

**Standing Next to You, Seven Days A Week:  
Transitivity Analysis of Bts Jungkook's Lyrics**

**Friska Dita**

English Language and Culture Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business  
University of Widya Dharma Pontianak  
friska\_dita@widyadharma.ac.id

**Abstract**

*It has piqued interest to study the songs of a particular artist since they have garnered a lot of attention from listeners. The study aims to explore the use of language through the transitivity theory, which is the core of Halliday's (1969) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) that focuses on language functions. To analyze the function, the study focuses on the transitivity processes present in the artist's first debut single, "Seven", and the latest release, "Standing Next to You". The study results show that both songs have dominant material processes for 66 occurrences, which accounts for about 45.8% of the total 144 processes. Although both songs predominantly use the same processes, they differ in the second most commonly used processes. "Seven" emphasizes the thoughts, feelings, or perceptions (mental processes) that arise after experiencing love (material processes). In contrast, "Standing Next to You" emphasizes the verbal communication that follows the act of showing love. Based on this study, it is recommended to conduct further analysis of the participants involved in the process and the circumstances for future research.*

**Keywords:** *Transitivity processes, song Lyrics, BTS Jungkook*

---

**Introduction**

As the biggest singing group in the world, BTS fame is not one to doubt. BTS, also known as the Bangtan Boys, is a South Korean boy band that consists of RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook. They captivated global audiences with their distinctive blends of music, performance, and socially conscious messages. Earning a reputation for their energetic performances and charismatic stage presence, they often addressed societal challenges and advocated for positive change. Beyond their musical prowess, they actively engage with their fanbase, known as the ARMY, fostering a sense of connection and shared experiences. The fans' backgrounds are varied although BTS's lyrics are in Korean and a few English clauses here and there. Their commitment to authenticity and meaningful storytelling led to their involvement in producing their crafts, from writing the lyrics to producing the beats. They chose a specific theme for each album, which was oftentimes based on a book to convey their concern. Their lyrics often delve into topics such as mental health, self-love, and societal issues, resonating deeply with fans worldwide. This sense of resonance was another distinct factor that separated BTS from other K-pop groups.

With their long list of awards and dedicated fanbase, BTS's achievements have proven their quality is not one to be taken lightly. Not only charting in Korean music shows, BTS also charted on a global scale on Billboard charts and Grammy. Starting as the winner of the top social award in the Billboard Music Award 2017, they cemented their path in widening their audiences on a global scale. BTS attended the Grammys in 2019, presenting H.E.R. with the best R&B album of the year for her self-titled EP. The Grammys is the annual award given by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences for special achievement in the recording industry. This award show is one of four major annual American entertainment awards. They continued attending the award show the following year and had an opportunity to join Lil Nas X for an "Old Town Road," performance alongside Billy Ray Cyrus, Diplo, and Mason Ramsey.

In 2021, they were nominated for their first nomination on Grammy in the “Best Pop Duo/Group” category for their first full English song, “Dynamite.” This event marked BTS as the first South Korean pop act to receive a Grammy nomination. It was not only their first time receiving a nomination, but also their first performance at the award show. Although they didn’t win, this event is still a history for South Korea.

Because of these achievements, it was not a surprise when each member had their solo projects. The project topped several categories on the Billboard charts. While Suga and RM had already debuted as soloists years back before their appearance on Billboard with their mixtapes, the other five members’ solos garnered achievements as much as their group albums. The youngest member of the group, Jung Jungkook, also known as BTS Jungkook, had a successful solo debut album “Golden” and all the songs are in English. This propelled him to greater opportunities and higher chart rankings on a global scale. His first single “Seven” topped several charts domestically and globally. This song won triple crowns on three Korean music shows: M Countdown, Inkigayo, and Music Core, with a total winning of 13 times for the first-place trophy. On a global scale, it charted for about 7 weeks on the Billboard Global 200 since it was released on July 14th, 2023 (Trust, 2023a). It won two Guinness World Records for The Most Streamed Track on Spotify in a week and The Fastest Time to Reach 100 Million Streams on Spotify as a male singer (Punt, 2023).

These achievements continued to the third single, “Standing Next to You”. This song was the third song to be released from the same album, “Golden”. The music video was released on November 3rd, 2023, on YouTube. This song also reigned at first place on the Billboard Global 200 and the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. song charts the second week of its release (Trust, 2023b). Although it didn’t reign at No.1 consecutively, this song stayed for five weeks at No.1 on the Digital Song Sales chart (Vaishnavi, 2023). These achievements showed BTS Jungkook’s force to be reckoned as a non-English native-speaker soloist, besides his work as a member of the seven-member group BTS.

