



## Mood and Modality in the song “Reckless” by Madison Beer within Semantics

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**Abstract.** *Mood and modality are important aspects of semantic studies because they express attitudes, emotions, certainty, obligation, and intention through language. The aims of this research are to identify and describe the types of mood and modality found in the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer and to explain their semantic meanings. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with semantic analysis as the main approach. The data source is the lyrics of the song "Reckless." This study analyzed clauses and modal expressions based on Halliday's theory of mood and Palmer's theory of modality. The findings show that the declarative mood is the dominant mood used in the song because the lyrics mainly express emotional experiences and reflections. In addition, three types of modality were identified, namely epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality. Dynamic modality appears most dominantly because the song strongly expresses emotional ability, willingness, regret, and vulnerability. The use of mood and modality in the lyrics strengthens the emotional meaning of heartbreak, disappointment, betrayal, and sadness conveyed by the singer. It is expected that this research can provide a deeper understanding of how mood and modality function in expressing emotions through song lyrics and contribute as a reference for future studies in semantics, especially those analyzing mood and modality in literary works such as songs, poems, or other lyrical texts.*

**Keywords:** *Semantics; Mood; Modality; Song Lyrics; Reckless.*

**Abstrak.** *Mood dan modalitas merupakan aspek penting dalam studi semantik karena keduanya mengekspresikan sikap, emosi, kepastian, kewajiban, dan intensi melalui bahasa. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis mood dan modalitas yang ditemukan dalam lagu "Reckless" karya Madison Beer serta menjelaskan makna semantiknya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis semantik sebagai pendekatan utama. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah lirik lagu "Reckless." Penelitian ini menganalisis klausa dan ekspresi modal berdasarkan teori mood dari Halliday dan teori modalitas dari Palmer. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mood deklaratif merupakan mood yang paling dominan digunakan dalam lagu tersebut karena lirik lagu terutama mengekspresikan pengalaman emosional dan refleksi diri. Selain itu, ditemukan tiga jenis modalitas, yaitu modalitas epistemik, modalitas deontik, dan modalitas dinamis. Modalitas dinamis muncul paling dominan karena lagu ini sangat mengekspresikan kemampuan emosional, kemauan, penyesalan, dan kerentanan. Penggunaan mood dan modalitas dalam lirik lagu memperkuat makna emosional tentang patah hati, kekecewaan, pengkhianatan, dan kesedihan yang disampaikan oleh penyanyi. Diharapkan penelitian ini dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana mood dan modalitas berfungsi dalam mengekspresikan emosi melalui lirik lagu serta berkontribusi sebagai referensi bagi penelitian selanjutnya di bidang semantik, terutama yang menganalisis mood dan modalitas dalam karya sastra seperti lagu, puisi, atau teks liris lainnya.*

**Kata kunci:** *Semantics; Mood; Modality; Lirik lagu; Reckles.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential tool for communication used by humans to express ideas, emotions, intentions, and experiences. Through language, people can interact and convey

meaning in various forms of communication, including literary works such as songs. Songs are not only forms of entertainment but also media for expressing emotions, thoughts, and personal experiences through lyrics.

One branch of linguistics that studies meaning is semantics. According to Saeed (2003), semantics is the study of meaning communicated through language. Semantics helps people understand how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning in communication. In semantic studies, mood and modality are important elements because they influence how meaning and emotions are interpreted.

Mood refers to the grammatical form used to express the speaker's communicative purpose. Halliday (1994) classifies mood into declarative mood, interrogative mood, and imperative mood. Declarative mood is used to provide information, interrogative mood is used to ask questions, and imperative mood is used to give commands or requests.

Meanwhile, modality refers to the speaker's attitude, judgment, possibility, certainty, obligation, or willingness toward an event or proposition. According to Palmer (2001), modality can be divided into three types: epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality. Epistemic modality expresses possibility and certainty, deontic modality expresses obligation and permission, while dynamic modality expresses ability and willingness.

Mood and modality are commonly found in song lyrics because songs often express emotional experiences and personal reflections. One song that contains strong emotional expressions is "Reckless" by Madison Beer. The song describes heartbreak, betrayal, disappointment, and emotional vulnerability caused by someone who treated love carelessly.

Several previous studies have examined mood and modality in song lyrics using similar theoretical frameworks. Maulida (2023) analyzed interpersonal meaning in Taylor Swift's Fearless (Taylor's Version) album and found that declarative mood dominates because the album mostly expresses the singer's ideas and certainty through different degrees of modality. Similarly, Ananda and Purbasari (2022) examined Freddie Dredd's Suffer album, revealing that declarative mood constitutes 81.48% of clauses with

median modality as the most frequent type. Daryanto (2022) investigated The Weeknd's *After Hours* album and identified declarative mood as the dominant type with 127 out of 144 clauses.

