


Social Awareness in Kim Namjoon's Speech at the United Nations Using Textual Analysis Perspective

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to explore the meaning and representation of social awareness values in Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in 2018 by examining the textual dimension within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The research adopts a qualitative approach and applies content analysis as the main method of inquiry. The data consist of words, phrases, and sentences taken from the official transcript of Kim Namjoon's speech. Data were collected through a library-based study and document analysis of the speech text. The analytical procedure follows an interactive model of content analysis, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that Kim Namjoon conveys strong moral and social values that encourage empathy, self-acceptance, and awareness of others as members of a broader social community. His speech also emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and collective responsibility in responding to social problems faced by individuals and society. Furthermore, the frequent use of personal pronouns such as *I*, *we*, and *us* functions as a linguistic strategy to build emotional closeness, a sense of togetherness, and a shared identity between the speaker and the audience. From a textual perspective, the analysis shows that the sentence structure, lexical choices, and rhetorical style employed in the speech reflect four major textual aspects, namely grammar, structure, writing style, and meaning. These textual elements work together to construct and reinforce social awareness values, particularly solidarity, tolerance, and social responsibility, which become the central messages delivered in Kim Namjoon's speech.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature as an aesthetic tool that provides an experience of beauty, while others emphasize communicative, educational, or social reflection aspects (Jeyaraj, 2025; Świątek et al., 2023). Literary texts in the study of language and literature are not only confined to works of fiction, such as novels, short stories, or poems, but also include nonfiction works that address emotional expression and language use and convey life values that have the aim of entertaining readers (Marulafau, 2019). One form of literary text is speech. It shows the expression of human experience conveyed creatively through language, both in the form of fiction and nonfiction (Aljarelah, 2024; Li, 2022). Speech is not only seen as a form of oral communication, but also as a text that has aesthetic and expressive value. Speech is a persuasive and expressive style of oral communication in which language is used to generate information, emotion, imagination, and empathy in the listener (Tarigan & Stevani, 2022).

Emotional descriptions and rhetorical language styles, also known as descriptive texts, can describe a person's experience with social relativity imaginatively and reflectively

(McGinley et al., 2021; Schwerin & Lenhart, 2022). As a result, this proves that, with the proper language structure, speech could be used to express socio-cultural values. It means that language gave the social norm or value and can build social life (Hu & Navarrete, 2025).

In a broader perspective, social awareness is increasingly recognized as a fundamental competence that is closely constructed and mediated through language use in public discourse. Previous studies emphasize that language functions not only as a medium for conveying information, but also as a social practice that shapes attitudes, values, and patterns of social interaction (Alejandro, 2024; Korneeva et al., 2019; Nuryati Nani, 2024; Thomas & McDonagh, 2013). In educational and intercultural contexts, social awareness is strongly associated with the ability to interpret emotions, understand social realities, and respond ethically to social diversity through discourse (Merlin & Soubramanian, 2024; Schat et al., 2022; Waghid, 2024; Walter & Hazan-Liran, 2025; Xu & bt. Shapii, 2025). Moreover, Fangni (2025) highlights that effective communication in multicultural environments depends on speakers' capacity to integrate emotional expression and social sensitivity within linguistic choices. These findings indicate that social awareness is not merely an individual psychological attribute, but is discursively constructed through grammatical patterns, rhetorical strategies, and narrative structures that allow speakers to express empathy, social responsibility, and collective identity. Therefore, the analysis of language in speech becomes an essential entry point for understanding how social awareness values are formed, negotiated, and disseminated in contemporary public communication.

Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in collaboration with UNICEF in 2018 is a clear example of a descriptive literary text. In his speech, Kim Namjoon not only explains the moral and social message of the importance of accepting identity and loving oneself, but also describes his emotional journey in a detailed and significant way. Social awareness has a significant correlation to the development of emotional competence, especially in the context of education and cross-cultural interactions. Successful cross-cultural communication depends not only on linguistic accuracy but also on the ability to convey meaning and emotion authentically (Fangni, 2025; Fuller et al., 2021; Pang et al., 2024). Kim Namjoon talks about stress principles, like inclusion, self-love, the courage to speak up, and awareness of social issues such as mental health, which are currently receiving global attention. This speech also comes not only from his celebrity status but from the social depth he brings as a highly socially conscious individual.

