

BTS's Affirmation during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of 'Life Goes On' Music Video

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Abstract: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) requested people to avoid spaces that are closed, crowded, or involve close contact. Hence, the government of South Korea released a regulation that urge people to postpone or cancel any non-essential gatherings, dining out, events, or travel and limit outings to purchasing needs, seeing the doctor, and going to and from work. This government's policy caused the cancellation of BTS's Map of The Soul tour that is originally scheduled to start on April 2020. As BTS's response towards these unfortunate situations, they released Life Goes On along with its music video to deliver affirmation message. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of BTS's affirmation during COVID-19 pandemic in Life Goes On music video by using Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar and Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse in doing the visual and text-image relationship analysis. As the results, the following four aspects complement each other in representing and delivering the music video's key message: (1) Relatable activities; (2) Relatable settings; (3) Positioning; and (4) Composition. In addition, this study found that BTS do not only focus on visual attractiveness, but also showing togetherness.

Keywords: Affirmation, BTS, COVID-19 Pandemic, Music Video, Visual Grammar

Introduction

In recent years, there are a lot of people from generation Z (8-23 years old), millennial (24-39 years old), generation X (40-55 years old), even until baby boomer (56-74 years old) in many countries around the world have been attracted by the existence of Korean popular culture. As stated by Onishi (2005), this phenomenon is commonly called "Korean Wave," or they called it Hallyu in Korean. Jang & Paik (2012) argue that in terms of the recent rise in the standard of Korean cultural products such as television dramas, movies, a musical genre (K-pop) and dance (B-boys), video games, are mostly understood as Korean Wave. One of the most globally spread products of Korean Wave is K-pop. According to Tuk (2012), K-pop refers to a broad range of music styles in South Korea, including rock, ballads, and pop music. He explained that dance music, electronic music, electro pop, hip-hop, and R&B are the examples of this genre. It all refers to music created and sung in Korean by people of Korean origin. When we talk about "K-pop," it includes both K-pop music and idols (boy groups, girl groups, and solo artists) (Tuk, 2012; Russel, 2014).

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Among many of the globally well-known K-pop idol boy groups, there is a boy group named “BTS.” BTS or Bangtan Boys/Beyond The Scene is a boy group from South who debuted in 2013 under Big Hit Music/HYBE Labels (former name: Big Hit Entertainment). As stated in bbc.co.uk, this group consists of Kim Namjoon (RM), Kim Seokjin (Jin), Min Yoongi (SUGA), Jung Hoseok (J-Hope), Park Jimin (Jimin), Kim Taehyung (V), and Jeon Jeongguk (Jungkook) where the members involve in most of their production. Blady (2021) explained, BTS's message and content are creatively exploring vulnerability, self-compassion, lived experience, peer support, and the recovery journey from the members' points of view: originating in their personal and creative growth journey and organically emerging from it.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency of worldwide concern in December 2019 when a novel coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-CoV-2) developed in Wuhan, China. It has already caused a global pandemic and declared as the cause of public health emergency (Choi, 2020). On January 20, 2020, the first imported case of COVID-19 was confirmed in South Korea. Then, as of March 31, 2020, South Korea had reported a total of 9786 verified COVID-19 cases, including 162 fatalities, 5408 recovered persons released from isolation, and 4216 patients in hospitals or non-hospital facilities for isolation (Choi, 2020). As the government’s response and action toward that condition, on March 22nd, 2020, there was a press release uploaded on ncov.mohw.go.kr titled Stronger Social Distancing for 15 Days, Starting with the Government! as the main result of the Regular Briefing of Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters. For the public, the government urge them to postpone or cancel any non-essential gatherings, dining out, events, or travel and limit outings to purchasing needs, seeing the doctor, and going to and from work.

This government’s policy affected the scheduled activities of BTS, especially their announced concert tour schedule. As written on www.ibighit.com, the last concert of BTS is the Speak Yourself concert in Seoul, South Korea, on October 29th, 2019. Then on April 28th, 2020, Big Hit Music delivered an announcement on Weverse and Twitter about their decision to completely reschedule the entire BTS’s Map of The Soul tour that was initially scheduled to start on April 11th, 2020, without providing the exact new schedule. Therefore, due to this unpredictable decision that disappoints BTS and ARMY, in 2020 BTS returned with their new album called, “BE.” As a sense of helplessness pervades every part of the globe, in this album BTS expresses their conflicted thoughts about the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Among the eight tracks in this album, Life Goes On serves as the title track in which Jung Kook involved as the video director meanwhile RM, SUGA, and J-Hope involved as the songwriters. In the Global Press Conference for “BE” album that was aired through HYBE Labels YouTube channel, RM (2020) stated that they wanted to gently deliver words of comfort by conveying the somewhat obvious but unyielding truth about life that “Life goes on.” In other words, through Life Goes On, BTS delivered their affirmation message during COVID-19 pandemic to the viewers – especially their fans (ARMY).