This sparked an interest in studying his songs, since it garnered a lot of attention from the listeners. The study explores the use of language using the transitivity theory. Transitivity theory is the core of Halliday’s (1969) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which focuses on language functions. To analyze the function, the study focuses on the processes of transitivity that occur in the first debut single, “Seven”, and the latest release, “Standing Next to You”.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Theory of Transitivity**

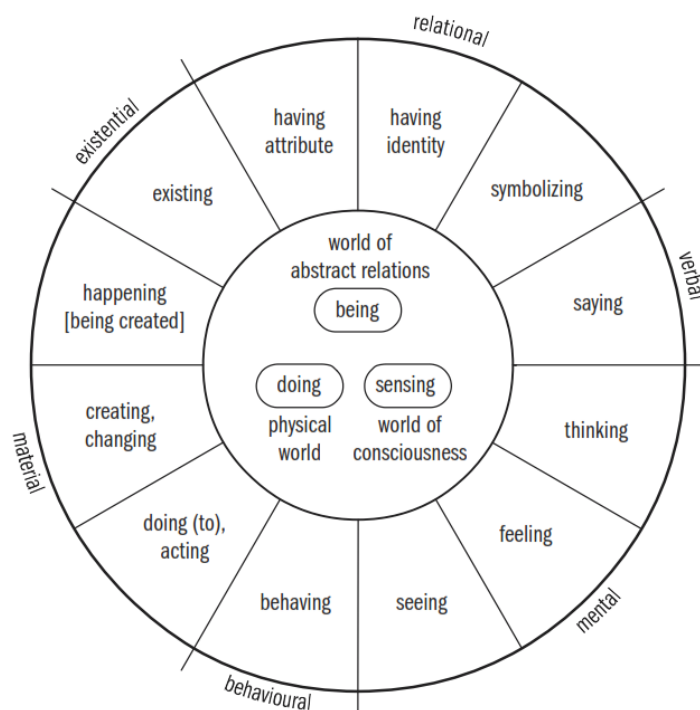
Transitivity, as part of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar, has some specific purposes. Transitivity belongs to the ideational metafunction of language because it conveys experiences. This includes processes, participants, and circumstances. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Fontaine (2013) points out that the transitivity framework portrays human encounters as a series of interconnected and notable elements. It is further explained by Thompson (2014) that the transitivity system provides alternatives to how a speaker perceives the world with his or her intention taken into account for choosing the expression. Verbal phrases or predicators in a clause mainly carry a transitivity process and involve participants (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

These transitivity processes, as explained by Halliday, include material processes, mental processes, verbal processes, behavioral processes, relational processes, and existential processes. Material processes are processes of doing physical or tangible actions, which is proven by analyzing the actor and the goal. These two roles are the participants of this process with the actor as the doer, and the goal is a person or entity. This process can also be proven by asking “What did X do?”.

In mental processes, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are converted to mental reactions. They “express an internal experience of a human, what happens in their mind, and

the use of human senses" (Kristiano, 2021). These processes can be explored by asking "What do you think/feel/know about X?" The Sener and the phenomenon are two participants in mental processes. The Sener is the conscious being who is involved in a mental process, while the phenomenon is the thing conscious Sener felt, thought, and seen. Gerot & Wignell classified mental processes into three categories: perceptive, affective, or reactive, and cognitive. Gerot and Wignell (1995: 58) identified three mental processes: perception, affect, and cognition. Perception refers to the process of sensing, hearing, tasting, smelling, noticing, and more. Affection involves feeling, loving, liking, and more. Cognition pertains to thinking, believing, understanding, remembering, and more.

Relational processes explain the relationship of being and having between two participants through identification, attribution, and possession or circumstantial. Generally, verbs such as is, am, are, was, were, have been, seem, become, weigh, cost, and more, belong to this type of process. This process consists of Identifying and Attributive. Identifying relational serves the purpose of defining and Token and Value are two participants that are involved in this process. "Nominal groups realize both token and value. The essential characteristic of the identifying clause is that the clause is reversible" (Prasetyo, Situmorang, & Hutabarat, 2023: 13). For instance, "Elsa is the smartest kid in this class" can be changed to "The smartest kid in this class is Elsa". Attributive serves to describe, and the participants involved are the Carrier and the Attribute. On the contrary, from identifying relational, nominal groups, along with nouns, only realize carrier in attributive relational. The attributive clause is not reversible and is the crucial point in attributive (Prasetyo, Situmorang, & Hutabarat, 2023: 13).



