LINGUISTICS AND VIETNAMESE LINGUISTICS

IDENTITY AND PERSONAL GROWTH IN TWO SPEECHES BY TAYLOR SWIFT: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: Personal growth stories are common in contemporary culture. This study compares how Taylor Swift constructs identity and personal growth in her Woman of the Decade acceptance speech (2019) and New York University commencement address (2022). The transcripts (4,864 words) were analysed using Fairclough's three-dimensional model and tools from systemic functional linguistics. The acceptance speech positioned Swift in relation to her critics and, through obligation with *we*, as an advocate for women within the music industry. It represented growth as moving from reacting to critics to acting on her own wishes, and challenged gender and ownership relations. The commencement address positioned her as a modest adviser and addressed the graduates directly: *you* was the Subject of 25.0% of clauses (2.6% in the acceptance speech). It represented growth as learning from mistakes, close to the dominant resilience discourse. The comparison shows how one speaker's account of growth differed with genre and audience.

KEY WORDS: Critical discourse analysis; Fairclough; identity; personal growth; Taylor Swift.
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1. Introduction

Speeches by public figures reach audiences far beyond the events at which they are delivered, as they are transcribed, broadcast and reported in the news (Fairclough, 1992, p. 79). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) treats such texts as part of social practice: discourse is "socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258, as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 6). This article examines two speeches by Taylor Swift: her Woman of the Decade (WOD) acceptance speech at the Billboard Women in Music event on 12 December 2019 (Associated Press, 2019) and her commencement address at New York University (NYU) on 18 May 2022 (Wilson, 2022). They are referred to here as the WOD speech and the NYU speech.

Both speeches draw on the speaker's past experiences to describe personal change. In the WOD speech, Swift recalled: *I saw that people love to explain away a woman's success in the music industry, and I saw something in me change due to this realization* [WOD-S12]. In the NYU speech, she told the graduates: *My experience has been that my mistakes led to the best things in my life* [NYU-S105]. Such accounts connect with wider ideas about identity in contemporary culture. Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p. 7) note that self-help books treat identity as "something that must be worked on", and Gill and Orgad (2018) argue that the discourse of resilience asks individuals to turn setbacks into lessons, while the structural causes of their difficulties remain out of view.

Previous studies have analysed the two speeches separately, through pronouns and speech acts (Swari & Winaya, 2023), persuasive appeals (T. B. G. Nguyễn, 2024), illocutionary acts (Olii et al., 2023), conceptual metaphor (Hu, 2022) and Attitude in the Appraisal framework (Mufidah et al., 2025). Among the studies reviewed, none compares the two speeches or examines personal growth through specific grammatical features. This study therefore applies Fairclough's (1992, 2003) three-dimensional model, supported by tools from systemic functional linguistics (SFL), to address three research questions:

1. What specific lexical choices, grammatical patterns, and rhetorical devices does Taylor Swift employ in her Woman of the Decade acceptance speech (2019) and her New York University commencement speech (2022)?

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2. How are the concepts of personal growth and identity construction discursively built through these specific linguistic choices?

3. What ideologies are reflected through language in the two speeches, and what are the similarities and differences in the way these ideologies are realised?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's three-dimensional model

2.1.1. Critical discourse analysis

CDA is not a single theory or method. Wodak and Meyer (2016, p.5) describe it as a "school" or programme that includes several approaches, among them Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach (p.18). These approaches share an interest in "deconstructing ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data" (p.4). CDA has also been criticised. Widdowson (1995, as cited in H. Nguyễn, 2024, p.18) argues that analysts tend to select texts that suit their interpretations and may move too quickly from linguistic data to interpretation. To reduce this risk, the present study analyses the full transcripts rather than selected extracts and reports evidence that does not support its main interpretations.

2.1.2. The three-dimensional model and tools for textual description

Fairclough (1992, pp.71-73) treats a discursive event as simultaneously a text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice. Discursive practice concerns the production, distribution and consumption of texts (p. 78), together with intertextuality and interdiscursivity (p. 85). Social practice relates the event to its situational, institutional and societal conditions (p. 56). Fairclough (2003, p.29) later links texts to genres, discourses and styles, which are ways of acting, representing and identifying. He defines ideologies as "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation" (p.9). Since ideologies cannot be "read off" from texts (Fairclough, 1992, pp.88-89), this study does not infer an ideology from a single word or sentence.

