

BTS's 'Spring Day' through the lens of narrative paradigm and semiotics

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on analyzing the meanings of BTS's Spring Day music video through the lens of the Narrative Paradigm theory and Roland Barthes semiotics. The study used two primary data collection techniques: observation and literature review. The analysis found nine key scenes showing three stages of emotional transformation: grief, longing, and emotional liberation. Each stage reflects a specific mood, isolation, sorrow, longing, healing, or hope. Additionally, an analysis of eight key lyrics reveals four narrative stages: profound loss and clinging to hope, struggling with normalcy, emerging from despair, and messages of hope and closure. These findings highlight how Spring Day combines visual and lyrical elements to convey the universal message of loss and recovery. BTS's storytelling on Spring Day offers an emotionally resonant and culturally relevant narrative enriched with semiotic meaning.

Keywords: BTS, Barthes semiotics, lyrics and video analysis, narrative paradigm, spring-day.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Art is more than just a form of expression; it is a reflection of emotions, thoughts, and experiences that shape human life. Just like anyone else, artists process feelings of joy, sorrow, longing, and hope, often channeling these emotions into their creative work. These feelings are not always stated outright; instead, they unfold through stories and narratives woven into lyrics and imagery (Murtiawani et al., 2025). Music stands out as a deeply emotive form of storytelling (Hess 2021). Through songs, artists communicate complex emotional journeys (Athanasopoulos et al., 2021), offering listeners entertainment as well as moments of empathy and connection. Within this process, narrative becomes a bridge that links the artist's inner world with the audience's lived experiences. Rather than simply telling a story, the narrative invites the audience to feel, reflect, and relate to it on a personal level.

One theoretical framework that helps us understand this phenomenon is the Narrative Paradigm Theory introduced by Walter Fisher in 1985 through his article "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration." According to Fisher (1985), humans are essentially storytellers' homo narrans who make sense of the world and communicate effectively through stories. This theory emphasizes that the persuasiveness and effectiveness of communication depend not only on logic but also on the coherence (internal consistency) and fidelity (truthfulness and relevance) of a narrative in relation to the audience's values and lived experiences (Fisher, 1985). Coherence is a measure of how well parts of a story relate to each other and form each concept. A coherent story has a clear structure, consistent characters, and logical plot. Coherence helps the audience understand and accept the narrative as making sense, whereas fidelity is a measure of how relevant and trustworthy a story is to the audience. It covers aspects such as the relevance of the story to the audience's personal experiences, cultural values, and social norms. High-resolution stories are those that are perceived by the audience as real and meaningful (Taufik et al., 2024).

In the context of the global music industry, narratives play a crucial role in shaping artists' identities and building emotional connections with audiences (Burns, 2015). As a leading figure in the international music scene, BTS exemplifies the application of narrative strategies to engage and inspire a global fanbase. By constructing compelling stories through music, visuals, and public personas, BTS has succeeded in fostering a strong sense of community and loyalty among listeners (Sierotowicz, 2024). Narrative Paradigm Theory is relevant to this study as it provides a framework to analyze how BTS utilizes storytelling to communicate messages, shape perceptions, and create meaningful relationships with their audience worldwide (Malik, 2023).

Music is an effective medium to convey messages. In music, there is an exchange of ideas, thoughts, and ideas between the songwriter and the audience as music connoisseurs (AL & Suyanto, 2017). Music is an element that is inseparable from human life and acts as a means of expression, communication, and cultural identity. Music has also been described as something that is inherently social and that contributes to cultural and social cohesion and identity (Barton & Riddle, 2022). Over time, music evolves with the changing times, influenced by technology, social trends, and the dynamics of the entertainment industry. An interesting phenomenon in the global music industry is the development of K-pop music, which has not only evolved in style and production, but also in marketing and interaction with fans (Min, 2024). With a powerful combination of visuals, immersive narratives, and high digital engagement, K-pop has become the dominant force in the world's music industry, bringing a new color to the modern entertainment landscape (Kim, 2021).