**Figure 1. The Grammar of Experience: Types of Process In English (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 216).**

Behavioral processes share material and mental processes features. The outer expression of inner work characterizes these and reflects psychological and physiological behaviors, such as breathing, dreaming, snoring, smiling, hiccupping, looking, watching,

listening, and pondering. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 60) further explain that in this process, there is only one participant, which is called a Behavior. This participant is usually a conscious being, like the Sayer in the mental process, but the process leans more toward doing an action rather than sensing.

When it comes to the process of communicating information through saying, it is classified as a Verbal process in transitivity. The verbal process represents the link between mental and relational processes, expressed through language, such as speaking and understanding. (Thompson, 2000). The participants in this process are called the Sayer, the Receiver, and the Verbiage. According to Mehmood et al. (2014: 81), in a verbal process, there are three participants: the Sayer, who is responsible for initiating the process; the Receiver, who is the intended recipient of the message; and the Verbiage, which is the statement that summarizes the verbal process. There is also a fourth participant, known as the Target, who is the subject of the message. As noted by Zhao and Zhang (2017: 34), the Receiver is the person addressed by the saying, while the Target is the entity being referred to.

Existential processes express states of being, existence, and occurrence. These processes typically use the verb 'be' or its synonymous words, such as exist, arise, emerge, happen, and occur. In this process, the only participant is the Existent, which follows the 'there is/are' sequence. These processes are distinct from Relational and Material processes. The following figure shows the diagrammatic summary of the types of processes in English according to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014: 216).

The following table provides an example of each process from "Interview of Chinua Achebe:

**Table 1. Examples of A Transitivity Process**

| Process Type | Example<br>(Process + participants underlines; process in bold; circumstances in italics)  |
|--------------|--|
| Material     | <i>During the European scramble for Africa, <u>Nigeria</u> <b>fell</b> to the British.</i> |
|              | <i>and <u>the British</u> <b>ruled</b> <u>it</u> until 1960</i>                            |
| Behavioral   | <u>people</u> <b>are laughing</b> .  |
| Mental       | <u>The boss</u> <b>did not approve of</b> <u>kings</u>                                     |
| Verbal       | so <u>we</u> <b>say</b> → that every fourth African is a Nigerian                          |
|              | <b>Can you tell</b> <u>us</u> <i>about the political and cultural make-up of Nigeria?</i>  |
| Relation     | that <u>every fourth African</u> <b>is</b> <u>a Nigerian</u> .                             |
| Existential  | so <i>today</i> there's <u>Christianity</u> <b>in the south</b>                            |

## Methodology

Firstly, the lyrics of "SEVEN" and "STANDING NEXT TO YOU" were collected from Genius.com. Since the song selection was usually based on the person's preference, the song selection was based on the songs' rank on the Billboard World Music chart. Lines of primary data containing clauses with verbs that realize transitivity were done as the second step. Then, use a table to outline the six processes since the focus of the study is the types of transitivity processes in the song lyrics of BTS Jungkook. The table was used to record the occurrence of transitivity processes and analyze the dominant process types in each song.

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

Process types were identified and counted after conducting a transitivity analysis on the song lyrics. The resulting data is presented in table 2 below. It shows that three processes are more dominant than the others. This is in line with Halliday and Matthiessen's claim that material, mental, and relational processes are the main types in the English transitivity system due to their frequency (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 215). These three types of processes

display how a human is: experiencing the external world (material), experiencing the internal world of consciousness (mental), and relating one aspect of the experience to another (relational).

**Table 2. Total Occurrences and Percentage of Types of Transitivity Processes**

| TYPES OF TRANSITIVITY PROCESSES | OCCURRENCES OF PROCESSES | PERCENTAGE  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Mental                          | 32                       | 22.2%       |
| Material                        | 66                       | 45.8%       |
| Relational                      | 17                       | 11.8%       |
| Behavioral                      | 9                        | 6.3%        |
| Existential                     | 6                        | 4.2%        |
| Verbal                          | 14                       | 9.7%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>144</b>               | <b>100%</b> |

According to the data, the material process is the most dominant of the two songs analyzed. The data indicates that material processes occurred 66 times in total which is about 45.8% of the total of 144 of all processes. Mental processes are the second place most dominant with 32 times occurrences, which is about 22.2% of the total processes. In third place, relational processes dominate the occurrences 17 times, which is about 11.8% of all processes. The verbal process follows the reign to be the fourth place with 14 times occurrences, which is about 9.7% of total occurrences. The rest of the processes occur 9 times or around 6.3% of occurrences for behavioral, and existential processes occur 6 times or around 4.2% of total occurrences.

