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Getting Better: A Systematic Functional Interpretation of Grief Through a Song

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Abstract

This article presents an analysis of the song *Get Better* by British band Alt-J. The song was written amid the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. It mainly represents grief after the loss of a beloved person from the perspective of the bereaved. The analysis was conducted using the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework by Halliday with an emphasis on the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The findings of the analysis determined that the song depicted a few of the occurrences that some people unfortunately had to experience after unforeseeable death of a loved one and how they managed to overcome grief.

Keywords: bereavement, grief, systemic functional linguistics.

1. Introduction

After two years of pandemic, it was hard to hear that so many people had died from the COVID-19. Globally, the death toll amounts to 6,296,771 passings (World Health Organization, n.d.). During this time of isolation and lockdowns, millions of people around the world were suddenly connected through the experience of bereavement. The band Alt-J used their art form to create a song based on this occurrence. Thus, this article has the purpose to understand how an omnipresent and eminent occurrence is reflected through art. The motivation of this analysis stems from my own curiosity to learn more about the topics of grief or loss and they ways in which they are depicted through art. The objective of the study is guided by the following research question:

RQ: How does the song *Get Better* portraits the reality of loss and bereavement during pandemic times?

The article offers information about the band Alt-J and the inspiration for writing the song. The literature review provides an overview of the concepts of grief and how it is linked with art. The methodology section includes the definition for the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

framework by Halliday as well as the metafunctions commonly related with the same framework of analysis. Finally, the analysis of the song is presented.

- The song uses mainly existential references throughout the song to represent (1) the connection between the bereaved and the deceased, (2) to allude to the presence of the beloved departed in the present, past, and future time.
- Although the song was said to be fictional, it illustrates ways in which people coped with the quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Song writing was an outlet of inspiration to depict a very sensitive yet omnipresent topic, grief.

2. Context

2.1 *The Band*

Alt-J (also stylized as Δ) is a British band from Leeds formed in 2008. It was in 2012 that they became a global sensation with their award-winning Mercury Prize album *An Awesome Wave* (Monger, n.d.). Currently, the band is comprised by singer, guitarist, and lyricist Joe Newman; keyboardist and vocalist Gus Unger-Hamilton; and drummer Thom Green. After their acclaimed first album, on 2014, Alt-J launched their sophomore album, *This is All Yours*, which was critically well-received and earned them their first Grammy nomination (*Ibid.*).

In addition, in 2017, the trio released their third album, *Relaxer*. Although it was not as successful as their previous works, the album received a Mercury Prize nomination (Monger, n.d.). Lastly, the band issued their latest album, *The Dream*, in February 2022. Something that distinguishes this album from the others is its “unexplored emotional space, showcasing warmth and humanity” (Morgan, n.d., para. 5) on their songs’ lyrics. This means that the band had not written such personal of feelings-drenched songs on their previous albums. These special characteristics are particularly shown on the track *Get Better*, which has been chosen for analysis in this paper.

2.2 *The song*

Get better is probably one of the most personal songs ever produced by the band. The song is loosely based on true events that happened during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 where a significant number of people died while others were left to mourn. It also depicts some of the coping mechanisms some people lived while quarantining. These ideas can be supported by what Joe Newman, lyricist of the band, had to say about it:

“[Get better] is the union of two songs. The first an improvised song from 2018 I sang to my partner who was suffering from period pain. The second was a chord structure I worked on in lockdown that focused on someone living through a bereavement. The context of the pandemic lent my words a chilling weight and gave me a new sense of responsibility as a lyricist. Whilst the direct events described are fictional, I believe – or I hope – that it’s emotionally the most honest song I’ve written”. – Joe (Δ (alt-J), 2021).

The merge of both songs described by the lyricist may have turned it into one of their most memorable songs. This might be due to how close to reality the song is. However, this is not the first time Alt-J has written songs based on true events. For example, *Taro* is one of the best examples of this. This song talks about the reimagined lives and true experiences of photographers Gerard Taro and Robert Capa (The Sherp, 2016). Nonetheless, there is still something remarkable about the song *Get Better* which makes it special.

Such distinction could be stated by mentioning that there is something primal about it which makes it resonate with their audience. Although the song depicts certain reality to what the world lived through in the times of pandemic, Joe Newman, on an interview for KVNA FM (2022) states that the song depicts coping with bereavement and going through the loss of the closest person in someone's life. In that same interview, Newman mentions that going through those feelings is something we all experience (KVNA FM, 2022). This last reflection about the creation of the song may be what makes it the most relatable and personable to the listener.

Although the lyricist mentioned that the events represented in the song are fictional, there is still some reality in them. He stated that the song talks about coping mechanisms and was roughly inspired in the pandemic. Raj and Bajaj (2021) reveal that young working adults adopted coping mechanisms to fight mental health through lockdown. Some of those methods included engaging in a pleasurable activity, for example: doing yoga, reading, self-care, among others. This may be another aspect about the song which makes it relatable.

3. Literature review

According to Fuchs (2021), grief is defined as the loss of a person and to how to cope it with. Grief and its relation with language has been studied before (Brubker et al., 2012; Corless et al., 2014; Hedtke, 2002; Rosenblatt, 2016; Strange, 2002). This suggests that there is in fact a connection amongst the two. The studies cited above agree on how language is modified by the bereaved when they express their feelings or emotions about grief. The studies also mention how language presents certain expressions to talk about positively or negatively about one's grief. The cases presented in the aforementioned studies are about real situations where people lost a loved one and were experiencing the loss. However, none of those same studies depicted grief fictionally or through forms of art.

3.1 *Grief and art*

According to Ritchie (2003: 1) displacement caused by grief or loss has been seen as a "source of creative vision". This means that, through time, humankind has relied on emotions as venues to create all sorts of art. Special attention is awarded to the mood of melancholy, "a general affective state that is sensitive to the ontological situation of transience" (Fuchs, 2021: 9), as a means of creative output. Ritchie (2003) mentions that although concepts of tragedy, alienation, and death do not represent means of expression to ordinary people, they are representative of the mad artist. In this case, the mad artist is represented by the lyricist and singer of the *Get better* song. Although the events are not related to true feelings, the events are representative of them.

Ritchie (2003) comments on the modern distance that exists between life and death and how it is necessary to abridge the two concepts. He states that this distance is caused by ontological security, meaning that humankind tries to shield away from a disorder which may alter the sense of life. Death is considered to be the ultimate form of disorder (Giddens, 1991). Ritchie (2003) also mentions how media has both alienated and abridge the concepts of life and death. Television shows such as horror films, exhibitions of mortal remains, writing poetry or prose as well as other means of art are examples of this.