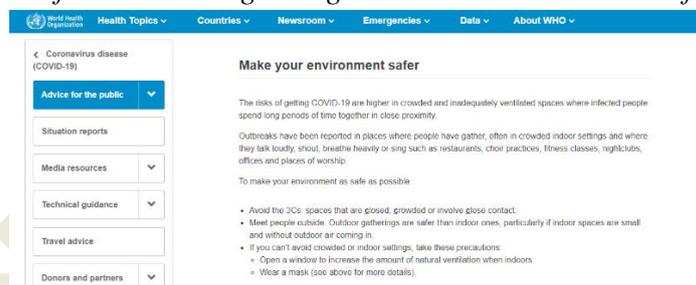
Literature Review

1. South Korea during COVID-19 Pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) pointed out that COVID-19 is more likely to spread in packed, poorly circulated places where infected persons spend long periods together in close quarters. Restaurants, choir rehearsals, fitness classes, nightclubs, businesses, and sites of worship have all reported outbreaks in locations where people gather, frequently in crowded indoor settings, and where they talk loudly, yell, breathe deeply, or sing. Hence, the WHO (www.who.int) gave a more detail guidance in creating a safer environment. The first is avoiding spaced that are closed, crowded, or involve close contact. Then, the WHO recommend us to meet people outside. It is stated that outdoor gatherings are safer than indoor ones. The last one is for the situation when we cannot avoid crowded and indoor places. There are two actions that we should take which are wear a mask and open a window to increase the amount of natural ventilation.

Figure 1

Advice for Public from WHO Regarding COVID-19 to Create a Safer Environment



Source: www.who.int (October 1st, 2021)

According to Choi (2020), on January 20, 2020, the first imported case of COVID-19 was confirmed in South Korea. Then, as of March 31, 2020, South Korea had reported a total of 9786 verified COVID-19 cases, including 162 fatalities, 5408 recovered persons released from isolation, and 4216 patients in hospitals or non-hospital facilities for isolation. As the government's response and action toward that condition, on March 22nd, 2020, there was a press release uploaded on ncov.mohw.go.kr titled Stronger Social Distancing for 15 Days, Starting with the Government! as the main result of the Regular Briefing of Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters. The government of South Korea delivered several points as their message to the public, employee and employer that request them to stay at home and avoid going out as much as possible for 15 days. For the public, the government urge them to postpone or cancel any non-essential gatherings, dining out, events, or travel and limit outings to purchasing needs, seeing the doctor, and going to and from work.

Figure 2
Stronger Social Distancing for 15 Days, Starting with the Government (Press Release - March 22nd, 2020)



Source: ncov.mohw.go.kr

Initially, it was assumed that the COVID-19 pandemic would solely affect China. It later spread over the world as a result of human mobility. Because people were advised to stay at home, there were various restrictions in place that impacted a variety of sectors. One of them is the restriction on public gatherings, which has an impact on the events and entertainment businesses (Horowitz, 2020; Ozily & Arun, 2020).

2. Korean Wave (Hallyu) Phenomenon

Korean Wave or Hallyu is a phenomenon that has been being recognized and perceived by many people around the world. Bok-rae (2015) tells us that Hallyu refers to the Korean popular culture movement that came into vogue in the late 1990s in Southeast Asia and mainland China. In particular, Hallyu is very popular in many countries, including China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the United States, and Japan, among individuals who enjoy Korean music (K-pop), dramas (K-drama), movies, fashion, food, and beauty, and many more. In East Asia, this cultural pattern has been closely related to multi-layered transnational revolutions involving people, information, and flows of capital. Jang & Paik (2012) argue that in terms of the recent rise in the standard of Korean cultural products such as television dramas, movies, a musical genre (K-pop) and dance (B-boys), video games, are mostly understood as Korean Wave. Even to a lesser extent towards Korean fashion, food, tourism, and language.

3. BTS and 'Map of The Soul' Tour Cancellation

BTS or Bangtan Boys is a boy group from South Korea that consists of seven members who began forming in 2010 under Big Hit Music/HYBE Labels (former name: Big Hit Entertainment) and debuted in 2013. Consisting of Kim Namjoon (RM), Kim Seokjin (Jin), Min Yoongi (SUGA), Jung Hoseok (J-Hope), Park Jimin (Jimin), Kim Taehyung (V), and Jeon Jeonguk (Jungkook), the members of BTS co-writes and co-produces most of their