For textual description, the study uses selected tools from systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Fairclough's approach draws on Halliday's multifunctional theory of language (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, pp.19-20), in which every clause combines ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Fairclough, 1992, p.76). This study examines ideational meaning through transitivity and interpersonal meaning through mood and modality; textual meaning is not analysed. Transitivity construes experience through processes, participants and circumstances, with six process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp.213-215). The Subject is the element "held responsible" for the validity of a proposition or for carrying out a proposal (p.146). It belongs to the clause as exchange, whereas participant roles such as Actor and Senser belong to the clause as representation (pp.134, 211). Modality construes "the region of uncertainty that lies between 'yes' and 'no'" (p.176). It includes probability and usuality (modalization) and obligation and inclination (modulation), each with a high, median or low value (pp.177-180). Fairclough (2003, pp.162-163) relates such commitments, together with the choice of *I* and *we*, to the ways in which speakers identify themselves.

2.2. Identity and personal growth in discourse

2.2.1. Identity

Discourse studies treat identity as constructed in language rather than simply reflected in it (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p.4). Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p.586) define identity as "the social positioning of self and other". Identities include "temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles" as well as broad social categories (p.592), so a speaker may be positioned as an adviser or an advocate within a single speech. For Fairclough (2003, p.159), styles are "the discoursal aspect of ways of being, identities", and identification combines an "I" and a "we" (p. 162). These concepts provide a basis for examining how identity is constructed through the pronouns, Subjects and modal items analysed in this study.

2.2.2. Personal growth

Personal growth is not a category in Fairclough's model. In this study, it refers to the representation of change in the speaker over time. This working definition draws on Fairclough's (2003, p.154) view of clauses as representations of events made up of processes, participants and circumstances. It also draws on his distinction between activated social actors, whose "capacity for agentive action" is accentuated, and passivated ones, whose "subjection to processes" is accentuated (p.150). Four questions follow: which processes represent the change, who or what is represented as bringing it about, who undergoes it, and how it is placed in time. Representations of growth can also be considered in relation to wider discourses. Gill (2007, p.153) identifies "a grammar of individualism" in postfeminist media culture, and Gill and Orgad (2018) describe resilience as an ideal that asks individuals to adapt and bounce back. These studies concern media culture rather than speeches, so they are used as context for interpreting the discourses in the two speeches, not as evidence of how audiences received them.

2.3. Previous studies

Among the studies reviewed, Swari and Winaya (2023) is the only one to analyse the WOD speech. They apply Fairclough's three-dimensional approach, but their text analysis covers only pronouns and assertive speech acts in eight extracts, and they interpret *we* and *us* as creating "a sense of solidarity or togetherness" among women in the music industry (p.5). Studies of the NYU speech use other frameworks. T. B. G. Nguyễn (2024, p.172) finds pathos to be the most frequent persuasive appeal (22 of 51 instances), and Olii *et al*. (2023, p.286) report representative and expressive acts as the most frequent illocutionary acts. Hu (2022, p.54) identifies 118 conceptual metaphors, and Mufidah et al. (2025, p.10097) find that 144 of 172 instances of Attitude are positive. Some of these studies also touch on identity and growth. T. B. G. Nguyễn (2024, p.163) reads *we are so many things, all the time* [NYU-S88] as showing the changing nature of identity, while Hu (2022, p.55) interprets *it taught me to protect my private life fiercely* [NYU-S114] as a metaphor of experience as a teacher. In Vietnam, the studies reviewed have analysed Swift's speeches through rhetoric (T. B. G. Nguyễn, 2024) and conceptual metaphor (Đặng, 2024) rather than CDA.

Three gaps follow from this review. First, none of the studies reviewed compares two speeches by Swift delivered on different occasions. Second, although some studies comment on identity and growth, none examines how specific grammatical patterns, such as process types, Subjects and modality, construct the speaker's identity and her personal growth. Third, none compares the ideologies of the two speeches or traces them through all three dimensions of Fairclough's model to the social conditions of each occasion. This study therefore combines clause-level grammatical analysis with the three dimensions of CDA to explain how identity, personal growth and ideology are constructed in two different discursive contexts.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative, comparative CDA design, examining one speaker on two occasions that differed in genre, audience and institutional setting. Because the speeches differed in length, frequencies were compared per 1,000 words or as percentages. Log-likelihood values (Rayson & Garside, 2000) were treated as exploratory indicators rather than evidence of differences beyond the two texts.