3.2 *Views on grief*

Howarth (2000) states that grief is not only the feeling of losing a loved one, but also the feeling of the loss of self. He mentions that within grief, if the deceased is let go, then that part of self is also detached. This view of grief is similar to the popular belief of *if you die, a part of me*

will die with you. On the basis of the previously mentioned view on grief, Køster (2021) mentions that, within grief, there is an emotion of longing, longing for the dead, longing for the other.

Kellehear (2002) claims that grief if not shared is a denial of experiencing and acknowledging the state of bereavement, loss, pain, and mourning. This view is representative of the popular belief of saying *if I don't talk about, it didn't happen*. Didion (2015) reflects on grief by saying how it affects both body and mind. She continues and states that “[g]rief is different. Grief has no distance. Grief comes in waves, paroxysms, sudden apprehensions that weaken the knees and blind the eyes and obliterate the dailiness of life” (p. 27). This quote of Didion exemplifies how grief is a process which should not be underpinned as once-occurring, but, on the contrary, as ever present as long as the person is mourning a death.

4. Methodology

This section defines the systemic functional linguistics framework (SFL) which informs the analysis of the song. The three metafunctions related with SFL, ideational, interpersonal, and textual are also described here.

4.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL is a descriptive and interpretative framework which considers language as a meaning-making resource (Eggins, 2004). Additionally, in order to say and do meaningful things, we make use of the resources available in a language. These resources are the lexicogrammar components of language which enable us to make meanings possible (Fatima et al., 2018). SFL is then an approach to analyze meaning from which language is the subject of study.

Language is a social semiotic source for making and exchanging meaning from which we also construct our reality and endorse social relationships (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Webster, 2009). Through language we are able to produce what Halliday and Webster (2009: 5) call *acts of meaning*. They described acts of meaning as “linguistic instances of the linguistic system of meaning potential” (*Ibid.*) and it is through these acts of meaning that we build communication and extract meaning. Furthering on their definition, Halliday and Webster (2009) state that acts of meaning correspond to a subclass of semiotic acts called semantics.

On one hand, a semiotic system is an arbitrary social convention by which it is traditionally agreed that a particular meaning will be realized by a particular representation (Eggins, 2004). In this semiotic system we refer to the representations as signs. Each sign has a particular meaning ascribed by a group of people. It is the oppositions, not the substances, in the semiotic system that are important (Eggins, 2004). This means, for example, that the representation of a bird, the sign, the mental representation, the signified, and the physical representation, the signifier are all equal disregarding the species of the bird.

On the other hand, according to Halliday and Webster (2009) a semantic system is grounded on grammar. It is composed of three strata which combined add up to a whole linguistic system. The first level is semantics followed by the lexicogrammar level and, below, on the third level, is the phonological and morphological level. Additionally, a semantic system is organized by three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual (Halliday & Webster, 2009). These metafunctions may be the base of how to conduct an analysis of language.

4.2 Metafunctions

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) there are three metafunction from the SFL framework. The first one, ideational, refers to how language construe human experience. It names things meaning it construe them into categories. These categories differ from one language to another. “Language provides a theory of human experience, and certain of the resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function” (p. 30). The second metafunction is interpersonal. While we use language to enact meaning, we also use it to perform personal and social relationships. The clause is not only a grammatical representation, but also a process that informs doing or happening, saying or sensing, being or having. “It is also a proposal, by which we inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about” (p. 30). Lastly, the textual metafunction indicates sequencing grammatical patterns which enact meaning and are address to someone. It also adds another mode of meaning that relates to the construction of text. “In a sense this can be regarded as an enabling or facilitating function, since both the others – construing experience and enacting interpersonal relations – depend on being able to build up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow, and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along” (pp. 30-31).

According to Haratyan (2011) ideational metafunction is linked with transivity. In an SFL approach, transivity refers to how ideas are transmitted. There are six processes in which ideas can be transmitted: (1) material, an action verb of doing or happening; (2) mental, verbs categorized into cognition, perception and affection; (3) relational, adjectives and adverbs classified into intensive, attributive, identifying, circumstantial, and possessive; (4) verbal, verbs of direct or indirect report; (5) behavioral, verbs related with physiological and psychological behaviors; and (6) existential, as the processes of existing.

5. Discussion and findings

This section is dedicated to presenting the results obtained during the analysis of the song *Get Better* using Halliday’s framework of the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

5.1 Ideational metafunction

The analysis of this metafunction takes into consideration the transivity aspect of the ideational function, thus, the analysis used the six processes mentioned in section 4.2 Table 1. shows the findings of this metafunction and the six processes of transivity. Some examples are included for reference. Verbs are kept in their original tense as examples.

Table 1. Transivity processes

Process	Number	Percentage	Example
Material	26	13.27	go, meeting, made, rests, close, wore, walking
Mental	26	13.27	need, get, know, wanted, hope, pretend
Relational	27	13.78	better, cold, orange, happy, younger, ripped
Verbal	1	.51	told
Behavioral	11	5.61	listening, sleeping, sound, watch, smiling
Existential	105	53.57	I, you, we, us, these, am, are, was, were, will

Results show that the existential process (53.57%) is the most prevalent process in the song. The song uses a high number of references about personal pronouns (I, you, we, they) These results indicate that the song stands from a personal point of view, and it is directed to a specific person. Some examples include *I wanted you to know, I hope you will*. The song also includes

different forms of verb to be in different tenses (will, am, are, were, was). This finding indicates that the message of the song is referred to in the present, past and in the future. Some examples include *I am yours, you are mine, You were always a fan of that spread*. In general, it could be said that the song stems from a personal perspective as it repeats many times personal pronouns and uses the verb to be to show the reality from which the song was written from.

The second most used process is that related with the relational process (13.78%). This means that the songwriter utilized a number of adjectives to describe what were potentially true scenarios. Some examples of those adjectives include *better, cold, orange, white, yellow, soul-quietening, happy*. These finding may indicate that using adjectives when telling a story may portray a clearer scene for the other person. The songwriter may have used these adjectives to provoke a feeling of familiarity by describing the scenario to how things were or how things are.

The mental and the material processes were used equally (13.27% each) throughout the song. This indicates that the songwriter used both action verbs and perceptive or affective verbs equally. Most of the verbs for both processes are performed by the *I* person. This finding shows that the song depicts life experiences from a personal view. Some examples include *I still pretend, I know I will*. These examples may depict the closest to the reality of grief specially the mental process verbs.