K-pop, which refers to Korean Pop, is a genre of pop music that originated in Korea. According to Howard (2010), K-pop is a hybridized produced pop product that combines the East and West, as well as global and local cultural aspects. K-pop itself is part of the Korean Wave (Hallyu), which is a wave of

Korean pop culture that penetrates the world (Jang & Min-Ho, 2023). The Korean Wave has become a very popular phenomenon and affects young people and teenagers. In general, K-pop has several factors that produce teenagers enjoying it, namely the attractiveness or good appearance of the members of boy bands and girl bands, as well as musical accompaniment that can be enjoyed by teenagers. In addition, the emotional relationship between idols and fans also plays an important role in attracting teenagers' interests. Interactions through social media, fan meetings, and other digital content create closeness that makes fans feel connected to their idols. The music presented by K-pop idols also often contains messages that are relevant to fans' experiences and feelings, thus strengthening their emotional bond (Kim & Kwon, 2022).

Big Hit Entertainment (now HYBE Corporation) is the agency that houses the most famous South Korean boy group today (Lie, 2021) and BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan). BTS was first introduced by Big Hit on June 13, 2013, with the album 2 Cool 4 Skool, along with its main song No More Dream (Kim, 2021). BTS consists of seven talented members, namely RM as the leader and main rapper, Jin as the sub vocalist and visual, Suga as the lead rapper, J-Hope as the sub rapper and main dancer, Jimin as the main vocalist, V as the lead vocalist and Jungkook as the main vocalist, center and also the youngest member (maknae). Since its debut, Big Hit Entertainment has always poured a unique concept on BTS to attract fans (Nishad, 2021). BTS has been the largest group in the world because of the various international achievements and recognition they have achieved, such as the best artist, album, song, and group award since 2017 in Korea, and has topped billboard charts since 2017, getting the nickname of the best group and artist in America since 2018 (Sihombing, 2021).

Through the hit single Dynamite, the group under the auspices of Big Hit Entertainment became the first K-pop group in the world to receive a nomination for the US music award Grammy in 2020 (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021). They were nominated in the best-pop duo/group performance category. BTS collaborated with UNICEF on the Love Myself campaign, a global initiative aimed at encouraging the younger generation to respect themselves and stand against violence. As part of this ongoing collaboration, on September 24, 2018, the BTS participated in the UNICEF Generation Unlimited event at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York (Oktiani & Putri, 2022; Clairini, 2022). During the event, BTS delivered a speech on behalf of young people around the world, emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance, identity, and voicing one's struggles and anxieties (Saptoyo & Galih, 2022).

Not just an ordinary concept, but Big Hit presents a concept that has a narrative and is sustainable to the point of having a theory in every music they create, making BTS more than just an ordinary idol group. Like in the album trilogy, You Never Walk Alone, which describes the journey of a person who faces challenges and pain, but is not alone because there are friends or people who support him. This album reflects hope and solidarity, inviting listeners to not give up in the face of difficult times.

The album You Never Walk Alone was first released on February 13, 2017, with the addition of four new songs from a previous album (Wings, 2016). The album serves as a repackaged edition of Wings and complements a previously built story. The four additional songs were Spring Day, Not Today, Outro: Wings, and A Supplementary Story: You Never Walk Alone.

From the setlist, Spring Day You Never Walk Alone (Spring Day) became the most iconic song from BTS known with lyrics that poetic and emotional discuss loss, longing, and companionship. It was released as part of an album on February 13, 2017. Spring Day has become one of the most loved songs by BTS (ARMY) fans and has continued to survive on various charts since its release. The song has reached one billion streams on MelOn, making it the first and only song to achieve such a feat in MelOn's history. MelOn is the largest and most popular music platform in South Korea with more than 28 million users. In addition, this song won the "Best Song of The Year" award at the MelOn Music Award in 2017 (Lestari, 2024).

According to Riyadi, the Spring Day song itself was believed to commemorate the tragedy of the sinking of the Sewol Ferry in 2014. Three years have passed since the song's release, and BTS's Jin confirmed that the song refers to a sad incident. "It's about sad events, as you say, but it's also about longing," Jin said (Wahyuningratna et al., 2023).

This research seeks to fill a gap that has not been discussed much in previous studies, namely, how BTS's Spring Day builds a narrative through a combination of lyrics, visuals, and symbols. Previous research, such as that conducted by Wahyuningratna et al. (2023), has focused more on the meaning of symbols in each MV scene. Meanwhile, this study not only examines the symbols that appear in music videos but also analyzes how the relationship between visual elements and lyrics forms a complete narrative and determines how BTS's Spring Day constructs a coherent and emotionally impactful narrative through the integration of lyrics, visual elements, and symbolic imagery.