The data consisted of the full transcripts published by Billboard (Schiller, 2019; Dailey, 2022), each checked against a video recording of the speech. Only the speaker's words were included. Each transcript was divided into sentences, and each sentence was assigned a code. For example, [WOD-S12] refers to sentence 12 of the WOD speech. Table 1 summarises the corpus.

Table 1. *Corpus of the study*

Code	Event and date	Institutional setting	Words	Sentences
WOD	Billboard Women in Music, Los Angeles, 12 December 2019	Music industry	2,073	113
NYU	NYU commencement, Yankee Stadium, 18 May 2022	Higher education	2,791	152
Total			4,864	265

The analysis followed Fairclough's three dimensions, with each dimension addressing one research question, although the dimensions overlap in practice (Fairclough, 1992, p.231). For textual description, content words were grouped into semantic fields. The ranking clause was the unit of grammatical analysis, giving 216 clauses in the WOD speech and 306 in the NYU speech. Minor, elliptical and formulaic clauses without a process (20 and 10) were excluded from the transitivity analysis, so 196 and 296 clauses were coded for process type (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp.213-215) and Subject. Mood was coded for free clauses only (130 and 216), since only free clauses enter the system of mood type (p.171). Each token of *we*, *you* and *they* was coded for its referent in context, and each modal item for type and value, as defined in Section 2.1.2. Rhetorical devices included repetition, lists, contrast, figurative expressions, narrated episodes and signposting; quoted and simulated speech was also marked. For discursive practice, each speech was examined in relation to its production, distribution and addressed audience, and personal growth was analysed through the four questions in Section 2.2.2. For social practice, each ideology was traced through a chain of evidence from linguistic features to discourses, social context and power relations, and counter-evidence, that is, features that qualify or point away from each reading, was recorded for each ideology (Table 3).

Coding followed written criteria based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), including rules for boundary cases such as causative constructions and verbs that could belong to more than one process type. The full coding is available from the authors on request. Interpretation focused on what the texts represented rather than what the speaker intended, and contextual claims were checked against independent sources.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Linguistic features of the two speeches

The two speeches drew on different vocabularies. In the WOD speech, the largest semantic field was music industry and business (45 tokens, 21.7 per 1,000 words, compared with 1.8 in the NYU speech), including *private equity* [WOD-S71] and *catalog* [WOD-S74]. Female-marked words (*woman*, *women*, *female*, *girl*) occurred 20 times, compared with once in the NYU speech. The NYU speech drew on education and institutions (13.3 per 1,000 words) and on mistakes, loss and recovery (6.8), a semantic field absent from the WOD speech, as in *when we lose things, we gain things too* [NYU-S125].

First-person singular pronouns were the most frequent in both speeches (67.5 and 57.0 per 1,000 words), but the other pronouns differed. All 40 tokens of *we* in the WOD speech included the speaker in a group, referring either to women in music (13 tokens) or to people in the industry (27). In the NYU speech, *we* most often referred to people in general (25 of 43 tokens). The largest difference concerned *you*. It occurred 39.1 times per 1,000 words in the NYU speech, compared with 10.1 in the WOD speech. It was also the Subject of 25.0% of NYU clauses, compared with 2.6% of WOD clauses (log-likelihood = 47.1). Most of these 74 NYU clauses were material (41), as in *you go out into the world* [NYU-S34].

Relational clauses were the most frequent process type in both speeches (38.3% and 35.8%), followed by material clauses. Declarative clauses dominated both speeches (80.0% and 89.4% of free clauses). However, imperatives occurred 10 times in the NYU speech, compared with once in the WOD speech, as in *Decide what is yours to hold* [NYU-S48]. Modal items also occurred at almost the same

rate (30.9 and 31.9 per 1,000 words), but their types and values differed. Probability was the largest type in the NYU speech (47.2% of modal items, compared with 26.6% in the WOD speech), mainly through predictions with *will*, as in *We will recover* [NYU-S145]. High-value items made up 32.8% of WOD modal items, compared with 13.5% in the NYU speech. In the WOD speech, obligation was expressed mainly with *we* as Subject, as in *we have to work this hard* [WOD-S58].