The least present transitivity processes in the song are verbal (.51%) and behavioral (5.61%). The song only includes an example of verbal process. This example was used when the songwriter was telling a story *I was admonished and told to go back inside*. This finding suggests that the song is told from a personal perspective as stories were lived with a single occasion of outsiders in the I-and-you story. The examples for the behavioral process include *smiling at your phone, I am listening to a recording of you sleeping next to me*. The lack of more examples of behavioral verbs may indicate that the songwriter found difficult to relate to sensorial experiences.

5.2 Interpersonal metafunction

Considering Halliday and Matthiessen's definition of the interpersonal metafunction which is used to "inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about" (2014: 30). In this section, the mood, the tenses and the types of adjectives are analyzed.

The most used mood in the song was the declarative one (78.69%). This finding means that the author of the song used sentences which may related to facts or real situations experienced by him and which could be relatable to other persons. For example, *I'll start the day with tiramisu*. The author also used declarative mood to describe some of the scenarios. For example, *the cold whoosh of truck passing*. These findings are reflected in Table 2. below.

Table 2. Mood

Mood	Number	Percentage	Example
Imperative	11	18.03	Get better, my darling
Declarative	48	78.69	I am yours, you are mine
Interrogative	2	3.28	Shall we go in?

The next analysis is about the verb tenses used in the song (Table 3). The most prevalent tense used in the present tense (52.87%). Although the use of the present tense is the greatly used, it is relevant to state that some the experiences may also reflect future meaning. The use of the present tense indicate that the situations depicted in the song are current or have a feeling of being current and relatable. The second and third tenses mostly used are the future (18.36%) and the past tense (14.94%). The uses of the past and the present are link structures to the stories that are being illustrated in the present. An example is *Your shyness stoked my*

boldness. These examples connect the stories of the person *I* and *my darling* person portrayed in the song. Considering the connection with grief, the songwriter may have used different verb tenses as to show a greater link between the two persons: the alive and the deceased.

Table 3. Verb tenses

Verb tense	Number	Percentage	Example
Present	46	52.87	am, cover, rests, hope, risk, stand, watch, know
Past	13	14.94	smuggled, wanted, threw, wore, stoked
Future	16	18.39	will need, will keep, will christen
Imperative	7	8.05	get,
Infinitive	5	5.75	to go, to sound, to be, to know

The last analysis for the interpersonal metafunctions is for adjectives (Table 4). The song has a total of 31 adjectives from which most adjectives are positive (96.77%) and only a short amount is for negative adjectives (3.23%). This finding indicates that although the song is about grief, the songwriter used positive adjectives throughout the song to depict only the best experiences with the deceased person. Some of the positive examples include *I'll christen this new era with the smell of freshly baked bread, a younger you and a younger me, happy birthday*.

Table 5. Adjectives

Adjectives	Number	Percentage	Example
Positive	30	96.77	better, cold, orange, white, soul-quietening,
Negative	1	3.23	cold

5.3 Textual metafunction

Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) definition for textual metafunction includes "construing experience and enacting interpersonal relations – depend on being able to build up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow, and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along" (p. 31). This textual metafunction analysis closely relates to the main question of this article which is to understand how the song *Get Better* portrays in a fictional manner the reality of lose and bereavement specially during pandemic times.

[Verse 1]
 Hallelujah
 I'm listening to a recording of you sleeping next to me
 A cappella
 I'm listening to you cover Elliot Smith's "Angeles"
 It's these times I'll need if you go
 It's these times I'll need if you go, so

In this verse, the lyricist is talking about the things he will be doing in the future if anything were to happen to his loved one. There are a few ambiguities. It is unclear to this point who *you* refers to, although we know the song is partially written based off of a poem written to the lyricist's girlfriend. It is also unclear what the person is going through. It is also unclear what meaning the verb *go* is taking.

[Chorus]
 Get better, my darling
 I know you will
 Get better, my darling
 I know you will
 Get better

In the chorus of the song, the lyricist uses the phrase “get better” which is commonly used when someone is sick, and we wish them well. We can then infer that the person is sick or going through an illness. At this point, *you* is now referred to as *my darling*. *My darling* is still an ambiguous term. It is unclear what relationship do the lyricist and the you person have. Considering how language is constructed with choices (Eggins, 2004). It could be stated that the lyricist chose to use the phrase “my darling” so the listener could relate to the song’s meaning and interpretate as their own. Meaning “my darling” could be any one of their loved ones, parents, children, friends, siblings, etc.

[Verse 2]

I’m drawn to the motorway
The cold whoosh of trucks passing
This nighttime under sodium light
The orange spread is soul-quietening
A younger you and a younger me
Meeting at The Serpentine
I am yours, you are mine

The second verse is hard to interpret. The reason why is because it seems to be disconnected from the previous verse and chorus. However, it could be interpreted as a link to the third verse. This second verse is considered to be a thought of the person while driving to see their “darling person”. The thought is very descriptive about that moment (lines 1-4). In the following lines of verse two (lines 5-7), we could interpret that the relationship between the persons is romantic, that of lovers. The lyricist is being reminiscent of the time they met. He is also mentioning the way they profess their love.

[Verse 3]

Happy birthday
Staff smuggled in a card I made
It rests under your pillow
When out of ICU,
You’ll cringe at all the “I love you”
The card retired the life of one biro
At this time, I wanted you to know
At this time, I wanted you to know

During verse three is getting clearer the situation in which *my darling* is. It is at this point that we know that the person is in fact sick and in a hospital. We could infer the person is comatose or greatly sick as the lyricist mentions the person will leave the ICU (Intensive Care Unit). When the lyricist mentions that the staff smuggled in the card it can be interpreted as the lyricist being unable to get in contact with his darling person. The end of verse three is a connection to the following chorus which is mentioned a second time in the song.

[Verse 4]

I’ll start the day with tiramisu
Raise a spoon to frontline workers
An underfunded principle
They risk all to be there for us
A younger you and a younger me
Meeting at The Serpentine
I am yours, you are mine

Verse four covers topics related with the pandemic situation. Similarly, to verse two, this verse also seems to be quite disconnected. The lyricist is talking about certain activities he will do while nodding to Frontline workers and principals who were the ones mostly “in the trenches”

when the pandemic first hit in 2020 (lines 1-4). The rest of the verse is similar to that of the second verse. The lyricist reminisces about the time they met and the way they profess their love.