In addition to the moral and emotional depth of his 2018 United Nations speech, Kim Namjoon's influence as a global figure is reflected in his position as a cultural ambassador whose voice resonates across international platforms beyond the music industry. As the leader of BTS, he became part of a groundbreaking moment for K-pop when the group delivered the first speech by a Korean pop artist at the United Nations General Assembly in support of the *Love Myself* campaign in collaboration with UNICEF, advocating self-love and violence prevention for young people around the world. This event not only highlighted his commitment to social issues, but also demonstrated how his public engagement bridges popular culture and global advocacy, reinforcing the soft power of Korean cultural discourse in global arenas. Moreover, BTS's global outreach has extended to multiple United Nations assemblies and other international forums, where messages of empowerment and cultural diversity have been amplified through Namjoon's articulate advocacy, contributing to a broader dialogue about youth, identity, and social responsibility on a global scale (Nawaz, 2021; Yonhap, 2022).

Many previous studies have studied Kim Namjoon's speech in United using critical discourse (Nisa et al., 2023), such as Leech's social value framework from the linguistic aspect (Sitinjak et al., 2023), speech function (Atmaja et al., 2021), deixis aspect (Susanti et al., 2023), fostering self-love using CDA (Agustien & Fanany, 2025). Of these studies, the focus of the study related to the value of social awareness in Kim Namjoon's speech in United in 2018 through the textual aspect taken from the CDA component has not been widely studied. Besides that, the study focuses on Kim Namjoon's opinion as the leader of a globally famous group to convey the social values given through the speech can build sympathy and empathy,

understanding other people's perspectives, and social awareness that can make us realize that these abilities can change the perspectives of those who listen to them. By blending personal storytelling with global messages, the speech connects individual experiences with communal ambitions, ensuring that its message resonates on both emotional and intellectual levels.

Although previous studies have extensively examined Kim Namjoon's 2018 United Nations speech using Critical Discourse Analysis from various perspectives such as social values based on Leech's framework, speech functions, deixis, and the promotion of self-love, there remains a limited focus on how social awareness values are specifically constructed at the textual level of the discourse. In particular, existing research has not sufficiently explored how grammatical patterns, textual structure, and writing style function together to construct meanings related to social awareness within the CDA framework. Consequently, there is a research gap in understanding how textual features of the speech contribute to the formation and articulation of social awareness values, especially in relation to solidarity, empathy, and social responsibility conveyed through Kim Namjoon's discourse.

The value of social awareness is taken from the textual meaning included grammar, structure and writing style which show the vocabulary meaning. It is as a novelty part that displays in this study. In addition, Critical Discourse Analysis allows researchers to explore ideological values and social awareness that are not directly visible in the text. It also helps reveal how Kim Namjoon's choice of words in narratives like "Love Yourself" or "Speak Yourself" carries ethical values, social awareness, and identity struggles.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how social awareness values are constructed and represented in Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in 2018 by examining the textual dimension of the discourse within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. Specifically, this study focuses on the analysis of grammatical features, textual structure, and writing style in order to reveal how linguistic choices contribute to the formation of meanings related to social awareness, including solidarity, empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility. This study is expected to contribute theoretically and methodologically to the field of literary and discourse studies by extending the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to descriptive literary texts in the form of public speeches. By emphasizing the role of textual features in constructing social awareness values, this research provides a deeper understanding of how literary and linguistic elements function together in shaping ethical and social meanings. Furthermore, the findings are expected to offer practical insights for educators, researchers, and discourse analysts in using public speeches as learning resources for fostering social awareness, empathy, and critical language awareness in educational and intercultural contexts.

