Analysis of Kim Namjoon's Speech Using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): "We Have Learned to Love Ourselves, so Now I Urge You to Speak Yourself"

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini menerapkan *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL) dengan fokus pada analisis transitivitas untuk mengkaji pidato Kim Namjoon di Majelis Umum Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa. Analisis ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana proses linguistik, seperti material, mental, dan relasional, digunakan untuk membangun tema identitas, cinta diri, dan pemberdayaan kolektif. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengkategorikan klausa berdasarkan proses, partisipan, dan keadaan untuk mengungkap makna ideasional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa proses material mendominasi pidato, menekankan tindakan dan dampaknya di dunia nyata, sementara proses mental dan relasional menambahkan kedalaman pada refleksi pribadi dan konstruksi identitas. Proses-proses ini secara efektif menghubungkan pengalaman individu pembicara dengan pesan global tentang pemberdayaan diri dan tanggung jawab sosial. Penelitian ini menyoroti kekuatan bahasa dalam membentuk wacana, memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana narasi pribadi dapat memengaruhi tindakan kolektif dan advokasi.

Kata kunci: *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Analisis Transitivitas, Kim Namjoon, Cinta Diri, Pemberdayaan Kolektif

Abstract: This study applies Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with a focus on transitivity analysis to examine Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations General Assembly. The analysis explores how linguistic processes such as material, mental, and relational are used to construct themes of identity, self-love, and collective empowerment. Using a qualitative approach, the study categorizes clauses based on processes, participants, and circumstances to uncover their ideational meaning. Findings reveal that material processes dominate the speech, emphasizing actions and their real-world impacts, while mental and relational processes add depth to personal reflection and identity construction. These processes effectively connect the speaker's individual experiences with global messages of self-empowerment and social responsibility. This study highlights the power of language in shaping discourse, providing insights into how personal narratives can influence collective action and advocacy.

Keywords: *Systemic Functional Linguistics, Transitivity Analysis, Kim Namjoon, Self-love, Collective Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), introduced by Halliday, provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing language as a social semiotic system (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). One of its core components, transitivity analysis, focuses on understanding how language encodes meaning through processes, participants, and circumstances within clauses. By examining these elements, transitivity analysis reveals the ways in which experiences, actions, and relationships are constructed in discourse,

making it a powerful tool for understanding the ideational function of language (Gee, 2014).

Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations General Assembly serves as a compelling case for transitivity analysis (Unicef, 2018). As the leader of BTS, a globally influential music group, Kim Namjoon uses language to convey themes of self-love, identity, and collective empowerment (Lee, Kim, & Park, 2020). His speech, particularly the iconic statement "We have learned to love ourselves, so now I urge you to 'speak yourself,'" reflects a blend of personal narrative and global advocacy (Simpson & Mayr, 2021). This combination makes it an ideal subject for exploring how linguistic choices shape meaning and impact audiences on an emotional and intellectual level (Anderson & Gale, 2021).

Through the lens of transitivity analysis, this study seeks to uncover how different linguistic processes are employed in the speech to emphasize concrete actions, personal reflection, and identity construction (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It aims to analyze the ways in which these processes connect individual experiences to broader social messages, highlighting the power of language in fostering advocacy and collective solidarity (Wang & Lau, 2022). By doing so, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how language functions as a tool for influencing thought, shaping identities, and driving social change.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyze Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations General Assembly using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with a focus on transitivity analysis. The qualitative design allows for an in-depth examination of how linguistic choices reflect ideational meanings, particularly in constructing themes of identity, self-love, and collective empowerment. The data source is the transcript of Kim Namjoon's speech, selected for its rich content and its emphasis on blending personal narratives with global advocacy, making it suitable for linguistic analysis.

The transitivity analysis breaks the speech into individual clauses, which are categorized based on three primary components. First, processes represent the types of actions or states described, categorized into material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes. Second, participants identify entities involved in the processes, such as actors, goals, sensers, carriers, and attributes. Third, circumstances provide contextual details, including time, place, manner, or condition, enriching the analysis by offering situational relevance to the discourse. This structured approach enables the study to uncover patterns in the speech that highlight the speaker's internal reflections, real-world actions, and social messaging.

To ensure validity and reliability, investigator triangulation was applied. Multiple reviewers, including peers and supervisors, assessed the categorization and interpretation of the clauses to reduce bias and ensure consistency. This rigorous process aligned with the principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the role of linguistic processes in shaping discourse. The analysis further connects the personal dimensions of the speech to its broader social and global

implications, providing insights into how language can drive both individual reflection and collective action.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The speech of Kim Namjoon at the United Nations General Assembly reflects a detailed interplay of verbal, relational, material, and mental processes, showcasing how linguistic choices serve to construct themes of gratitude, identity, and advocacy. Below is a concise interpretation of the clauses.

The opening clause, "Thank you, Mr. Secretary General, UNICEF Executive Director, Excellencies, and distinguished guests from across the world," reflects a verbal process conveying gratitude, setting a formal tone that establishes respect for the audience. Following this, "My name is Kim Nam Jun" and "I am also known as RM" employ relational processes, creating a connection between the speaker's personal and professional identities, thus grounding his credibility and relatability.