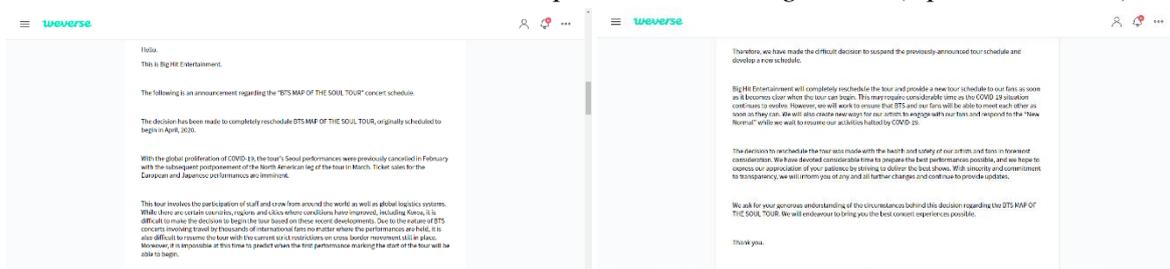
production. Their music was at first a hip-hop collective and has full-grown to incorporate a large type of genre. Usually centered on a personal and social statement, their songs bit on the topics of psychological state, school-age youth problems, loss, the search to like oneself, and individualism. Their work incorporates references to literature and psychological ideas and contains an alternate plotline of the universe. Several albums are free accessed through several social media and music platforms, and that they have gone through several world tours. According to Blady (2021), the employment of mental health messages by BTS is consistent and well-integrated across their whole discography. BTS's message and content are neither preachy nor abstract, instead creatively discovering vulnerability, self-compassion, life experiences, peer support, and the recovery process from the perspectives of the members: taking inspiration in and organically arising from their personal and creative growth journey. Furthermore, despite the language and cultural barrier, BTS and their fanbase (ARMY) relationship has resulted in more outstanding innovation as they expand their peer support community from seven people to millions of fans as they connect with fans who may be suffering from mental health issues and seek consolation in music that shares their points of view and pain while also giving a message of hope and resilience.

As mentioned earlier, the enhanced social distancing campaign in South Korea had been applied since the middle of March, 2020. This government's policy affected the scheduled activities of BTS, especially their announced concert tour schedule. As written on www.ibighit.com, the last concert of BTS is the Speak Yourself concert in Seoul, South Korea, on October 29th, 2019. Then on April 28th, 2020, Big Hit Music delivered an announcement on Weverse and Twitter about their decision to completely reschedule the entire BTS's Map of The Soul tour that was initially scheduled to start on April 11th, 2020, without providing the exact new schedule.

In the announcement, it is explained that staff and crew from all over the world, as well as worldwide logistical systems, are all involved in BTS's Map of The Soul tour. While there are certain nations, regions, and towns, such as Korea, where conditions have improved, it is impossible to decide whether to start the journey based on these recent improvements. With the present tight limitations on cross-border movement continuing in place, it will be impossible to restart the tour due to the nature of BTS concerts, which need thousands of worldwide fans to travel regardless of where the performances are conducted. As a result, Big Hit Music have made the tough decision to put the previously planned tour itinerary on hold while they work on a new one. As soon as it is apparent when the tour can begin, Big Hit Entertainment will entirely rearrange it and present a fresh tour itinerary to BTS fans around the world.

Figure 3

BTS MAP OF THE SOUL TOUR Complete Rescheduling Notice (April 28th, 2020)



Source: weverse.io

4. *BTS's 'Life Goes On' Music Video*

As stated in ibighit.com, in 2020 BTS returned with their new album “BE” to start a new chapter in the year. As a sense of helplessness pervades every part of the globe, BTS expresses their conflicted thoughts about the COVID-19 pandemic situation – fear and concern blended with a desire to overcome it all. There are eight songs on the album, including the No. 1 summer smash, “Dynamite” and the lead single “Life Goes On.” The latter speaks for everyone trapped in COVID-19’s new normal: one day, the world came to a halt without warning, streets were devoid of footprints, and there was no way out in sight. BTS repeats in a low voice the reassuring message that “Life Goes On” in the midst of adversity and stretches their hands towards the future.

Life Goes On was released on November 20th, 2020, along with its music video, through several online platforms such as YouTube, V Live, Weverse (The official fan community platform created by HYBE Corporation, the entertainment company that houses BTS), and many other music streaming platforms. Interestingly, in the making of the music video, Jung Kook (the youngest member of BTS) involved as both an artist and a director. By now, Life Goes On music video has reached more than 380 million views on HYBE Labels YouTube channel. One of this music video’s greatest achievements is reaching the first rank on Billboard Hot 100 chart.

In Life Goes On music video also the whole concept of “BE” album, J-hope (2020) explained in the Global Press Conference for “BE” album that BTS would like expose themselves as normal young men in their 20s and not the glamorous side as idols or performers. The music video concept is mainly showing how does the daily routine of BTS like, especially in the middle of COVID-19 pandemic when many of their schedules are cancelled. In the music video, BTS also showed their efforts to overcome the situation and stay ‘alive’. Other than that, the feeling of sadness and longing to do what they used to do such as doing outdoor activities with no obligation to wear mask and doing offline concerts, are also expressed in this music video. In the Weverse Magazine, Myungseok Kang (2020a) stated that Life Goes On allows those people who are not sure whether they should stay hopeful or give up on hope and to feel the feeling of ‘go with the flow’ when they do not know what to feel.