METHOD

The research uses a qualitative method that focuses on the content analysis method approach to examine the values of social awareness in Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in 2018 using textual analyze perspective as part of critical discourse analysis. Content analysis is a fundamental method in the social sciences and humanities that converts qualitative text into quantitative data (Limont et al., 2022). This rationale was picked because of its potential to identify meaning in the text, connect more deeply with it, and connect it to the globalized socio-cultural context. Furthermore, as the volume of digitized text grows, scaling old methods to handle larger datasets becomes increasingly difficult (Zhao et al., 2025).

The data source is a transcript of Kim Namjoon's speech taken from the Unicef website (<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/we-have-learned-love-ourselves-so-now-i-urge-you-speak-yourself>). The data are words, phrases or sentences that are taken from Kim Namjoon's speech which contain the meaning of social awareness. The process of collecting data is library study and document of Kim Namjoon's speech. The textual analysis of CDA that is applied focuses on the value of social awareness which is understood through the context of grammar, structure, writing style and meaning. The content analysis is an interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and

conclusion drawing. This process is carried out regularly to identify patterns, categorize data, and interpret meaning in qualitative findings. Thus, qualitative research seeks a deep knowledge of human and social problems rather than simply describing the surface of reality. Researchers examine how participants derive meaning from their surroundings and how that meaning drives their behavior (Miles et al., 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it was found that the value of social awareness in Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in 2018 was developed through the use of language that was emotionally changed, empathic, and reflective. Analysis from a text perspective shows that the sentence structure, diction, and writing style used by Kim Namjoon in his speech included four main aspects at the textual level, namely grammar, structure, writing style, and meaning used by Kim Namjoon in conveying social awareness values such as solidarity, tolerance, and social responsibility. The following is the social awareness value using textual perspective;

Table 1. Social Awareness Value Through Textual Perspective

NO	Kim Namjoon's speech Data (words, phrases or sentences) and Social Awareness Value	Text Perspective			
		Grammar	Structure	Writing Style	Meaning
1	Solidarity	- Nominal present simple tense - Nominal present past tense	- Simple sentence - Compound sentence	- Descriptive style - Expository style - Narrative style - Persuasive style	- It reflects a social issue such as identity and self-acceptance. - It reflects a social issue such as young people's voices in social change - It reflects solidarity through the process of recognition, empathy, and interpersonal closeness
	1. My name is Kim Namjoon, also known as RM, the leader of the group BTS.				
	2. Our fans have become a major part of this campaign with their action and enthusiasm.	- Verbal present perfect tense - Verbal present past tense - Verbal present simple tense			
	3. I was born in Ilsan, ...				
	4. If there's anything that I've achieved, it was only possible because I had my other BTS members by my side, and because of the love and support of our ARMY fans.				
	5. ... how our message helped them overcome their hardships in life and start loving themselves.				
	6. What is your name? What excites and makes your heart beat?				
	7. Tell me your story.				
	8. Find your name, find your voice				

