I hear Jerusalem bells a-ringing"	Present progressive
		"Roman Cavalry choirs are singing"	Present progressive
		"Be my mirror, my sword and shield"	Imperative sentence
		"My missionaries in a foreign field"	Present tense
		"For some reason, I can't explain"	Present tense
		"Once you'd gone, there was never, never an honest word"	Past perfect
		"And that was when I ruled the world"	Simple past tense
		"It was a wicked and wild wind"	Simple past tense
		"Blew down the doors to let me in"	Simple past tense
		"Shattered windows and the sound of drums"	-
		"People couldn't believe what I'd become"	Simple past tense
		"Revolutionaries wait"	Simple present tense
		"For my head on a silver plate"	-

Analysis of Tenses in Coldplay Songs Lyrics

From the results of the analysis of the types of tenses from the lyrics of the Viva La Vida song above, it can be seen that the lyrics that use simple present tense are 25%, those that use simple past tense are 50%, those that use past perfect tense are 4,2%, those that do not use any tenses are 8,3%, those that use present progressive tense are 8,3%, and those that use imperative sentence are 4,2% as data from the table above. For more details, please see the graph below:

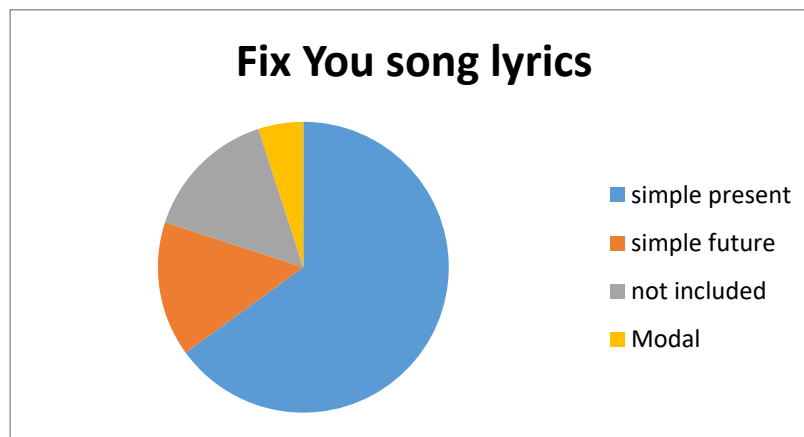


So, it can be concluded that the type of tense that is often used in the lyrics of the song Viva La Vida is the simple past tense, where of the 24 lyric texts there are 12 lyrics that use the simple past tense with percentage 50%.

No.	Song Title	Lyrics	Tenses
4.	Fix You	"When you try your best, but you don't succeed"	Simple present tense
		"When you get what you want, but not what you need"	Simple present tense
		"When you feel so tired, but you can't sleep"	Simple present tense
		"Stuck in reverse"	-
		"And the tears come streaming down your face"	Simple present tense
		"When you lose something you can't replace"	Simple present tense
		"When you love someone, but it goes to waste"	Simple present tense
		"Could it be worse?"	Modal auxiliary
		"Lights will guide you home"	Simple future tense
		"And ignite your bones"	Simple present tense
		"And I will try to fix you"	Simple future tense

		“And high up above, or down below”	-
		“When you're too in love to let it go”	-
		“But if you never try, you'll never know”	Simple present tense
		“Just what you're worth”	Simple present tense
		“Tears stream down your face”	Simple present tense
		“When you lose something you cannot replace”	Simple present tense
		“Tears stream down your face, and I”	Simple present tense
		“Tears stream down your face”	Simple present tense
		“I promise you I will learn from my mistakes”	Simple future tense

The results of the analysis of the types of tenses from the lyrics of the “Fix You” song above, it can be seen that the lyrics that use simple present tense are 65%, those that use simple future tense are 15, those that do not use any tenses are 15%, and sentence that use modal auxiliary are 5% as data from the table above. For more details, please see the graph below:



From the graph above, it can be summarized that the type of tense that is often used in the lyrics of the song Fix You is the simple present tense, where of the 20 lyric texts there are 13 lyrics that use the simple present tense with percentage 65%.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explores the use of tense language in four well-known Coldplay songs: "Yellow," "Paradise," "Viva la Vida," and "Fix You." Being a universal language, English is very important for communication, particularly when it comes to musical expression.

Guy Berryman, Jonny Buckland, Will Champion, and Chris Martin make up the influential band Coldplay, who have been around for more than 20 years. Their songs'

intentional use of verb tenses to express viewpoints and feelings is highlighted by the qualitative analysis of the lyrics.

The simple past tense is used in 53% of the lyrics in "Yellow," according to the results, suggesting reflection on the past. "Paradise" emphasizes past events by using the simple past tense 73% of the time. "Viva la Vida" features a variety of tenses, which illustrates a sophisticated story structure. The majority of "Fix You" (65%) is in the simple present tense, implying a continuous emotional journey.

To put it simply, Coldplay masterfully employs verb tenses to elevate narrative, which adds to the timeless allure of their sound. This study sheds light on the critical role that language especially tense usage plays in articulating feelings and constructing storylines in songwriting. The band's command of language demonstrates the enduring ability of skillfully written lyrics to captivate listeners.

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