5. *Affirmation*

After knowing the message and intention that BTS wants to deliver through Life Goes On, it can be said that BTS wants to deliver an affirmation to their fans (ARMY) and all people around the world. According to Oxford Languages, the word “Affirmation” refers to “emotional support or encouragement.” Tanti (2021) stated that an affirmation is generally a phrase, a sentence of powerful words strung together in the form of a positive statement, and this sentence is meant to motivate, challenge, and push people to realize their greatest potential in life. Furthermore, Radhakrishnan and Allarakha (2021) also argued that positive affirmations are positive words or remarks that are intended to challenge and eradicate negative or unhelpful beliefs. They stated that positive affirmations may be quite simple to use. It primarily entails choosing a phrase and continually repeating it to oneself.

COVID-19 pandemic does not only affect people physically but also psychologically. COVID-19 pandemic situation causes people to experience fear, anxiety, and uncertainty because of isolation (Usher et al., 2020; Rubin & Wessely, 2020). Therefore, mental health wellbeing is also an important thing that people need to take care of. As mentioned previously, Blady (2021) explained that mental health is the focus of BTS’s creativity outputs. Hence, in this case, BTS use their work identity and globally influential power to take part in mental health management action by delivering affirmation for their global fans through Life Goes On.

6. *Social Semiotics*

The sign was formerly thought to be the most fundamental idea in semiotics. A signifier – an observable form such as a specific facial expression or a certain color – and a signified – a meaning such as disapproval or danger – were considered to constitute the union of a signifier and a signified. One of the most well-known definitions of semiotics was proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1974/1916, p.16) stated that semiotics is ‘A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable ... I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion, “sign”).’ (Leeuwen, 2005; Kress, 2009). According to O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2012, as cited in Perdana, 2020), signs are considered to serve as the foundation of communication systems in semiotics. Road signs, traffic lights, symbol hand gestures, images, and other forms of media may all be analyzed using semiotics. Gualberto and Kress (2019) also explained that texts are viewed as multimodal complexes in social semiotics, indicating they are made up of several modes. Gesture, writing, speech, dance, music, and layout are all examples of modes, which are the material resources used to convey meaning.

7. *Visual Grammar*

Because the focus of this study is the visual features of a music video that made up of numerous signs, it is important to point out where the visual text accomplishes three semiotic functions in order to establish meaning. Based on the theory of Visual Grammar introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (Cople, 2013), the three metafunctions includes Representational, Interactional, and Compositional. Cople (2013) explained and illustrated Kress and Leeuwen’s three-metafunctional approach to image analysis by making specific reference to the realization of these functions in the work of press photographers. Furthermore, the Visual

Grammar is also can be used in doing a visual analysis of video such as promotional video and music video (Yao & Zhuo, 2018; Margaretha & Panjaitan, 2020).

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (as cited in Caple, 2013, p.58), representation or representational metafunction refers to the represented visual representation of informational facts regarding a particular state of affairs. Kress and Leeuwen (2006, p.79) divided the types of representation into two which are “Narrative Representations” with the role of designing social actions and “Conceptual Representations” with the role of designing social constructs. Next, the Interactional metafunction refers to the engagement within the image (between the represented participants displayed in the image), through the image (between the image producer and the viewer), and between the represented participants in the image and the audience or viewer that are identified through Contact, Affect, Social Distance, Involvement, and Status (Caple, 2013, pp.58 & 69). Last, the Compositional metafunction refers to the way the representational and interactive parts are constructed to interact with one another, and how they are combined into a coherent whole. In this metafunction, Caple (2013, p.80) explained that there are three simultaneous systems that rules the analysis of compositional meaning which are Information Value, Salience, and Framing.

Methodology

This study used qualitative study method – specifically textual analysis. Smith (2017) explained textual analysis is a type of research used by researchers to analyze texts as they appear in various mediums. The data in this method can be generated from documents, films, newspapers, paintings, web pages, and other sources. These data types serve as the "texts" under research, and they are utilized to assess the meanings, values, and messages sent through them. The focus of this study is to ascertain the message behind BTS Life Goes On music video. Hence, we used Interpretivism paradigm. According to Daymond and Holloway (2010), interpretivism emerged as a revolutionary paradigm that sought to separate the social sciences from the scientific sciences in order to construct a new approach to the world and knowledge.

In this study, we used documentation data collection method since music video is this study’s unit of analysis. Documentation is the data collection technique that involves documents such as written texts, photographs, diagrams, voice, and video recording (Flick, 2018). During the data collection procedure, we employed purposive sampling to identify the most important and relevant frames to answer the research questions (Weintraub, 2009, as cited in Perdana, 2020, p.15). This sampling method is used to find the appropriate balance between taking too few and too many samples, as well as to select the most relevant samples to answer this study’s research questions.