	by speaking yourself.				
	9. ... today's young generation.				
2	Tolerance	- Nominal present simple tense	- Simple sentence	- Descriptive style	- It reflects as identity and young people's voices in social change which is involved in humanitarian efforts, child protection, and human rights
	1. We have been partnering with UNICEF.		- Complex sentence	- Expository style	
	2. ... in wonder and dream the dreams of a boy.	- Verbal present simple tense	- Compound sentence	- Narrative style	
	3. ... imagine that I was a superhero, saving the world.	- Verbal present past tense		- Persuasive style	
	4. I began to worry about what other people thought of me...	- Verbal present perfect tense			- It encourages us to tolerate and empathize by understanding the perspectives, hopes, and imaginations of others as children.
	5. I began to shut out my own voice and started to listen to the voices of others.	- Verbal present perfect continuous tense			
	6. But I am still an ordinary, twenty-four-year-old guy.				- It reflects the diversity of personalities.
	7. We have learned to love ourselves, ...				- It talks how to accept and appreciate diversity, and encourages them to speak up about what they feel.
	8. Speak yourself.				
	9. I want to hear your voice.				
	10. I had one sanctuary, and that was music.				- Kim Namjoon here affirms that everyone has the same religious background, ethnicity, race, or social status; they have the same right to be respected and treated equally
	11. ... just an ordinary boy.				
3	Social Responsibility	- Nominal present simple tense	- Simple sentence	- Expository style	- It reflects survive concept
	1. Sometimes, I just wanted to quit.		- Complex sentence	- Narrative style	- It reflects care about other perceptions, they are not only concerned about personal matters, but also about their readiness to bear social impact and great expectations from the outside.
	2. ... making the decision to join BTS, there were hurdles.	- Verbal present simple tense	- Compound sentence	- Persuasive style	
	3. I think I was very lucky that I didn't give it all up.	- Verbal present past tense			
	4. ... but yesterday's me is still me/	- Verbal present continuous tense			- It managed to maintain and take responsibility for the good, sustainability,
	5. I am who I am today, with all my vaults.				
	6. ... we started to hear remarkable stories from our				

- fans all over the world, ...
7. These stories constantly remind us of our responsibility.
 8. I want to hear your conviction.
 9. No matter who you are, where you're from, your skin colour, gender identity.
 10. ... but I am going to embrace myself as hard as I can, and I'm starting to love myself, little by little.
- and well-being of them
- It reflects responsibility in interacting with others, be more honest, and be more trustworthy in social life to build healthy social relationships.

An analysis of Kim Namjoon's speech at the United Nations in 2018 shows that every part of his message contains profound meanings related to solidarity, tolerance, and social responsibility. Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach, particularly from a textual perspective, this study found that the way Kim Namjoon expressed his thoughts revealed strong moral values that encourage empathy, self-acceptance, and awareness of others. The result of the study show that Kim Namjoon's frequent use of personal pronouns such as "I," "we," and "us" creates a sense of togetherness and shared identity between himself and the audience. This expression reflects the value of solidarity, showing that personal experiences can be connected to collective consciousness. When Kim Namjoon mentions the members of BTS and ARMY, he highlights the importance of unity, cooperation, and mutual support. This is in line with Fairclough's idea that words in a text can represent social relationships and express emotional closeness.

Solidarity

The first value reflected in the speech is solidarity, which is evident in Kim Namjoon's expressions of togetherness and mutual support. When he introduced himself as "the leader of BTS" and mentioned that "our fans have been an important part of this campaign," it showed that his identity is inseparable from the people around him. He positions himself as part of a collective that includes his bandmates, fans, and the global community, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and appreciation for others.

This message continues when he says, "If there is anything I have achieved, it is only possible because I have the other members of BTS by my side, and because of the love and support of our ARMY fans." The meaning behind this statement shows humility and the belief that success is not an individual thing, but a collective one. This emphasizes that human relationships built on trust, care, and shared goals are at the core of meaningful achievement. Through phrases such as "Tell your story" and "Find your name, find your voice by speaking honestly," Kim Namjoon encourages people to open up, share their experiences, and connect through empathy. These expressions invite self-reflection and compassion for others, showing that solidarity is born from mutual understanding. His call to the younger generation to recognize their identity and speak with confidence creates a sense of togetherness and empowerment among listeners. Therefore, solidarity in this speech is not only about unity, but also about understanding and supporting one other through shared human experiences (Khater et al., 2024).

Tolerance

The second key value is tolerance, which is reflected in Kim Namjoon's openness and respect for differences. Through his words, he shows appreciation for diversity, background, or personal experience. His statement, "We have been working with UNICEF," reflects a spirit

of global cooperation that transcends national and cultural boundaries. This symbolizes mutual respect and a shared commitment to humanitarian goals.

When Kim Namjoon said, “I started worrying about what other people thought of me” and “I started ignoring my own voice and listening to the voices of others,” Kim Namjoon revealed his personal transformation toward understanding other people’s perspectives. The meaning behind these sentences shows that tolerance begins with awareness to learning to listen, empathize, and respect other people’s feelings.