The WOD speech relied more on the speaker's past and on other voices. Narrated episodes covered 29.2% of its sentences, compared with 16.4% in the NYU speech. Fourteen sentences presented simulated speech [WOD-S30–S43], thirteen of which formed an exchange with critics [WOD-S30-S42]; the NYU speech contained no simulated speech. The NYU speech used more contrast (7.5 compared with 4.3 instances per 1,000 words) and more figurative expressions (5.0 compared with 3.4), including *a patchwork quilt* [NYU-S8]. It also introduced its advice as *some life hacks* [NYU-S43]. Table 2 summarises selected linguistic features of the two speeches.

Table 2. *Main linguistic features of the two speeches*

Feature	WOD	NYU
Music industry and business (tokens per 1,000 words)	21.7	1.8
Education and institutions (tokens per 1,000 words)	0.0	13.3
Female-marked words (tokens)	20	1
You (tokens per 1,000 words)	10.1	39.1
You as Subject (% of clauses)	2.6	25.0
Probability (% of modal items)	26.6	47.2
High-value modality (% of modal items)	32.8	13.5
Narrated episodes (% of sentences)	29.2	16.4
Contrast (instances per 1,000 words)	4.3	7.5

4.1.2. Construction of identity and personal growth

In the WOD speech, the speaker's identity was constructed in dialogue with her critics. In the simulated exchange [WOD-S30-S42], the critics' charges were grammatically declarative but presented with question marks, several with *they* as Sayer, as in *They're saying I'm dating too much in my 20s?* [WOD-S30]. Each reply contained *Okay* and announced a change, as in *Okay, I'll stop, I'll just be single* [WOD-S31]. This repeated pattern represented a younger self who changed her conduct whenever the critics spoke. The speaker was also positioned as an advocate. Ten of the 13 obligation items had *we* as Subject, as in *we need to keep advocating for women* [WOD-S64], and she called herself *your resident loud person* [WOD-S70].

Growth in the WOD speech was represented as a change made in response to others. It began with a realisation expressed in *I saw something in me change* [WOD-S12], followed by a description of the self in relation to critics: *I became a mirror for my detractors* [WOD-S13]. In *Whatever they decided I couldn't do is exactly what I did* [WOD-S14], the critics were Sensers who made judgements, while the speaker was the Actor who did what they had ruled out. Her agency was therefore present but reactive. The contrast between *At that time I couldn't understand* [WOD-S22] and *And now I realize* [WOD-S24] placed the change in time, while the cycle of *accommodating, over-correcting* [WOD-S29] showed that it was not straightforward. The final stage introduced a new point of reference: *doing whatever the hell I want* [WOD-S110].

In the NYU speech, the speaker was positioned as a modest adviser. She accepted the role with a hedge, *I guess I have been officially solicited in this situation* [NYU-S38], denied her own authority, *I, in no way, feel qualified to tell you what to do* [NYU-S39], and presented her advice as *some life hacks* [NYU-S43]. Later imperatives, such as *Decide what is yours to hold* [NYU-S48], were framed by these disclaimers. Most modal items were of median value (57.3%). She also placed herself alongside the graduates by admitting that *I lose perspective all the time* [NYU-S118].

Growth in the NYU speech was represented as learning from setbacks. In six of the seven sentences in [NYU-S110-S116], a non-finite clause naming a painful experience functioned as the Subject of the first main clause, as in *Not being invited to the parties and sleepovers in my hometown made me feel hopelessly lonely* [NYU-S110]. In these clauses, the speaker typically appeared as *me*, the participant affected by the experience, as in *made me feel* [NYU-S110] and *made me cry* [NYU-S111]. The following clauses, often introduced by *but*, turned the experience into a lesson: the sentence beginning *Having the world treat my love life like a spectator sport* continues *but it taught me to protect my private life fiercely* [NYU-S114]. People associated with these experiences, such as *label executives* [NYU-S111] and *journalists* [NYU-S113], appeared within the non-finite clauses rather than as Subjects of the main clauses. The speaker was not only affected, however: in [NYU-S110], she responded to loneliness by acting, *I would sit in my room and write the songs*. Growth was then extended to the graduates through predictions: *We will recover. We will learn from it. We will grow more resilient because of it* [NYU-S145–S147]. As in the WOD speech, growth was not presented as straightforward, since the list of possible future mistakes ended with *rinse, repeat* [NYU-S122].