We accessed the music video on YouTube where they provided English subtitle as the translation of the song lyrics. The data collection procedure was done in five steps. First is watching the Life Goes On music video on HYBE Labels YouTube channel. Second is manually selecting several frames that fulfill the following inclusion criteria: (1) Showing BTS member(s); (2) Showing the emotions, activities, and settings that are related to COVID-19 pandemic situation; (3) Showing BTS members as men in their 20s and as idols; and (4) Accompanied by the song lyrics. Third is creating the transcription of the lyrics – in English

translation – that are shown along with the selected frames. The last is collecting references from other academics and related publications from the internet's e-library and lastly collecting all data.

In analyzing the data, we used Kress & Leeuwen's visual grammar for the visual analysis by identifying the visual elements based on the three-metafunction (Representational, Interactional, and Compositional). Furthermore, we also did text-image relationship analysis using Fairclough's (1992, 2015) three-dimensional conception of discourse (describe, interpret, and explain) to understand how each selected frame and the accompanying song lyric relate to each other. This analysis was also done to understand the relevance between the visual and verbal text that are shown in BTS Life Goes On music video by finding out the role of each frame and lyric in representing the song's key message.

Findings & Discussion

Figure 4

BTS 'Life Goes On' Music Video (1.32)



Figure 4. Life Goes On Music Video (1.32)

Elements in the Representational Metafunction

This frame displays the same represented participants and setting as the previous frames (Figure 4). However, this frame is more highlights the reactional processes that occur. BTS serves as the Reacters in these frames, and their gazes and postures serve as the Vectors. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, p.67) argued that Reactional processes occur when the vector is created by an eyeline, the direction of one or more of the depicted participants' gazes. Even though the Phenomenon is unrecognizable in this frame, we can see that there is a light reflection through its reflection on BTS members and the shadows shown at the back. It gives a little clue that can direct viewers' imagination guessing what they are watching or looking at. However, the next frame (Figure 7) drives the viewer to understand that BTS members are watching a video that recorded the moments before the COVID-19 pandemic when they can freely and happily do outside activities. The setting in this frame is recognizable that BTS members are in a living room that can be seen from the sofa and the size of the room (Caple, 2013, p.68)

Elements in the Interactional Metafunction

In Figure 4 there is no eye contact within the frame nor between the represented participants and the viewer. Their gazes are directed in the same direction and slightly upward which in terms of contact, they are considered as offering information or messages to the viewers (Caple, 2013, p.70). In terms of social distance within the represented participants in

the frame, the BTS members sit close to each other and it creates imaginary personal or intimate relationship between the represented participants (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006, p.149; Caple, 2013, p.70). Meanwhile, this image uses a full shot that creates an impersonal relationship between the represented participants and the viewer (Caple 2013). Through the eye-level angle, the Attitude shown by the BTS members in this frame is subjectivity that indicates involvement and equality between the represented participants and the viewers (Caple, 2013, pp.70 & 73). Additionally, the BTS members' facial expressions in this frame is considered as showing neutral emotions "where the facial muscles would generally be most relaxed, and the lips and eyebrows would be in a neutral position" (Martin and Rose, 2007, p.29; Martin and White, 2005; Bednarek, 2008; Caple, 2013, p.75).

Elements in the Compositional Metafunction

The BTS members are placed on the center of the frame and they are foregrounding. According to Caple (2013, p.81), the represented participants are displayed in somewhat salient since the elements on the setting can be seen clearly. In terms of color, there is no contrast color differences between BTS members and the setting. However, in in terms of size, BTS members take the most part of the frame. Since the background is not blurred, the BTS members and the setting are almost on the same level in the hierarchy of importance so that the viewers can draw their attention not only to BTS but also to the setting (Caple, 2013)

Text-Image Relationship Analysis

In Figure 4, the lyrics say, "Like an echo in the forest. The day will come back around." According to Machin & Mayr (2012, p.110), this sentence includes relational processes in giving a state for the day that will come back around by relating it to an "echo." According to Morin (2020), the analogy is used to label the COVID-19 pandemic as "a storm we will all weather as time soldiers on." However, this frame shows how BTS are reminiscing the moments they had before the COVID-19 pandemic that they hope to happen again. The visual and lyrics have a role in delivering comfort to the audience by showing that even though they have done many activities that make them happy during the day, they are still missing those normal days that they used to have. BTS wants the viewer, especially their fans, to involve in the same feeling as they have (Caple, 2013, pp.70 & 73). Then through the lyrics, BTS wants their fans to stay hopeful that everything will come back normal again.