To detail the findings, Table 3 and Table 4 present transitivity processes counting for each song. Table 3 reveals the occurrences and percentage of the “Seven” song. With a total of 76 occurrences, material processes reign to be the most frequent processes to occur with 40.8% or 31 occurrences. This rank is then followed by mental processes in 24 occurrences (31.6%). The rest of the processes follow respectfully with 9 times for relational processes (11.8%) existential processes with 6 occurrences (or around 7.9%), behavioral with 4 occurrences (5.3%), and verbal processes occurring 2 times (or around 2.6%).

**Table 3. Occurrences and Percentage of Types of Transitivity Processes on BTS Jungkook’s “Seven”**

| Types of Transitivity Processes | Occurrences of Processes | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Mental                          | 24                       | 31.6%          |
| Material                        | 31                       | 40.8%          |
| Relational                      | 9                        | 11.8%          |
| Behavioral                      | 4                        | 5.3%           |
| Existential                     | 6                        | 7.9%           |
| Verbal                          | 2                        | 2.6%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>76</b>                | <b>100%</b>    |

Table 4 also displays the occurrences of the “Standing Next to You” song. In this song, material processes still rank as the first with 35 times occurrences or about 51.5% of the total processes. Different from “Seven”, the second most dominating processes which occur in this song is Verbal processes, with 12 occurrences or about 17.6% of total occurrences. Mental and relational processes appear to be in the same spot, with 8 appearances, or about 11.8%. While

behavioral processes occur 5 times (around 7.4%), there is no appearance of an existential process.

**Table 4. Occurrences and Percentage of Types of Transitivity Processes on BTS Jungkook's "Standing Next to You"**

| <b>Types of Transitivity Processes</b> | <b>Occurrences of Processes</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mental                                 | 8                               | 11.8%                 |
| Material                               | 35                              | 51.5%                 |
| Relational                             | 8                               | 11.8%                 |
| Behavioral                             | 5                               | 7.4%                  |
| Existential                            | 0                               | 0%                    |
| Verbal                                 | 12                              | 17.6%                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>68</b>                       | <b>100%</b>           |

### **Discussion**

With the occurrences for 66 times in total which is about 45,8% of the total of 144 of all processes, material processes lead the transitivity processes in this study. The reason for this finding is because we begin with the material aspect of things, not because it is more important than other aspects, but because it is the most easily observable and understandable to our conscious mind. Throughout history, linguistics has focused on material aspects such as verbs, which has led to the traditional differentiation between transitive and intransitive verbs (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p.215). The prominence of material processes in song lyrics can reveal the songwriter's mental style in processing the world around them. It reflects their experiences and how they have dealt with them, displaying a focus on action and events. These material processes are represented in the lyrics, and they convey the songwriter's perspective on life.

However, the difference between these two songs is in their second most dominating process. While "Seven" has mental processes as their second most frequent, the latest song "Standing Next to You" appears to have verbal processes as their second most frequent processes to occur. The reason behind this is related to the lyrics of the songs and their theme. In "Seven", the most frequent verbs of mental processes that appear in the lyrics are loving and knowing, which are repeated in the chorus multiple times. For instance, the lyric "You know night after night" is repeated six times, while "I'll be lovin' you right" is repeated nine times. With the theme of showing love to the significant other every day, it is no surprise the emphasis after the action (material processes) is on the mental processes. On the other hand, the most frequent verbs of verbal processes that appear in the song "Standing Next to You" are screaming and testify. These two verbs appear twice in two pre-chorus, which can be totaled as 4 occurrences. This can be comprehended because the theme of this song is to convince the lover while being proactive through actions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study presents several results regarding the transitivity analysis of types of processes that occur in two songs from BTS Jungkook, "Seven" and "Standing Next to You". Based on the findings, material processes are the most commonly used processes in these two songs. They occur 66 times, which is 45.8% of the total 144 processes identified. Mental processes come in second place, while relational processes are the third most frequently used process in these songs. These findings prove that these three processes are the most frequently occurring in transitivity analysis. The findings also show that, depending

on the theme of the song lyrics, transitivity processes occur to accommodate the purpose of the song. This claim is proven by the difference between “Seven” and “Standing Next to You” songs in their second-most occurrences. While “Seven” emphasizes the feeling, thought, or perception after receiving the action of love (material processes), “Standing Next to You” emphasizes the verbal actions following the act of showing love. Verbal actions are taken to convince the value of the processes. Following this study, it is suggested to further analyze the participants in the process and the circumstances for future conduct.