Beyond mood and modality studies, research has also explored how song lyrics function emotionally. Pond and Leavens (2024) found that sad lyrics paired with sad melodies significantly reduce listeners' mood, with semantic content of lyrics influencing emotional responses more strongly than melody alone. Additionally, a large-scale study on "coping songs" during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that people actively select songs whose lyrical themes align with their emotional regulation goals, such as processing heartbreak and betrayal (Vidas et al., 2024). These findings support the importance of analyzing lyrical content semantically.

This research chooses this song because its lyrics contain various expressions of mood and modality that can be analyzed semantically. Therefore, this study is interested in conducting a research entitled "Mood and Modality in the Song 'Reckless' by Madison Beer Within Semantics." Based on the background above, this research addresses three questions such as, (1) what types of mood are found in the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer, (2) what types of modality are found in the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer, and (3) how do mood and modality contribute to the semantic meaning of the song lyrics.

The aim of this research is to identify and describe the types of mood and modality used in the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer and to explain their semantic meanings. It is expected that this research can provide a deeper understanding of how mood and modality function in expressing emotions, particularly heartbreak, disappointment, and betrayal, through song lyrics. Furthermore, this research is hoped to contribute as a reference for future studies in semantics, especially those analyzing mood and modality in literary works such as songs, poems, or other lyrical texts.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research was applied because the data were analyzed in the form of words, clauses, and sentences found in the song lyrics. The focus of this research was to identify and interpret mood and modality expressions in the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer within semantic analysis. The source of data in this research was the lyrics of the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer. The data consisted of utterances, clauses, and sentences containing mood and modality expressions.

In collecting the data, this study first listened to the song repeatedly to understand the context and emotional meaning of the lyrics. Second, the lyrics were read carefully and expressions related to mood and modality were identified. Third, the identified data were classified into categories of mood and modality.

The data were analyzed using Halliday's theory of mood and Palmer's theory of modality. The analysis included identifying declarative, interrogative, and imperative mood. Furthermore, modality expressions were classified into epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality. Finally, the semantic meanings conveyed through the use of mood and modality

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

*Table 1. Types of Mood Found in the Song "Reckless" by Madison Beer*

Types of Mood	Frequency
<b>Declarative Mood</b>	26
<b>Interrogative Mood</b>	4
<b>Imperative Mood</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	31

As shown in table 1, declarative mood is the most dominant mood found in the lyrics of the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer. The song mainly uses statements to express sadness, disappointment, heartbreak, betrayal, and emotional pain.

### **A. Declarative Mood**

Declarative mood is used to provide statements and information about the speaker's emotional experiences.

Data 1: "*Hey, this is a story I hate*". This sentence is categorized as declarative mood because it expresses the speaker's feeling and personal statement about painful experiences.

Data 2: "*You gave me your word, 'Don't worry 'bout her.*" This sentence functions as a declarative statement describing the promises given by the partner.

Data 3: "*You might love her now, but you loved me first.*" This sentence expresses emotional disappointment and comparison between past and present love.

### **B. Interrogative Mood**

Interrogative mood is used to ask questions and express emotional confusion.

Data 4 : "*How could you be so reckless with my heart?*" This sentence is categorized as interrogative mood because it asks a question expressing disbelief, sadness, and emotional pain.

Data 5: "*How could you be so reckless with someone's heart?*" This question emphasizes disappointment and emotional frustration toward the partner's behavior.

### **C. Imperative Mood**

Imperative mood is used to express commands or requests.

Data 6: "*Don't worry 'bout her.*" This sentence is categorized as imperative mood because it contains a request intended to calm the speaker.

**Table 2. Types of Modality Found in the Song “Reckless” by Madison Beer**

Types of Modality	Frequency
<b>Epistemic Modality</b>	4
<b>Deontic Modality</b>	2
<b>Dynamic Modality</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	12

As shown in Table 2, dynamic modality is the dominant type found in the song lyrics (6 out of 12 occurrences).

### **A. Epistemic Modality**

Epistemic modality expresses possibility, uncertainty, or belief.

Data 1: “*You might love her now.*” The modal “might” expresses possibility and uncertainty regarding the partner’s feelings.

Data 2: “*I guess my friends were right.*” The expression “I guess” indicates uncertainty and personal belief.

### **B. Deontic Modality**

Deontic modality expresses promises, obligations, or expectations.

Data 3: “*Said you’d never hurt me.*” The modal “would” in this context expresses commitment or promise.

Data 4: “*You gave me your word.*” This expression reflects obligation and trust within the relationship.

### **C. Dynamic Modality**

Dynamic modality expresses willingness, emotional ability, and intention.

Data 5: “*But I’ll tell it anyway.*” The modal “will” expresses willingness and determination to tell the painful story.