Figure 5

BTS 'Life Goes On' Music Video (1.53)



Figure 5. Life Goes On Music Video (1.53)

Elements in the Representational Metafunction

In Figure 5, all BTS members are displayed, and the reactional processes occur. The five members (SUGA, V, Jung Kook, Jimin, and Jin) are sitting while J-hope and RM are standing. Since it displays reactional processes, BTS serves as Reacters, and the Phenomenon is diverse since their gaze (Vector) looks at different ways. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, p.67) argued that Reactional processes occur when the vector is created by the direction of one or more of the depicted participants' gazes. They also explained that the Phenomenon of reactional processes could be both depicted and not depicted in the images. According to (Caple, 2013, p.68), the setting in this frame is considered recognizable in outdoor setting since the sky is shown in this frame and there is a stretch of grass. Choi (2020), on her Twitter account (@choi_bts2), stated that the setting took place in a villa named Casanoir in Yangpyeong-gun, South Korea.

Elements in the Interactional Metafunction

Even though the members sitting position are facing the viewer, no eye contact occurs between the represented participants and the viewer. Hence, the represented participants in this frame are considered as offering information to the viewer (Caple, 2013, p.70). However, an eye-contact occurs within the frame since some of the members are looking at each other, which creates an engagement within the represented participants. This frame is captured in a full shot which makes BTS members fully shown and the setting recognizable. The BTS members are sitting and standing close to each other that creates a personal and intimate relationship of BTS as a group (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006, p.149; Caple, 2013, p.70). BTS members as the represented participants are captured using a low angle – the photographer is looking up towards the subject – indicating the represented participants as more powerful than the viewer (Caple, 2013, pp.70 & 73), but it still showing involvement. Additionally, in this frame, BTS members show positive emotions through their facial affect (Martin and Rose, 2007, p.29; Martin and White, 2005; Bednarek, 2008; Caple, 2013, p.74).

Elements in the Compositional Metafunction

The BTS members are placed on the center of the frame, and they are foregrounded. According to Caple (2013, p.81), the represented participants in this frame are displayed in somewhat salient since the elements on the setting can be seen clearly. There are color differences between BTS members' outfits and the setting that is dominated by sky view. In terms of size, BTS members take the most of the frame and the background is not blurred. It indicates BTS members and the setting are almost equally important so that the viewer can draw their attention to BTS and the setting (Caple, 2013). Unlike the other frames, this frame uses a vintage style of images to give a nostalgic mood (Niemeyer, 2014).

Text-Image Relationship Analysis

In Figure 5, the lyrics say, “*Yeah life goes on like this again.*” This sentence represents BTS’s belief and hopes that the normal days will be back again like they used to be. Aikhenvald (2016) explained, this sentence can be classified as a statement that consists of

a declarative mood. This lyric also includes the personification that is given to “life,” and it indicates its ability to change by labeling it with “goes on” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.171). They use an undoubted and well-known statement about the truth of life that keeps moving forward no matter what we are facing right now. They also emphasized their certainty and conformity about this fact through the use of “yeah” (Lee, 2015). The frame that is accompanied by this lyric serves in offering what kind of “life” that they want, which is the situation when there is no restriction that urges people to wear masks while doing outside activities (Caple, 2013, p.70).

Figure 6

BTS ‘Life Goes On’ Music Video (1.58 & 2.06)



Figure 6.1. Life Goes On Music Video (1.58) Figure 6.2. Life Goes On Music Video (2.06)

Elements in the Representational Metafunction

In these frames, SUGA serves as the interactive participant since he is the one who conveys the song lyrics while the other members serve as the represented participants (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, p.48). While there are only four members fully shown in the frame (SUGA blocks Jung Kook) in Figure 6.1, in Figure 6.2 all BTS members are shown. In these frames, both non-transactional Action processes and Reactional processes occur (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, pp.67 & 74). In Figure 6.2, the setting is recognizable that it is in a bedroom.

Elements in the Interactional Metafunction

SUGA, as an interactive participant, makes an eye-contact with the viewer by looking at the camera lens while he is singing. According to the Contact system, SUGA is considered demanding something from the viewer (Caple, 2013, p.70). Also, in Figure 6.2, RM makes eye contact with the viewer that indicates a demand while the other members make no eye contact within and through the frame. Hence, they are considered as offering information to the viewer (Caple, 2013, p.70). The type of shot used to display SUGA in Figure 6.1 is a medium close-up that creates an imaginary personal/intimate relationship between the participants and the viewer (Caple, 2013, p.71). Meanwhile, in Figure 6.2, all of the BTS members are captured in a full shot, which makes the setting also exposed and it creates an impersonal relationship between the represented participants and the viewer (Caple, 2013). The eye-level angle is used in these frames to represent an equal power relation between BTS members and the viewer. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2006 as cited from Caple 2013, p.70), the attitude shown by SUGA in these frames is subjectivity that indicates involvement because their face and gaze are directed to the camera lens (Caple, 2013, pp.70

& 73). Meanwhile, the attitude shown by the other BTS members is subjectivity that indicates detachment.