[Verse 5]

You were the baker
I'll christen this new era with the smell of freshly baked bread
Your Nutella, I'll keep it in the cellar
You were always a fan of that spread
Six months on, there's a car crash outside
The fire brigade using the jaws of life
No flush at night to sound your return
I still pretend you're only out of sight

Verse five is also slightly tied with topics related with the pandemic. It was concluded that some people adopted certain activities as means to cope with the pandemic. In this case, the lyricist mentions how the person had decided to take on bread making as a pass time. At this point, it is clear that the person, my darling, has passed away. This is indicated by the phrase you were fan of that spread. This idea also ties with the true meaning of the verb gone in verse one. We now know that the person has died. There is a time jump within the stories of this verse. The lyricist is telling about a happening which may have triggered memories about the dead person. It is from this happening that the person realizes that after the months that have passed is less likely that the person is going to return. This idea of being unable to recognize when a dead person is dead and not coming back is referred as a delusional state by Joan Didion (2005).

[Verse 6]

Front garden bouquet, I threw it at the fire brigade
I was admonished and told to go back inside
From the living room window
I stand and watch the white sheet go
Over the family car and I close my eyes
I still pretend you're only out of sight in another room
Smiling at your phone
I still pretend you're only out of sight in another room
Smiling at your phone
I still pretend you're only out of sight in another room
Smiling at your phone
I still pretend you're only out of sight in another room
Smiling at your phone
I still pretend

More of this delusional state is presented in verse six, but before interpreting that, let us go back to the same happening developed in verse five. The lyricist mentions an accident and his curiosity to step outside or his willingness to help but being told to get inside. This may be interpreted as a precaution move since the song is still loosely based on the pandemic times and how people were supposed to be in lockdown. This situation, however, may have brought memories up. Seeing dead unfold from his house and his powerlessness to help may have triggered another memory. This is the second time being delusional happens. Similarly, to what Didion experienced with her husband's death and Howarth's view on grief, it seems hard to let go of the loved one even after death. It is reiterated in this verse that the person is still unable to let his darling go. This withholding may also be a coping mechanism attached to grief.

[Verse 7]

A younger me, a younger you
Meeting at The Serpentine

The beginning of spring, you wore those yellow ripped jeans
Your look defined my 2009
Your shyness stoked my boldness
“Shall we go in?”, I smiled
Your hand warmed walking through the gallery

Verse seven is a complete reminiscing stage. Here, the lyricist brings back the theme of when he and his darling met. In this verse he is more descriptive about the memory. The lyricist takes us back to that moment by being explicit about the details of their encounter. These types of reminiscing are also elusive to Joan Didion and her husband death. In a way, she kept her husband alive while keeping the thought of him alive. Køster (2020) refers as spectral traces of deceased to those objects of memories that are still attached to the living person.

[Outro]
(Get better *laughs*) *tape rewinding*
I know I will
(Get better *laughs*)
My darling, I know I will

The outro of the song is quite similar to the chorus. The main difference is that the chorus referred to the other person *getting better* after falling ill. However, in the outro the pronoun changed and now it refers to the first person, the lyricist. In the fictional sense, where the darling person died, the lyricist is wishing himself to get better after losing someone. This self-soothing could be interpreted as a resolution from and to the person in grief.

6. Conclusion

This article was an attempt to use the SFL framework developed by Halliday to analyze a song. The analysis consisted of using the three metafunctions of the SFL approach to understand how the song *Get Better* portrays in a fictional manner the reality of loss, grief, and bereavement specially during pandemic times. The article presented a general background context of the band and the song. This was followed by a condensed literature review of the concepts of grief and the link between grief and art. The article also presented an overview of the concept of SFL and the definitions of metafunctions by Halliday and Matthiessen.

The most substantial part of this article was the analysis conducted of the song. In this section, the song was analyzed from the ideational, interpersonal and textual perspectives. The findings include how the songwriter used mostly declarative structures in the present tense to depict how a bereaved person goes through life when a dear person dies. The song depicted quiet closely a reality that some people lived while in pandemic and lost a person. The use of SFL allowed for a deeper understanding of how artists use current events and mix the reality and fiction of undone happenings, grief being one of them. At the end, understanding grief from an artistic way may help sooth bereavement as some people relate to it and not feel alone. As Joe Newman (2022) stated on a radio program, “it [grief] doesn’t get better; you get used to it”.

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Silver Spoon by BTS: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

BTS has become a global phenomenon not only because of the different genres of their music, but for the messages conveyed in their lyrics and the cultural representation of Korean culture. This article presents an analysis of a BTS' song that addresses a social difficulty based on the struggle faced by young Koreans related to education. Another aspect that makes this band's music relevant is the complexity of their lyrics by using their mother tongue Korean and English in order to convey a message and target a broad audience when mixing both languages. The analysis of the song is anchored in critical discourse analysis following Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The results of the analysis demonstrate how flexible language use illustrates young Koreans' views on society and more specifically in education. In order to understand a social problem in their country, this paper analyses how the artist used language to illustrate and give voice to the generation they represent.

Keywords: cultural representation, social practices linguistic features, k-pop, discourse analysis

1. Introduction

Korean culture has gained significant attention worldwide in the last decade due to the music bands, make up brands, tv shows, etcetera. The Korean music industry has been particularly influential for the representation of the country around the globe as young ambassadors of ONU and UNICEF and honored guests in the White House to discuss Asian hate. There is one group in particular, who will be describe later and who has accomplished to break the language barrier that may have stopped the Korean wave to spread in the past.

To begin with this article, the main objective of this work is to analyze the linguistic social references presented in the song "Silver Spoon" to demonstrate how BTS portray the values of mainstream Korean society. This song was chosen since it provides an idea of what the educational system, in the prior mentioned country, has denoted for the youngsters. This article presents an analysis of a song from one of the most popular bands in the K-pop industry nowadays. Continuously, the literature related to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be presented to understand Fairclough's model selected for the analysis of the song with my discussions and what a few authors have said related to my interpretations. Finally, my last comments will be presented in order to conclude with this article.

- The use of music to represent a social problem.
- BTS as a social phenomenon not only in music.

1.1 Background

BTS stands for *Bang Tan Sonyeondan* in Korean, and it is the name of a K-pop band that has reached a worldwide recognition for their popularity and the messages transmitted through their songs. BTS is formed by seven members who started the band in 2010 and debuted in 2013 in South Korea. Even if they are part of the K-pop genre, their music varies in melody and some of the songs are intended to raise awareness about mental health and social issues. These topics have been well received by their fans given their relevance in contemporary societies around the world, and particularly in Korea.

The band has won several awards and has gained recognition that has positioned them at the same level of artists such as Michael Jackson, The Beatles given the millions of fans and the massive sells of records and shows performed. Due to their popularity among young people, the BTS members became ambassadors of the “Love Myself” campaign for UNICEF, joined the United Nations as ambassadors of the youth and were invited to the White House to discuss Asian hate. These recognitions have been granted because of the band’s goal to demonstrate their discomfort of in social problems as well as mental health awareness using their music to make a statement in the world.