Data 6: *"I'm so sorry if you can relate."* The modal "can" expresses emotional possibility and ability for listeners to understand the pain.

Data 7: *"But I told it to cope with the pain."* This sentence reflects emotional intention and personal effort to heal from heartbreak.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of the analysis, the song *"Reckless"* by Madison Beer contains three types of mood, namely declarative mood, interrogative mood, and imperative mood. This finding is consistent with Halliday's theory of mood (1994), which classifies mood into these three types based on the speaker's communicative purpose. Declarative mood becomes the most dominant type because the lyrics mainly express personal experiences, emotional pain, disappointment, and heartbreak. The singer uses declarative sentences to narrate the story of betrayal and emotional suffering caused by a broken relationship.

For example, the sentence *"Hey, this is a story I hate"* expresses the speaker's emotional confession and sadness. Another declarative sentence, *"You might love her now, but you loved me first,"* reflects disappointment and comparison between past and present love. Through declarative mood, the singer directly communicates emotional experiences and personal reflections to listeners.

Interrogative mood is also found in the lyrics, especially in the repeated sentence *"How could you be so reckless with my heart?"* This question does not merely function to ask for information, but rather to express emotional disbelief, anger, sadness, and frustration toward the partner's behavior. The repetition of the interrogative sentence strengthens the emotional intensity of the song and highlights the deep pain experienced by the speaker.

Meanwhile, imperative mood appears in the sentence *"Don't worry 'bout her."* This sentence functions as a request intended to calm the speaker. However, semantically, the sentence later becomes ironic because the partner eventually betrays the speaker.

In terms of modality, the researcher found three types of modality in the song, namely epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality. This classification is based on Palmer's theory of modality (2001), which divides modality into these three categories. Dynamic modality becomes the dominant type because the lyrics strongly express emotional willingness, personal intention, and emotional ability.

Epistemic modality appears in expressions such as *"You might love her now"* and *"I guess my friends were right."* The modal *"might"* expresses possibility and uncertainty regarding the partner's feelings, while the phrase *"I guess"* reflects doubt and personal belief. These expressions show the speaker's emotional uncertainty and realization about the relationship.

Deontic modality appears in expressions related to promises and commitments, such as *"Said you'd never hurt me"* and *"You gave me your word."* These expressions reflect trust, obligation, and commitment in the relationship. However, the promises are eventually broken, which intensifies the emotional disappointment experienced by the speaker.

Dynamic modality appears most dominantly in the lyrics. For example, the sentence *"But I'll tell it anyway"* expresses willingness and determination to share painful experiences despite emotional difficulty. Another example, *"I'm so sorry if you can relate,"* uses the modal *"can"* to express emotional possibility and the listener's ability to understand the speaker's pain.

Semantically, the use of mood and modality in the song strengthens the emotional meaning of betrayal, heartbreak, disappointment, regret, and vulnerability. Declarative mood helps create a storytelling atmosphere, interrogative mood intensifies emotional confusion, and imperative mood reflects emotional requests. Furthermore, modality expressions help convey certainty, doubt, promises, willingness, and emotional suffering throughout the song. Thus, the findings support Halliday's (1994) and Palmer's (2001) theoretical frameworks by demonstrating how mood and modality function in real linguistic data, particularly in song lyrics as a form of emotional expression.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the song "Reckless" by Madison Beer contains various types of mood and modality that contribute to the semantic meaning of the lyrics. This study identified three types of mood, namely declarative mood (26 occurrences), interrogative mood (4 occurrences), and imperative mood (1 occurrence). Declarative mood is the most dominant type because the lyrics mainly express emotional experiences, disappointment, heartbreak, and personal reflections. Interrogative mood appears to express emotional confusion, disbelief, and frustration, while imperative mood appears as a form of request or reassurance. In terms of modality, three types were identified, namely epistemic modality (4 occurrences), deontic modality (2 occurrences), and dynamic modality (6 occurrences). Dynamic modality becomes the dominant type because the song strongly expresses emotional willingness, intention, vulnerability, and personal struggle. Epistemic modality reflects uncertainty and emotional doubt, while deontic modality reflects promises, trust, and commitment within the relationship.

Semantically, the use of mood and modality strengthens the emotional meaning conveyed in the song. The lyrics represent betrayal, sadness, regret, disappointment, emotional pain, and vulnerability experienced by the speaker. Therefore, mood and modality play an important role in conveying emotional expression and deeper meaning in song lyrics. This study contributes to semantic research by demonstrating how Halliday's theory of mood and Palmer's theory of modality can be applied to analyze emotional expression in popular song lyrics. Future research is encouraged to analyze more songs or compare different genres to enrich the understanding of mood and modality in lyrical texts.

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