Elements in the Compositional Metafunction

Compositionally, in Figure 6.1, SUGA draws more attention than the other members behind him. He is at the center of the frame and the camera focuses on him while the other members behind him are blurred. He also takes a bigger part of the frame rather than the other BTS members. Meanwhile in Figure 6.2, SUGA is still at the center of the frame even though, in terms of size, he no longer takes most of the frame since SUGA and J-hope (on the right front) are depicted in the same size. So, it can be said that in Figure 6.2, SUGA and J-hope are slightly more salient rather than the other member that drives the viewer's attention to the message they want to deliver.

Text-Image Relationship Analysis

In Figure 6.1 & 6.2, the lyrics say, *“Let me tell you with this song. People say the world has changed. But thankfully between you and me nothing's changed.”* This line consists of verbal processes in transitivity that expose SUGA as the Sayer in delivering BTS affirmation message to the viewer (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp.109-110). Here, SUGA is represented as the most powerful participant since this lyric is the Rap part of the song, and he is one of group's rappers. Connected to the reactional meaning created by the frame (Figure 6.1), the use of “me” indicates that SUGA has a role as the BTS representative to deliver the message. In Figure 6.2, the distance is created to tell the viewers that “me” refers to BTS as a whole since the third sentence of this lyric in the original version (in Korean) uses the word “우리” (Uri) as the subject that can be both defined as “me (in polite way)” and “we.” Through the word “사이” (Sai) in the original lyrics that means “relationship,” BTS want to give an assurance to the viewer, especially ARMY, that even though the world keeps changing, the relationship between BTS and ARMY is not affected.

Figure 7

BTS 'Life Goes On' Music Video (2.32 & 2.42)



Figure 7.1. Life Goes On Music Video (2.32) Figure 7.2. Life Goes On Music Video (2.42)

Elements in the Representational Metafunction

In this frame (Figure 7.1), all of the BTS members are depicted, but six of them are asleep, and only Jin awakes. Here, Jin has a role as an interactive participant since he is speaking (in this case, singing the song) while looking at the audience. Kress and Leeuwen (2006, p.48) defined interactive participants as the participants in the act of communication

who speak and listen or write and read, make images or view them. Meanwhile, the rest of the BTS members serve as the represented participants and sleep behind Jin. They are wearing the pajamas that are shown in the first and third entries. In Figure 7.1, the setting displayed is recognizable that they are in the living room (Caple, 2013). Followed by another frame (Figure 7.2), Jin is the only person depicted as the interactive participant, and the six members, including the setting, are no longer shown.

Elements in the Interactional Metafunction

In Figure 7.1 & 7.2, Jin is singing while facing and making eye-contact with the viewer. Hence, in terms of Contact, Jin as the interactive participant in this frame, is considered as demanding something from the viewer (Caple, 2013, p.70). Figure 7.1 uses a medium shot that creates a social relationship between the participants and the viewer (Caple, 2013). Meanwhile, in Figure 7.2, a closer look of Jin is displayed through the big close-up that creates an imaginary personal or intimate relationship between the participants and the viewer (Caple, 2013). The Attitude shown by Jin in this frame is subjectivity that indicates involvement while other BTS members show subjectivity that indicates detachment (Caple, 2013; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Additionally, these frames use eye-level angle that represent an equal power relation between BTS members and the viewer.

Elements in the Compositional Metafunction

In these frames, Jin serves as the interactive participant and is foregrounded to draw the viewer's attention more than the other asleep members. According to Caple (2013), in Figure 7.1, the representation of Jin still can be considered as salient even though there are other BTS members and the setting still can be seen. Meanwhile, in Figure 7.2, the background is blurred so the viewer can fully pay attention to Jin who dominates the frame. These compositional factors make Jin is considered as more important than the other represented participants (Caple, 2013, p.82).

Text-Image Relationship Analysis

In Figure 7.1 & 7.2, the lyrics say, "*Close your eyes for a moment. Hold my hand. To that future, let us run away.*" This lyric uses imperative sentence type to invite and request the viewer to do something (Aikhenvald, 2016). It is related to how Jin is visually represented in Figures 7.1 & 7.2 that indicates demand and involvement (Caple, 2013). Here, Jin serves as the interactive participants in inviting and requesting the audience to reminisce the offline concert where BTS and ARMY can meet and enjoy the unforgettable experience together like they used to do.

Figure 8

BTS 'Life Goes On' Music Video (3.03)



Figure 8. Life Goes On Music Video (3.03)

Elements in the Representational Metafunction

In Figure 8, the BTS members are shown wearing their performance costumes, all in white. In this frame, the Action processes occur since all of the BTS members hold a mic and sing while sitting next to each other in “U” formation (Cagle 2013, p.61). The setting is also different from the previous frames. In Figure 8, it is recognizable that they are in an empty arena with lightings and tribune seats with no audiences behind them. Interestingly, there is an official light stick of BTS fans (ARMY) called “ARMY Bomb” placed on each seat. ARMY usually carry it to cheer and to support BTS while performing (C. Hong, 2020).