BTS’ discography demonstrates what type of message they want to deliver to their listeners. This goal has been influenced by their experiences on stage and the problems people their age, are facing. The beginning of their career was marked by the pressure that students in Korean had in education, believing that not having what is consider “good grades” will not allow them to aspire to a good job or a good social status. The song chose to conduct the analysis presented in this paper is about how the youth is treated by older generations. This song was released in 2015 in the album called “The most beautiful moment in life: pt. 2” when most of the members related to the students’ population in the stress implied in the nation examination tests for entering to a university. I now turn to previous research related to the group in the area of discourse analysis.

2. Literature review

Previous research has been conducted on BTS from the discourse analysis perspective. Hasanah et al. (2019) provided a CDA on the band leader, Kim Namjoon’s speech at the ONU assembly in which the authors decided to use Halliday theory of Systemic Functional Grammar to discover language, ideology, and power in his words. On the other hand, Kim (2021) created a multimodal discourse analysis related to Korean cultural formation and non-western and peripheral societies pertaining the global cultural sphere. Most studies are centered on the importance of the group, the wave of Korean pop (K-pop) and how they have achieved great popularity and recognition not only in the music community but also in society (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Cho, 2011; Cho & Maliangkay, 2015; Jin, 2016; Cho, 2018; Benjamin, 2019). Although this research introduces a general idea of the K-pop wave and their legacy in the music industry, it is important to consider BTS in particular because of the social and economic representation they provide to their country. Therefore, the analysis presented in this paper draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore one particular song that reflects the band’s main message and their use of language to describe a social issue. The next section offers an overview of CDA, the concepts related as well as the foundations of it.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerged in the late 1980s based on the work of Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk et al. Due to its importance in discourse analysis, it has been implemented in several research focusing on the linguistic aspects of language in society. CDA affirms that discourse is socially fundamental as well as socially conditioned. Therefore, the foundations of discourse are related to socio-theoretical practices, as well as the use of discourse in society. So, the main goal of CDA is to discover the links between language use and social practice (Fairclough, 2013).

CDA is also related to social movements, their implications in discourse and how they have change according to ideologies, such as feminism, globalization studies, etc. Since language is the means of communication it is important to remember that the main focus of language study is what it tells about society, because of that, structure of society should be considered when focusing on the insights of its use. Discursive practices are an essential part of social interactions which as Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) explain, contribute to the formation of a social world, which includes social identities and social relations. Because of discursive practices, social and cultural production varieties take place.

Some characteristics related to CDA are presented by Amoussou and Allagbe (2018) in their research. The first one is related to the inter and multidisciplinary scope of the approach, since it can be used in several areas and for different purposes as long as the goal of the relationship between society and culture is achieved. The second relays in the relations of power, dominance and inequality produced by certain social groups through the types of speech. Finally, CDA is committed to exploring and exposing the implicit and hidden treats within discourse. Furthermore, CDA provides different frameworks which have helped in approaching the goals from different authors' perspectives. The section below outlines the methodology used to conduct the analysis of the song.

3. Methodology

In order to analyze the song "Silver Spoon", Fairclough's three-dimensional model has been selected. This model is considered to be a useful tool to answer the proposed research questions for this article:

- What are the social practices of Korean society represented in the song?
- How is Korean culture portrayed in the song? What is the interpretation of Korean culture provided in the song?

3.1. Fairclough three-dimensional model

The discourse model developed by Fairclough is framed in a theory of ideological processes in society. In addition, for discourse is seen in terms of processes of hegemony and changes in power. It is central for this approach that discourse is an important form of social practice which both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures. Therefore, text analysis alone is not sufficient for discourse analysis, as it does not shed light on the links between texts and societal and cultural processes and structures (Fairclough, 1989). The following image illustrates the three dimensions developed by Fairclough:

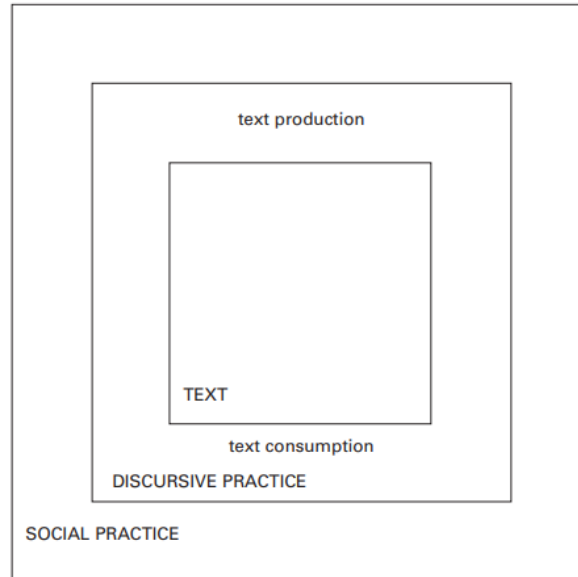


Figure 1. Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (1992)

The general purpose of the three-dimensional model is, then, to provide an analytical framework for discourse analysis. The model is based, and promotes the principle that texts can never be understood or analyzed in isolation they can only be understood in relation to webs of other texts and in relation to the social context (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Fairclough's model comprises three levels represented by discourse and its different presentations and use; these features are explained below:

- Text Analysis

The first stage of the model focuses on the linguistic features and organization of discourse occurrences. Fairclough (2013) states that this section is related to the formalities of pure text since representation of the speaker's world is considered to be presented through vocabulary.

- Discursive Practice

The second dimension is discourse as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society. It relates the text and interaction and consider the product as a referendum of interpretation (Fairclough, 2013). These characteristics allow to start creating meaning to what is produced by speakers, and how text helps to produce speech.

- Social Practice

The third dimension relates text with discourse and also social meaning to the use of speech. Fairclough (2013) declares that social construction is important to understand discourse since context, ideologies, traditions, and customs are part of giving meaning.

3.2 Steps for the analysis

In order to analyze data, I first analyzed other examples in which Fairclough's approach was used and how it was developed. I decided to selected parts of the song that could exemplified each section of the model in order to discuss the relationship and meaning of the lyrics and the dimensions of the approach. Additionally, to be able to comprehend the message conveyed in the song and what the artists intended to portray, I selected a reliable source to translate the

lyrics of the song. As mentioned in the background section, BTS mostly sings mixing Korean and English (with a predominance on their mother tongue Korean), because of that I consider necessary to translate the lyrics for this article. In the next section I will provide the analysis and discussions of the song.