4.1.3. Ideologies and their realisation

Five ideologies were identified, each traced through a chain of evidence and considered alongside counter-evidence (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Ideologies in the two speeches and their chains of evidence*

Speech	Ideology	Main linguistic evidence	Context	Counter-evidence
WOD	Gender equality in the music industry	Female-marked words (20); *we* referring to women in music (13); obligation with *we* (10 of 13 items) [WOD-S64]; contrast with a male artist [WOD-S43-S45]	Women made up 2.1% of producers in popular songs, 2012-2018 (Smith et al., 2019)	Hardship presented as a source of strength [WOD-S62]
WOD	Ownership of creative work	Business vocabulary (45 tokens); *The music I wrote* [WOD-S79]; *real estate* [WOD-S71]	Sale of her masters in 2019 (Variety, 2019)	Positive view of technology [WOD-S66]
WOD	Success through individual perseverance	*keeps making art* [WOD-S47]; *we have to work this hard* [WOD-S58]	Gill (2007); Gill and Orgad (2018)	Collective advocacy [WOD-S64]
NYU	Individual responsibility	*You* as Subject (25.0%); imperatives (10); *It's totally up to you* [NYU-S91]	Commencement genre; Gill and Orgad (2018)	*Not a single one of us here today has done it alone* [NYU-S7]
NYU	Mistakes as a source of growth	Mistakes, loss and recovery (19 tokens); [NYU-S110-S116]; *We will* [NYU-S145-S147]	Gill and Orgad (2018)	Loss and doubt [NYU-S119, S123]

The two speeches realised their ideologies through some shared linguistic means. Both grounded them in personal narratives told with *I* as Subject, presenting ideological claims as lessons drawn from experience. Both also represented hardship as bringing about change, with the speaker or her group as the participant affected, as in *what didn't kill us actually did make us stronger* [WOD-S63] and *it forced me to devalue the ridiculous notion of … social relevance and likability* [NYU-S115]. Both, finally, qualified their emphasis on individual effort with a collective perspective, as in *we need to keep advocating for women* [WOD-S64] and *Not a single one of us here today has done it alone* [NYU-S7].

The speeches differed in the direction of their ideologies. The WOD ideologies were realised through the language of a group in conflict. Female-marked words and *we* referring to women in music identified those presented as subject to unfair treatment. Obligation and high-value modality turned the

description of unequal treatment into calls for action, and the buyer and investors in the sale of her catalogue were named [WOD-S74]. The NYU ideologies were realised through the language of general advice. *You* as Subject, imperatives and predictions addressed the graduates, while generic *you* (42 tokens) and *we* referring to people in general (25 tokens) presented the advice as broadly applicable. No individual opponent was named, and critics appeared as occupational or institutional groups, as in *older members of the music industry, the media, interviewers, executives* [NYU-S96]. The WOD speech thus challenged gender and ownership relations in the music industry, whereas the NYU speech drew more closely on the dominant discourse of resilience (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

4.2. Discussion

The findings partly support Swari and Winaya's (2023, p.5) interpretation of *we* in the WOD speech as expressing solidarity among women in the industry. In the present study, all 40 tokens of *we* included the speaker in a group, but most (27) referred to people in the music industry rather than specifically to women. This difference may be partly due to the scope of the analyses: Swari and Winaya examined eight extracts, whereas the present study coded the whole text. For the NYU speech, T. B. G. Nguyễn's (2024, pp.163, 166) interpretations of changing identity and mistakes as opportunities for growth, and Hu's (2022, p.55) reading of experience as a teacher, are consistent with the findings in Section 4.1.2. The present study adds a grammatical account of these passages. In several clauses, painful experiences are highlighted as Subjects, while the speaker is represented as a participant affected by them. It also relates this pattern to the resilience discourse described by Gill and Orgad (2018).