With this approach, this research is expected to provide further insight into how BTS arranges visual and lyrical elements in Spring Day music videos, as well as the development of cohesive and authentic stories, in order to create narrative meanings that touch various audiences with diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach that integrates Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis with Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm to explore how BTS's Spring Day music video communicates meaning through its visual and lyrical elements. The combination of these frameworks provides a dual lens: semiotics decodes how symbols and signs construct cultural meaning (Hafizah et al., 2024; Tinarbuko, 2008), whereas the narrative paradigm enables an understanding of how stories achieve coherence and fidelity based on audiences' cultural values and shared human experiences (Nafsika & Huda, 2021).

Data collection was carried out between January and February 2025 using two main methods: structured observation and literature review. The observation process involved multiple viewings (Amalia et al., 2025) of the Spring Day music video to identify scenes and lyrics that contained layered symbolic meaning or narrative significance. Nine scenes and eight lyric excerpts were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria: the presence of recurring visual motifs (such as trains, snow, empty spaces), their connection to key emotional or temporal transitions, and their interpretive density in relation to Barthes' connotative system of meaning.

Each scene was time-stamped, described, and coded using Barthes' semiotic framework of the two orders of signification, denotation and connotation (Basri & Sari, 2019; Maria, 2020). Denotation refers to the literal or observable meaning of a sign, while connotation involves subjective cultural meanings influenced by memory, ideology, and emotional responses (Trimo Wati et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2024). The data was analyzed thematically, The data was analyzed thematically and grouped into three major clusters (Braun & Clarke, 2023), namely "absence and memory," "seasonal transitions," and "collective mourning."

To strengthen the validity of the interpretations, the study employed peer debriefing with two fellow media researchers and maintained a reflexive journal throughout the viewing and analysis process. The interpretations were refined collaboratively to mitigate subjective bias and reflect multiple perspectives. The researcher's positionality as a non-Korean viewer and emotionally invested K-pop audience member was acknowledged as a factor influencing both perception and interpretation.

The literature review served both as a theoretical foundation and triangulation tool. Academic studies on K-pop aesthetics, music video narratives, and symbolic representation have been conducted to contextualize the interpretation of Spring Day (Hafizah et al., 2024; Nafsika & Huda, 2021). Additionally, media coverage and selected fan interpretations were reviewed not as empirical sources but as cultural artifacts that reveal how meaning circulates within fandom discourse and public narratives.

This approach ultimately allows for a layered reading of Spring Day that considers both the textual richness of its signs and the narrative logic through which it engages viewers emotionally and culturally.

3. FOUND AND DISCUSSION



The results of the research, derived from the analysis of the music video and lyrics, were obtained through Barthes semiotic method, dividing the analysis into two parts, denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (implied meaning). To make the discussion clearer and more structured, the author presents the findings in table format, aligning selected scenes from the music video and key lyrics with their corresponding semiotic interpretations and narrative functions.




This format highlights how each element, both visual and lyrical, works together to build a cohesive emotional storyline that reflects the journey of grief, longing, and eventual healing. The following table outlines nine scenes and eight key lyrics from BTS's Spring Day, illustrating how these elements intertwined to create a meaningful and emotional narrative.

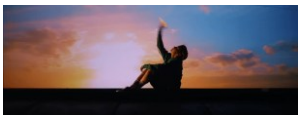
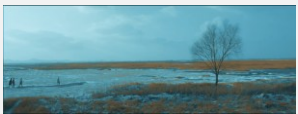

4.1 Visual Analysis


To understand the visual meanings embedded in BTS's Spring Day music video, this analysis applied a semiotic approach by identifying both denotative and connotative elements in nine key scenes.