4. Discussion and analysis

In this section I will present the data analysis elaborated based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model. This section intends to answer the research questions proposed at the beginning of this article in order to present of the Korean culture is represented in BTS's music or in this case a song. To deliver a clear discussion I consider necessary to state the general meaning of the song. In this case, the lyrics present a discomfort of adolescence who are constantly triggered by the past generation about how easy things like education, living expenses, etcetera, are for them. Thus, adolescents complain that it is not the case and instead, life in their country is more difficult than what it used to be. Mentioned that, I will continue with the first section of the analysis.

4.1 *"The generation has given up"*

In this section I will analyze the first feature of Fairclough's model which is related to text. In order to analyze this section, I will categorize the most common grammar structures used in this song and interpret what is the meaning of its use. As part of the linguistic features, each word being used in discourse involves a representation or characterization according to its intended use.

Throughout the song there are two grammar tenses presented constantly, past simple, and present perfect. The first tense tells us about an action that already happened and the second represents something that started in the past and continues in the present. Based on this, the song states actions that already happened for example, "My teachers **were** born with it all", when there is this interpretation of what past generations used to have. Present perfect states a continuous state of the new generation, for example when BTS states "Our generation **has had** it hard" is how they expressed that this is something that has been around them for a period of time. The use of this type of sentence helps to provide the difference between generations that is being constantly compared in the song.

Additionally, negatives are utilized in order to mark limitations in what adolescence cannot do anymore or are not allowed to do. Modal verbs are also part of the negation in the song as a form to interpret what this generation is able to do. Another utterance in the text is the use of the suffix "**-er**" in a few adjectives to increase the emphasis on the word in which is being used, for example, "**try harder**". This denotes an intention in exaggeration in certain words to create the notion of not being enough. In general, these are the structures that are constantly repeated throughout the lyrics which can help in the next section to understand its relation when being part of a larger structure.

4.2 *"Try harder"*

In this section I will establish the discussion related to the combination of text and its use in the Korean society to create a reasonable meaning to the lyrics of the song and what may represent for listeners. In this section I selected excerpts of the song that could be used in social interaction and that could give us an idea of the intention of the song.

Initially, the sentence "**Our generation has had it hard**" restates the idea of comparing the past with the future and affirms that it is difficult for the adolescents nowadays. As

described in Shin & Koh (2005) the Korean education is quite strict and parents do everything possible to help their children study. However, the song also mentions the pressure they receive if they are considered to not study hard enough. The part that declares: **“stop going on about effort and more effort”** exemplifies how they are constantly triggered by the word effort to have it as a pillar in their everyday performance. Another example says **“the generation that's given up”** which I consider expresses that sometimes their effort is not enough and what the public in general observes is that they do not care because the best results are now showing.

In order to reaffirm that the sentence providing examples of interaction are related to education, I will conclude this section with the following sentence **“My teachers were born with it all”**. This statement makes me believe that the constant complaining about the adolescents' lack of effort does not only come from the parents but teachers as well. In the end, youngsters are surrounded by critiques which could be noted in this excerpt of the song presented by BTS. I consider that this song marks a valuable view of Korean culture in education focus on this new generations.

4.3 *“My legs are shorter, so how do you expect me to keep up?”*

In this section I will establish how the song represents a social ideology and the struggles young citizens face in the Korean society. Continuing with what has been presented before, the following excerpts of the song are more related to the context in which is being used and the representation of certain idioms that are also related to the culture of the country.

For this part of the analysis, I decided to use a longer section of the song, since I consider it helps me to exemplify this section better. The first statement is the next, **“I have crow-tit legs, and you have stork's legs”**. This sentence uses these two animals to refer to how fast or how long they have walked through life and that the new generation is just learning and exploring while the past generation has already lived. Continuing with this, the next examples mention the following **“their legs are worth a million bucks”**, in here I believe that money is another form to see time, since their legs are longer, have gone through much, that is why they have more value. Furthermore, the song continues with the following **“My legs are shorter, so how do you expect me to keep up”**, in here it reminds us that they are not as experienced as the past generation, so they are not able to do as much as they did.

All through the song, we can see how there is a constant representation of how adolescents feel in Korea related to what is expected from them, from society, the school, and their parents. As Shin and Koh (2005) elaborated, education in Korean culture is a system that concerns the whole country, as in most places, but the pressure put in this society is sometimes bigger than others. The final excerpt shows how young people's situation is seen according to the ones who belong to the past generation, **“They call me silver spoon”**. This phrase is similar to saying that you have everything you need but you do not take advantage of it. Which I consider it perfectly reflects the fact that past generations are not conceiving how difficult it is for new generations to study and make a living in Korea, but they only see what they did not have in their time.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that there is much to say about a society that is growing and has achieved more interest in foreigners in the past years. I also consider the importance of sociocultural knowledge to understand representation of culture. For this article I had to read other authors who investigated the topic of education in Korea in order to understand what aspect of culture the song was representing. In this case, all the influence of Korean culture through media may infer our view of this culture since several perspectives about the same topic are

involved in the representation. I believe necessary to inform ourselves from the people who really intends to present their country in the most realistic form. The big role of BTS in representing a complete society and using their power to spread other messages is what I believe has made them the band they are now and has given them the acknowledge of a worldwide public.

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A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis on News Posts About Andres Manuel López Obrador Across Facebook

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Abstract

News sites on Facebook present posts with headlines that are aimed at triggering a reaction in their audience. This is significant specially when observing one of the currently most polarizing figures in Mexico, Andres Manuel López Obrador. This article analyses how these sites present AMLO for their audience and the intended image they portrait in the combination of written discourse and the image of the president attached to it. This image could be negative, positive or neutral.

Keywords: Multimodal discourse analysis, intermodality/intertextuality, communicative acts.

1. Introduction/background

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) is the current president of Mexico. When compared with other leaders in Mexico López Obrador stands as the most popular leader with an approval rating above 60% (Sheridan, 2019). He started to gain popularity across the country while being mayor of Mexico City from 2000 to 2005. However, he has been involved in politics since 1976 when he supported Carlos Pellicer's campaign to senator in the State of Tabasco (Lic. Andrés Manuel López Obrador – AMLO, 2022). During his rule in Mexico City, his public programs gained the attention of Mexicans by promoting economical supports for single mothers, pensions for the elderly and greatly investing in urban development, transportation and education (Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador | Age, political party, & facts, 2022). Nonetheless, his rule in Mexico City was also notorious for cases of corruption among his subordinates and difficulties to reduce crime in the city (Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador | Age, political party, & facts, 2022).

Andres Manuel López Obrador ran for presidency in three different occasions after his rule of Mexico City. He was elected president in 2018 with over 60% of voters on his side. Ever since, his popularity has remained strong among the Mexican people. The popularity of the president is also shown in the thousands of viewers he has during his daily morning reports, *las mañaneras*. This morning reports are the common source of most news about the president and the images use to represent him.