The comparative design also differs from that of Scarsi et al. (2025), who compared two speakers at the same institution. Keeping the speaker constant made it possible to examine how her discourse varied across two occasions, although the differences cannot be attributed to the occasion alone. Genre conventions offer one way to interpret these differences. Acceptance speeches often look back on the award recipient's journey and call on others in the industry to act (York-Williams et al., 2023, pp.315, 321), which is consistent with the retrospective framing and advocacy in the WOD speech. Commencement addresses typically acknowledge graduates, create identification, present the world and instil hope (Gault, 2008, p.vii), which is consistent with the modest adviser role and future-oriented predictions in the NYU speech. In Fairclough's (1992, p.91) terms, discursive practices may help sustain or restructure power relations. At the textual level, the WOD speech was more oriented towards challenging existing relations, while the NYU speech drew more closely on established discourses of individual responsibility and resilience. However, the speeches were delivered about two and a half years apart, so the influence of the occasion cannot be separated from that of time.

5. Conclusion

This study compared how Taylor Swift constructed identity and personal growth in two speeches. At the textual level, the WOD speech drew on the music business and female-marked words, and used *we*, obligation and high-value modality. The NYU speech drew on education and mistakes, and used *you* as Subject, imperatives and probability. In the WOD speech, the speaker defined herself in relation to her critics and as an advocate for women in music. Growth was represented as a shift from reacting to critics to acting on her own wishes. In the NYU speech, she spoke as a modest adviser, and growth was represented as learning from mistakes, a lesson then extended to the graduates. The WOD speech challenged gender and ownership relations in the music industry, while the NYU speech drew more closely on the discourse of resilience. Both, however, qualified their emphasis on individual effort with a collective perspective. These differences were consistent with the genre, audience and institutional setting of each occasion.

The study has two implications. First, the four questions about change (which processes represent it, who or what brings it about, who undergoes it and how it is placed in time) offer a grammatical approach to analysing personal growth within Fairclough's model. This approach could also be applied to interviews or memoirs. Second, the findings suggest that listeners could assess advice from public figures more critically by examining who or what is placed in the Subject position and how other

participants are represented. In the NYU speech, for instance, people associated with the speaker's difficulties appeared within non-finite clauses rather than as Subjects of the main clauses [NYU-S111, NYU-S113].

As a qualitative study of two transcripts delivered about two and a half years apart, this study does not aim to generalise beyond these texts, and the effects of occasion and time cannot be separated. The analysis also did not cover intonation, gestures or audience responses. In addition, although the coding followed written criteria, it involved interpretive judgement and was not checked by an independent second coder. Future research could compare more speeches by Swift within the same genres, compare speeches by different speakers on similar occasions, and examine how audiences, including Vietnamese audiences, interpret such speeches.

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Bản sắc và sự trưởng thành cá nhân trong hai bài phát biểu của Taylor Swift: Một nghiên cứu theo đường hướng Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán

Tóm tắt: Những câu chuyện về sự trưởng thành cá nhân xuất hiện phổ biến trong văn hóa đương đại. Bài viết so sánh cách Taylor Swift kiến tạo bản sắc và sự trưởng thành cá nhân trong bài phát biểu nhận giải Người phụ nữ của thập kỷ (2019) và diễn văn tốt nghiệp tại Đại học New York (2022). Toàn văn hai bài phát biểu (4.864 từ) được phân tích theo mô hình ba chiều của Fairclough, kết hợp với các công cụ của ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống. Bài phát biểu nhận giải định vị Swift trong mối quan hệ với những người chỉ trích và, thông qua các biểu thức tình thái nghĩa vụ với đại từ *we*, như một người vận động cho phụ nữ trong ngành âm nhạc. Bài phát biểu này thể hiện sự trưởng thành là quá trình chuyển từ phản ứng trước những lời chỉ trích sang hành động theo mong muốn của bản thân, đồng thời thách thức các quan hệ về giới và quyền sở hữu. Diễn văn tốt nghiệp định vị Swift là người đưa ra lời khuyên với thái độ khiêm nhường và hướng trực tiếp đến các sinh viên tốt nghiệp: đại từ *you* đảm nhiệm chức năng Chủ ngữ trong 25,0% số mệnh đề (2,6% ở bài phát biểu nhận giải). Diễn văn này thể hiện sự trưởng thành là việc học hỏi từ sai lầm, gần với diễn ngôn chi phối về tính kiên cường. Kết quả so sánh cho thấy cách một người nói thể hiện sự trưởng thành khác nhau theo thể loại và người nghe.

Từ khoá: Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán; Fairclough; bản sắc; sự trưởng thành cá nhân; Taylor Swift.