Kim Namjoon showed further tolerance when he referred to himself as “an ordinary twenty-four-year-old man.” This expression reflects humility and equality, emphasizing that everyone, regardless of status, deserves respect and acceptance (Anas et al., 2025; Preston et al., 2025). His famous phrase, “Speak Yourself,” reinforces this idea by encouraging people from all backgrounds to express themselves without fear or discrimination. This shows that every voice matters, and every individual has the right to be heard. This message is in line with the values of inclusion and respect promoted by global education and social awareness programs.

Social Responsibility

The third value conveyed in the speech was social responsibility, which reflected Kim Namjoon’s understanding of the impact of his words and actions. His admission of difficulty, “Sometimes, I just want to give up,” showed honesty and accountability. Instead of giving up, he continued to move forward, demonstrating a sense of responsibility towards BTS, fans, and the wider community.

When he said, “These stories continue to remind us of our responsibilities,” Kim Namjoon emphasized that both public figures and individuals have an obligation to use their influence for positive change. This statement expresses gratitude and awareness that his role extends beyond the world of entertainment; it is also about guiding and inspiring others. His invitations, “I want to hear your beliefs,” and “No matter who you are, where you come from, the colour of your skin, or your gender identity,” reflect a moral commitment to equality and inclusivity. He emphasized that every person’s story is important and that compassion should be given to everyone, regardless of differences.

Furthermore, his admission, “I am who I am today, with all my weaknesses,” demonstrates honesty and moral maturity. By acknowledging his imperfections, he sets an example of self-acceptance and encourages others to take responsibility for their actions and growth. This honesty is in line with Freire’s concept of critical consciousness, which emphasizes that self-reflection is the foundation for meaningful social change (Freire, 2017). His closing message, “I am starting to love myself, little by little,” reflects that personal healing and empathy are important steps toward the formation of a more understanding and responsible society.

From a textual perspective, Kim Namjoon’s speech successfully combines emotional narrative, moral reflection, and social values into a compact message. The meaning of this speech goes beyond mere motivation; it becomes a form of education about humanity, empathy, and awareness. His simple yet powerful words encourage listeners to reflect on their role in society and to practice kindness, openness, and courage. This speech illustrates that self-acceptance and awareness of others are closely related. By loving oneself, one becomes more capable of understanding and supporting others. Through solidarity, tolerance, and social responsibility, Kim Namjoon transformed his experiences into a universal message that touched the hearts of young people around the world.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results concluded that 1) there are four writing styles, namely descriptive style, expository style, narrative style, and persuasive style. 2) there are three sentence structures found, namely simple sentences, complex sentences, and compound sentences. 3) grammar consists of nominal and verbal tenses. From these textual findings, each word in the data has a social awareness value meaning that shows diversity in the context of social

concern. The discussion of the text's perspective shows that Kim Namjoon's speech was not just a public speech; it was a reflection of social awareness expressed with sincerity and compassion. His words inspire the younger generation to speak up, embrace their identities, and actively participate in creating a more empathetic and inclusive world. Kim Namjoon transforms his experiences into a universal message that touches the conscience of young people around the world. This study is expected to serve as a reference for those interested in discourse analysis and the role of popular culture in society. For Further Research could examine speeches by other public figures from different backgrounds, such as politicians, activists, or other public figures. In addition, the use of other analytical methods, such as semiotic analysis or narrative analysis, could also be used to enrich the research perspective. For Educators and Practitioners, Kim Namjoon's speech can be used as teaching material in courses related to language studies, communication, or popular culture studies. Educators can use it to train students' critical thinking skills while fostering empathy and concern for social issues. For Readers and Fans, the researcher hopes that readers can take away positive values from the message conveyed in this speech. For fans, this message can serve as motivation to be more confident, more open in expressing opinions, and more sensitive to social issues around them.

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