In spite of his popularity, Mexico shows signs of polarization (Centro de opinion Publica, 2019). This is noticeable when exploring social media.

There are 84.1 million internet users in Mexico which represents 72% of the population in Mexico, and 96% of these users access the internet through a smartphone (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2021). Thus, social media is an important source of information, and therefore it has a strong influence in the population. Social media has become an open platform for people to engage in all kinds of subjects like entertainment, health, education, and politics. While in public spaces or face to face interaction some topics are avoided because they are controversial or considered taboo, many internet users have found a space in social media to openly discuss these. In fact, sites dedicated to reporting news have gained significant numbers of followers who actively engage in interaction about their content.

News media using social networks post headlines and pictures with the aim of attracting people to their pages and generating replies, comments and reactions, or some kind of interaction depending on the social media platform. A common strategy is to present a headline with clickbait or partial information that will trigger polarized reactions and heated discussions in their reply or comment sections as observed in the study conducted by Sari (2019). Posts referring to López Obrador usually call the attention of social media users and typically get thousands of reactions and comments, which trigger heated online discussions. Some posts also seem to present information with the aim of promoting a specific image about the president. Depending on the media broadcaster, this image could be either positive, negative or neutral.

The aim of this paper is to present the analysis of several news post on Facebook about Andres Manuel López Obrador and the picture showing him that is attached to it. Therefore, the following research questions guide the study:

- How do news pages on Facebook represent Andres Manuel López Obrador and his government in their headlines and cover pictures?
- What is the intended image of Andres Manuel López Obrador that news pages on Facebook project to their audience?

2. Literature review

Research on discourse and images used in social media has been undertaken from different perspectives in DA and through various methods. This section offers an overview of research on the discourse and images used on social media and news.

Hamrita (2016) presents a critical discourse analysis on the representation of the Islamic community on Facebook after the revolution in Tunisia. The study analyzes how the secularist group depicts Islamism, through their views posted on Facebook. Hamrita (2016) analyzed 10 texts from secularist intellectuals using a framework that results from a combination of Fairclough's research methodology in CDA and Van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to discourse. The results show an aggressive and demeaning discourse against Islamism which contradicts the message of peace and openness manifested by the secularist intellectuals in their text from different subjects.

Another related study is from Sari (2019) who analyzed news headlines based on Fairclough's model of discourse analysis and using the pragmatic identity method from Sudaryanto (1992). Their finding shows how news pages on the social media try to manipulate their readers to increase their views and generated heated discussion between opposing readers to obtain comments. The tendentious headlines or fragments of information presented do not precisely reflect the actual information in the main article.

The critical discourse analysis approach used in the studies by Hamrita (2016) and Sari (2019) are only focus on the written text. They do not provide much information on the images

(if any) that may accompany the texts found on social media or headlines in news sites, which can also shape the message perceived by their readers.

Visuals in social media have a great impact in communication and the message transmitted through it. Adami and Jewitt (2016) contrast different articles presented in a journal on social media and visuals. In their analysis they identify four themes related to visual communication:

- The creation of new genres and practices in communication thanks to new technologies that facilitate the creation of multimodal texts.
- Visuals in social media enables the expression and construction of identity, however it also allows for the spreading of stereotypes.
- The diffusion of public and private everyday practices redefines the way we interpret events and situations. What seems common or inconsequential may have a greater impact in a different moment.
- Visual products are shared, copied, re-purposed or used again. This causes difficulty to determine who is the author or owner of visual materials shared in social media.

The themes found bring interest in the relevance of multimodality in social media. Communication is changing through technology and focusing critical discourse analysis only on written or spoken text is no longer enough to provide a complete and critical picture of any discourse related issue in social media that is under study.

Van Leeuwen (2006) exposes the relevance of visuals to discourse. He suggests speech acts should be called *communicative acts* and broad the analysis of discourse beyond written and spoken language. In this paper, Van Leeuwen (2006) uses the *Kitchener Recruitment Poster* to present how the intermodality between images, language and typography represent what he calls a *single communicative act*.

3. Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, this multimodal critical discourse analysis study focuses on the intermodality between written discourse about Andres Manuel López Obrador and the images of him that are attached to publications from different news' pages on Facebook. The posts were collected between February and April 2022. A total of 31 posts comprises the data collected of this study.

According to Hurtado Razo (2020) Facebook is the most accessed social media platform in Mexico. He also remarks that Facebook has a great influence in politics, culture and the public opinion, which generates polarization as it provides a space for the expression and discussion of topics that more traditional media does not often cover. The study concludes that Facebook is the social platform with the highest control over the flow of information, emotions and communication in Mexico. "*Nunca pensamos que tuviera tanto poder en la actualidad*" (Hurtado Razo, 2020).

The news pages were chosen based on the number of followers they have, at least one hundred thousand followers. In 2014 the average organic reach (not as a result of an ad) of a brand Facebook page is 6% of their followers (Manson, 2014). When pages with 100 thousand followers post something, 6 thousand followers are organically reached in average.

The data is first collected by taking screenshots from the posts while scrolling Facebook through its app in a smartphone using android. The screenshots are saved in a special folder in Google drive. The screenshots are divided in folders by topic. In the end one of the most

popular or controversial topics is selected specifically for lexical and image analysis. The topic selected is the opening of the new airport Felipe Angeles. Each folder must have at least 10 screenshots from different news' pages. The criteria use to select the screenshot is that they must content three elements, a written text as post, a picture showing Andres Manuel López Obrador and a headline, typically under the picture that is linked to the full article in the news page site.



Figure 1. Shows a news post screenshot from Facebook. It shows its three elements, post written text, image and the article headline generally under the image

Based on Hamrita's (2016) methodology, this paper draws on Fairclough's (1984) research methodology. Hamrita proposes three aspects: description, interpretation and, explanation and evaluation.

The description focuses on describing the highlights of the individual elements that form the communicative act, the language in the written text, the typography and the image. The interpretation focuses on the analysis of the details observed on the intermodality between these three elements to form a single communicative act in some selected posts from the data. Finally, the explanation and evaluation highlight the findings and determines the implications of the influence these news posts have in their viewers.

AntConc software (Version 4.0.11; Anthony, 2022) was used to create a short corpus with the 31 post and headlines' written text. The main reason for using this software is to observe how Andres Manuel López Obrador name is mentioned in the posts. This corpus consists of 1431 tokens and 540 types. Then lexical choices, and over lexicalization, are observe to help determine the position of the post based purely on the written text, as observed in Machin and Mayr (2018); other elements are also observed based on the strategies described by Van Dijk (2004) in his ideological discourse analysis, i.e., positive/negative lexicalization, vagueness, generalization, irony/sarcasm, etc. Typographic choices are observed in the use of uppercase text, some orthographic symbols and emojis.