Through material processes like "Last November, BTS launched the 'Love Myself' campaign with UNICEF," the speaker emphasizes actionable commitment to advocacy, linking personal values to tangible global initiatives. Similarly, "The campaign is building on our belief that 'true love first begins with loving myself'" connects the theme of self-love with empowerment, illustrating the core advocacy message. Collaboration is highlighted in "We have been partnering with UNICEF's #ENDviolence program," showcasing a long-term commitment to social impact.

Mental processes such as "Looking back, that's when I began to worry about what other people thought of me" provide introspection, inviting audiences into the speaker's emotional journey. Relational processes, including "I was born in Ilsan, a city near Seoul, South Korea," and "I am the leader of the group BTS," reflect identity construction and situate the speaker's narrative within a broader social and cultural context.

The narrative also uses material processes to symbolize shifts in perspective, such as "I stopped looking up at the stars at night" and "I tried to jam myself into moulds that other people made," illustrating the tension between societal expectations and personal authenticity. These shifts are complemented by relational clauses like "We became like ghosts," metaphorically representing alienation, and "I had one sanctuary. That was music," which underscores the theme of refuge and self-expression.

In the later sections, mental processes such as "I have come to love myself for who I was, who I am, and who I hope to become" reinforce self-acceptance, while verbal processes like "So now I urge you to 'speak yourself'" actively encourage the audience towards self-expression and advocacy.

The analysis demonstrates how linguistic elements interweave to articulate a narrative of empowerment and collective responsibility. Material processes ground the advocacy in real-world actions, while mental and relational processes deepen the emotional and identity-based resonance of the message. This interplay effectively communicates universal themes of self-love, resilience, and social commitment, making the speech a compelling example of how language can inspire individual and collective transformation.

Discussion

The transitivity analysis of Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations General Assembly highlights how linguistic choices contribute to constructing themes of self-love, identity, and collective empowerment (Unicef, 2018). The speech prominently utilizes material processes, which emphasize tangible actions such as "launching the Love Myself campaign" and "partnering with UNICEF" (Lee, Kim, & Park, 2020). These actions signify a commitment to real-world advocacy, bridging abstract themes with practical initiatives. By employing material processes, the speech effectively connects personal and collective efforts, underscoring the role of concrete actions in achieving broader social goals (Anderson & Gale, 2021).

In addition to material processes, mental processes are employed to reflect the speaker's introspection and emotional growth. For instance, the clause "I began to worry about what others thought of me" reveals a moment of self-awareness influenced by external perceptions (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). These processes invite the audience into the speaker's internal journey, making the speech relatable and emotionally resonant. This introspection not only humanizes the speaker but also strengthens the impact of the message by linking personal vulnerabilities to universal experiences (Gee, 2014).

Relational processes are used to articulate identity and establish roles, as seen in statements such as "I am the leader of BTS" and "I have faults and fears" (Simpson & Mayr, 2021). These processes define the speaker's evolving sense of self, situating personal identity within a broader social context. By sharing both achievements and insecurities, the speaker demonstrates authenticity, fostering a deeper connection with the audience (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

Circumstances, such as time ("last November"), location ("in Ilsan"), and manner ("with enthusiasm"), provide essential contextual details that enrich the narrative. These elements ground the speech in specific realities, enabling the audience to visualize the actions and their impact (Chilton, 2004). By weaving together these circumstances with linguistic processes, the speaker creates a vivid and compelling discourse that resonates both intellectually and emotionally (Wang & Lau, 2022).

The interplay of linguistic elements in this speech reflects the dual focus on personal reflection and collective advocacy. Material processes connect individual efforts to larger social movements, while mental and relational processes emphasize self-awareness and identity construction (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). The combination of these processes ensures a balanced narrative, where personal stories inspire collective action.

This study demonstrates that transitivity analysis offers valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies used in public discourse (Gee, 2014). By analyzing processes, participants, and circumstances, it becomes evident how language can convey powerful messages that inspire action. Kim Namjoon's speech is a prime example of how linguistic choices can effectively communicate universal themes, bridging personal experiences with global advocacy (Unicef, 2018). Future research could expand on these findings by analyzing other public figures' speeches to explore how transitivity patterns vary across different contexts and audiences (Anderson & Gale, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study's transitivity analysis of Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations General Assembly reveals how linguistic choices effectively convey themes of self-love, identity, and collective empowerment. The predominance of material processes emphasizes tangible actions, such as launching campaigns and advocating for social responsibility, demonstrating the speaker's commitment to connecting abstract ideas with real-world outcomes. Mental processes highlight introspection and emotional growth, while relational processes articulate identity and establish roles, creating a balance between personal reflection and collective advocacy. These findings demonstrate the power of language in shaping public discourse and inspiring action. By combining personal narratives with global messages, the speech bridges individual experiences with collective goals, making its message resonate on both emotional and intellectual levels. This study underscores the value of transitivity analysis as a tool for understanding the rhetorical strategies used in impactful public speaking. Future research could expand on these findings by examining how transitivity patterns vary across different speakers and cultural contexts. Such research could provide further insights into the ways language influences identity construction, social cohesion, and advocacy on a global scale.

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