## References

- Fontaine, L. (2013). *Analysing English grammar: a systemic-functional introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). *Making sense of functional grammar*. Cammeray, NSW: Antipodean Educational Enterprises.
- Guswita, K. A., & Suhardi, S. (2020). Transitivity Analysis of Jokowi and Prabowo Campaign Speech in Indonesian Presidential Election 2019. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 5(1), 143. <https://doi.org/10.21462/ijefl.v5i1.234>
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matuliessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.)*. Routledge.
- Harbi, S., Jabar, M. S. A., Nor, A. N. M., & Isa, N. M. (2019). “Hey, Jude! I Wanna Hold Your Hand”: Transitivity Process Analysis on Popular Songs by The Beatles. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.15282/ijleal.v9.301>
- Mehmood, A., Amber, R., Ameer, S., & Faiz, R. (2014). Transitivity Analysis: Representation of Love in Wilde's The Nightingale and The ROSE. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 2(4).
- Mulyati, S. (2022). *The Transitivity of Alan Walker Song Lyrics In “Different World” Album*. TheGIST, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.53675/gist.v4i2.313>
- Prasetiyo, D., Situmorang, H., & Hutabarat, I. (2023). Process Types of Transitivity System in Adele's Song Lyrics. *JURNAL LITTERA: FAKULTAS SASTRA DARMA AGUNG*, 2(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.46930/littera.v2i1.3249>
- Punt, D. (2023, August 2). *BTS members Jimin and Jungkook set even more records with solo careers*. Guinness World Records; Guinness World Records. <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2023/8/bts-members-jimin-and-jungkook-set-even%20more-records-with-solo-careers-756345>
- Sartika, J., Max, D., Vivian, Y., Putra, B., & Kuncara, S. (2023). Transitivity Analysis of Taylor Swift's Lyrics in Midnight's Album Indonesian. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 8(2), 2023. <https://doi.org/10.21462/ijefl.v8i2.688>
- Siahaan, H. V. F. (2021). Transitivity Processes in Bon Jovi's Selected Song Lyrics, *Ijeal: International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics*, (2), 117-125.
- Staff, T. H., Herman, T., & Staff, B. (2023, June 12). *How BTS Took Over the World: A Timeline of the Group's Biggest Career Moments*. Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/lists/bts-timeline-biggest-career-moments/>
- Thompson, G. (2004). *Introducing functional grammar. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)*. London: Arnold.
- Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing functional grammar (3rd ed.)*. Routledge.

- 
- Trust, G. (2023a, September 5). *Seven Weeks for "Seven": Jung Kook & Latto Continue Atop Billboard Global Charts*. Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/music/chart-beat/jung-kook-latto-seven-number-one-seventh-week-global-charts-1235405973/>
- Trust, G. (2023b, September 7). *Jung Kook & Latto's "Seven" Is Billboard's No. 1 Global Song of the Summer for 2023*. Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/music/chart-beat/jung-kook-latto-seven-number-one-song-global-summer-2023-1235408379/>
- Trust, G. (2023c, November 13). *Jung Kook's "Standing Next to You" Debuts Atop Billboard Global Charts, The Beatles' "Now and Then" Hits Top 10*. Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/music/chart-beat/jung-kook-standing-next-to-you-number-one-global-charts-debut-1235470687/>
- Vaishnavi, A. (2023, December 28). *BTS' Jungkook spends most weeks at No. 1 on Billboard's Digital Song Sales chart with Standing Next to You*. Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/entertainment/music/bts-jungkook-spends-most-weeks-at-no-1-on-billboard-chart-101703769844276.html?>
- Vega, H., & Siahaan, F. (2021). *Transitivity processes in Bon Jovi's Selected Song Lyrics*. In IJEAL (International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics). <https://doi.org/10.47709/ijeal.v1i2.1043>
- Zhao, M., & Zhang, Y. (2017). A Transitivity Analysis of American President Donald J. Trump's Inaugural Address. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, 5(5).