The analysis of the image of López Obrador attached to the text in the post is centered around two criteria. The first element is the distance created between the reader and Andres Manuel López Obrador, this is determined by whether it is a close-up, a medium shot, a long shot or if López Obrador is facing the camera or looking at a third object (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

The second characteristic considers the facial expressions, hand gestures and body language (if visible) that Lopez Obrador shows in the image and how it may affect the connotation of the text in the post and headline.

4. Description

4.1 Naming the president

Andres Manuel López Obrador is usually mentioned in a variety of names. The corpus created through AntConc software (Version 4.0.11; Anthony, 2022) revealed that Andres Manuel López Obrador is named AMLO 38 times through the 31 post analyzed and *presidente* 19 times. These names could be considered neutral terms, however “AMLO” is sometimes use as a way to avoid referring to him as an authority. He is also referred with his full name, Andres Manuel López Obrador, only seven times, and six out of those seven times with the title *presidente*. These last forms for naming him could be considered as a formal or very formal way to referred to the president. Due to the research limitations this corpus size does not provide enough data to analyze the use of other common names like, Andres Manuel, López Obrador, Obrador, or some of the nicknames he is sometimes referred to either with appreciation or contempt.

4.2 Positive, negative and neutral positions

It is observed that the different news pages may present elements that define the ideology or position about the news presented. The expressions and word choices for the different themes set the tone of the post. Positive, negative and neutral representations are observed some clearly just by observing the written language, and others that are influence positively or negatively by the image that is attached to the post.

4.3 Visuals

In the typographical dimension we can observe the use of orthographical symbols and full upper-case letters. These words are sometimes use to highlight elements in the discourse or to denote certain irony or sarcasm. Some less formal pages use emojis to visually set the tone of their post.

The images of the president are usually composed of the president, the podium with microphones and a white or red background that is usually visible during his *mañaneras*. Sometimes the Mexican flag is also visible on the background and occasionally other people or a screen.



Figure 2. The elements usually observed in AMLO's pictures, his face/body, the podium and the background

Some news pages often show pictures of AMLO depicting neutral body language, gestures and facial expressions. However, some others use pictures that may enhanced their post written text or headline either in a positive or negative way. While some pictures show AMLO in a clear image, with a body language that makes him look straight and a kind face, other pictures show AMLO in positions where he seems stooped, with messy hair, and the colors of the picture lighting seems darker. Pictures sometimes show him frowning, smiling, grinning, smirking, with an upset face, or with a serious expression. The smirking or smiling face may have a different tone for interpretation depending on the written text that is tag along with it.

5. Analysis

Due to the limitations in the extend of this paper, the analysis presented is only focused on two contrasting posts.

5.1 *Felipe Angeles Airport*

The opening of the Felipe Angeles Airport (AIFA) was surrounded in polemic. One of the most highlighted topics was the stands of food selling different typical Mexican foods including *tlayudas*. This generate a lot of headlines in the news as *tlayudas* are food that is usually found in small stands on the streets, and not so typical in big malls or international airports.

Debate los Mochis, a news page from the state of Sinaloa, has over 380 thousand followers. After analyzing various Facebook posts, it is clear that *Debate los Mochis* has a tendency towards representing the president negatively:



Figure 3. *Debate los Mochis*, Tlayudas, AIFA, reporter

The post text reduces Andrés Manuel López Obrador to his acronym “AMLO”, perhaps just for shorting as later on it acknowledges him as president. However, the post’s text refers to a reporter who confronted the figure of authority that represents the president. It victimizes the journalist in face of the power represented by the president who calls her “classist” and “racist”, the way the text is presented makes it feel like an attack, though we cannot see the full context. The headline that links to the full article also establishes this power dynamic in which the president exhibits Azucena Uresti (the journalist) for showing a video of a woman selling *tlayudas*. Again,

no further context is presented, and the word “exhibit” is use with a negative lexicalization that presents the journalist as a victim of the president in this power dynamic.

The image shows the president in his podium from the presidential morning report facing a crowd from a slightly downward position. The picture was selected in a moment where the president face gives the impression of being gesticulating or about to say something and a slight smirk. He is slightly leaning forward which could be interpreted as a menacing position. This is enhanced as it happens from the presidential podium which is a sign of power.

The combination of all these elements denotes a negative impression about Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador that depicts him as an oppressive power.

In contrast *La Jornada* is another news site that tends to depict a positive image of the president. *La Jornada* is a nationally recognized newspaper with over three million followers.



Figure 4. *La Jornada*, una mujer, Tlayudas and AIFA

The text in the post refers to people questioning the opening of the new airport as *opositores* (adversaries) which is a generalization. Then it refers to the criticism made by *una mujer*, “a woman,” about the food stands selling *tlayudas*. In contrast, *Debate los Mochis* created the figure of a victim in a journalist while *La Jornada* presents her as just a nameless woman. It is not clear if both news’ posts are referring to the same or a different person, just based on the post information. AMLO is referred as “the president Andres Manuel López Obrador” which reinforces his position as authority and power. Then, *tlayudas* are presented as a contribution of the native cultures in order to provide them of some greater value beyond just a typical Mexican dish. This attribution as contribution of the native cultures reinforces the headline in which AMLO suggests the opening of typical food locations in new airport. Here he is referred as AMLO perhaps just for keeping the headline short. In both the post text and the headline, it is express the confrontation to the adversaries and the criticism as something that the figure of the president has to fight.

The picture depicts AMLO facing the camera, above his podium. his sight seems to be focus on the crowd he is speaking too. His lips are forming a smile with a short opening, as if he

was saying something. His body is slightly lean to one side while extending his hand to the crowd, in a gesture similar to that of a teacher giving a lecture. Behind there is a red diffuse background, and on the left the Mexican flag is distinguishable. This picture depicts a positive image that enhances the message presented in both the post's text and the headline which can be interpreted as a teacher educating the crowd.

6. Explanation/evaluation

It is clear that some news sites take stances about Andres Manuel López Obrador and organize their post to depict a specific image about him. This does not mean the positive or negative portrayal of the presidents is false as it much depends on the topic and the actual context, however viewers generally take the first impression they have from the three elements analyze in the post. Ethically it is necessary that news pages make their best to present their news post from a neutral stance, and allow the viewers to access and read their articles to get the full context, so they construct their opinion more informatively. However, this does not exempt followers of critically analyze these posts and construct their opinions from information obtained from different sources.

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