Elements in the Interactional Metafunction

In Figure 8, there is no eye contact occurs within and between the represented participants and the viewer. Some of them close their eyes since they are immersed in the song, and some are looking somewhere else. Hence, in terms of Contact, the represented participants in this frame are considered as offering information or messages to the viewer (Cagle, 2013, p.70). BTS members sit close to each other and it creates a personal/intimate relationship of BTS as a group (Cagle 2013). Meanwhile, this frame uses medium-full shot that drives the viewer to pay attention both to BTS and the setting. It also creates an impersonal relationship between the represented participants and the viewer (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006, p.149; Cagle, 2013, p.70). This image uses an eye-level angle that indicates involvement and equal power relation between the represented participants and the viewer (Cagle 2013).

Elements in the Compositional Metafunction

All of the BTS members draw the viewer’s attention in this frame and this frame is presented in black and white. The BTS members are at the center of the frame in their white costumes, which contrasts the color difference to the setting. Here, BTS members are represented salient (Cagle, 2013, p.81). However, it cannot be denied that the lights on the audience seats also catch the viewer’s attention that makes both BTS members and the lights behind them are equally important. In terms of size, BTS members and the lights on the audience seats behind them take almost a half part of the frame that draws the viewer’s attention to BTS and the light behind them as the essential elements to focus on (Cagle, 2013).

Text-Image Relationship Analysis

In Figure 8, the lyrics say, “*Like an echo in the forest, the day will come back around.*” Machin & Mayr (2012, p.110) explained, this sentence includes relational processes in giving a state for the day that will come back around by relating it to an “echo.” According to Morin (2020), the analogy is used to label the COVID-19 pandemic as “a storm we will all weather as time soldiers on.” To offer a clearer picture of what kind of “day” that BTS are longing to happen again, the frame serves in visualizing the moment of togetherness between BTS and ARMY that they miss the most, which is the offline concert (Caple, 2013, p.70). The monochrome color is used to create a nostalgic vibe of the situation that both BTS and ARMY are longing for (Greenleaf, 2011). Additionally, the presence of ARMY in this frame is represented by the official light sticks of BTS fans arranged on the audience seats.

After doing the previous analysis, we categorized the findings into five categories. There are relatable activities, relatable settings, positioning, composition, and key message. The first four categories are driven from the three-metafunctions in Visual Grammar and then the “Key message” section includes what BTS want to deliver to the viewers, especially ARMY. The major findings of this study are further explained on the table below.

Table 1

The Representation of BTS’s Life and Affirmation Message during COVID-19 Pandemic in “Life Goes On” Music Video

Category	Details
Relatable Activities	Playing games at home, sleeping on the sofa, singing, and reminiscing pre-pandemic positive memories.
Relatable Settings	Bedroom, living room, outside a villa, and an empty arena with BTS’s fans official light sticks (ARMY Bombs) arranged in the shape of an audience.
Positioning	Idols are also humans, creating social and personal relationships, involving the viewers as the observers of BTS’s emotions and the receiver of BTS’s affirmation message, and BTS and ARMY are in the same situation.
Composition	Focusing on BTS situation, emotion, and efforts also mostly showing togetherness that indicates the key message of Life Goes comes from all of BTS members

Key Message

BTS's life is also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic situation and it is not easy to deal with it. BTS and ARMY may be apart but our relationship remains the same. So, let's remember and stay hopeful that this too shall pass because life goes on.

Conclusions & Recommendations

In conclusion, *Life Goes On* music video represents BTS's affirmation during the COVID-19 pandemic through the following aspects: (1) The activities that BTS do as their efforts in facing the COVID-19 pandemic and the activities that they used to do as idols; (2) The places that represent the situation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) Position BTS as ordinary young men in their 20s and as idols. Also, it positions the viewers as the observers of BTS's emotions and the receiver of BTS's affirmation message; and (4) Focus on showing BTS's situation, emotion, and efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it focuses on showing togetherness. These four aspects complement each other in representing and delivering the key message.

This study has several limitations. First, this study does not include the audio analysis. Second, this study used the English translation lyrics in doing the text-image relationship analysis. Third, this study only focused on the frames that depicts BTS as the interactive and represented participants. Fourth, the data of this study are taken from internet. Therefore, I, as the researcher of this study, recommend other researchers to do deeper research that is supported by various references to enrich the results' detail and accuracy. Lastly, even though this study has limitations, I believe that this study is beneficial in informing the Public Relations students, practitioners, and related parties regarding how to deconstruct the underlying meanings hidden in multimodal discourse – lyrics and visuals – that complement each other by using social semiotic analysis. Also, this study can inform the readers regarding several important aspects that needs to be considered in conveying public figures' affirmation during COVID-19 pandemic or other similar situations.

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