Table 1. Denotations and Connotations related to BTS's MV Spring Day

Scene	Denotation	Connotation
Second 00:13 – 00:29 	V stands on the edge of a snowy railway crossing. He slowly walked in the middle of the train crossing and then stuck his ear to the train tracks.	The railway crossing is a powerful symbol often associated with transitions, meetings, or farewells. In Spring Day, the snowy setting adds a layer of coldness and isolation, emphasizing the theme of separation. V's action of pressing his ear to the tracks suggests a yearning to reconnect with something lost-perhaps a departed loved one or fading memories. This act metaphorically represents an attempt to "listen" to the past or to hold onto something intangible that time is eroding. The snow amplifies the feeling of stillness and waiting, underscoring the emotional weight of loss and hope for reunion.
Second 00:57 	RM who was standing in the middle of the carriage.	The train carriage symbolizes a journey, often interpreted as the journey of life. RM's solitary presence inside the carriage evokes feelings of loneliness and introspection, highlighting the emotional distance one feels during times of loss. The confined space of the carriage contrasts with the

Scene	Denotation	Connotation
		vastness of the journey ahead, symbolizing how loss can make one feel isolated even while moving forward. This scene reflects the internal struggle of navigating grief and the alienation that can accompany it.
Minute 01:36 	Jin stood at the bottom of the stairs, staring at the other members who were going upstairs.	Stairs often symbolize progression or a movement towards a higher state, such as enlightenment or the afterlife. In this scene, the members climbing the stairs can be interpreted as those who have “moved on” or passed away, while Jin remains grounded, representing those still grappling with grief and unable to let go. This visual metaphor poignantly illustrates the emotional divide between acceptance and mourning, emphasizing the difficulty of releasing cherished memories or people. Jin’s gaze upward conveys longing, hesitation, and the pain of separation.
Minute 01:46 	Jungkook was standing in the middle of the theme park with an abandoned ride behind him.	An amusement park is typically a place of joy and carefree happiness. Its emptiness here symbolizes lost happiness and the passage of time since those joyful moments. The abandoned ride serves as a metaphor for memories that once brought delight but are now silent and still. Jungkook’s somber expression reinforces the sense of nostalgia mixed with sorrow, reflecting how loss can turn once vibrant experiences into bittersweet recollections. This scene captures the emotional contrast between past joy and present grief.
Minute 02:41 	Suga sat on a pile of clothes.	The pile of clothes represents remnants or relics of people who are no longer present. Clothes, as personal items, carry traces of identity and presence, making them powerful symbols of memory and absence. Sitting on the clothes, Suga appears to be physically and

Scene	Denotation	Connotation
		emotionally anchored to the past, suggesting a deep connection to those who have gone. This image conveys the weight of memories and the struggle to move forward while still holding onto tangible reminders of loss.
Minute 03:20 	J-Hope sits on a train while flying a paper plane.	The paper plane symbolizes hope, freedom, and the desire to rise above current hardships. Flying a paper plane suggests sending wishes or messages into the future, embodying optimism and the pursuit of healing. J-Hope's position on the train indicates movement and progression, implying that despite the pain of loss, there is a journey toward recovery and renewal. This scene encapsulates the theme of resilience and the human capacity to find hope even in difficult times.
Minute 04:58 	Dry trees in the middle of a large field.	The barren trees amidst snow create a stark contrast between fragility and endurance. Snow often symbolizes coldness, dormancy, or sadness, while trees represent life, growth, and strength. Here, the trees' survival in a harsh environment suggests resilience and the persistence of life despite adversity. This imagery reflects the emotional state of enduring pain while still holding onto inner strength, conveying a message of hope and perseverance in the face of hardship.
Minute 04:49 	All BTS members are walking with an open sky	The open sky symbolizes freedom, vast possibilities, and hope for a brighter future. The members walking forward together emphasize solidarity, unity, and mutual support. This collective movement suggests that healing and overcoming difficult times are facilitated through companionship and shared strength. The scene serves as a hopeful conclusion, highlighting themes of togetherness.

Scene	Denotation	Connotation
		and the promise of renewal after loss.
Minute 05:19 	A pair of shoes hanging from a tree	Hanging shoes can be a symbolic tribute to someone who has passed away, representing remembrance and respect. This act can also signify the acceptance of loss and the process of letting go. In the context of the video, the shoes hanging from the tree suggest a ritual of closure and emotional release. It marks the transition from mourning to acceptance, embodying the journey toward peace after grief.

According to the findings from the analysis in Table 1, the diagram illustrates that several scenes in the music video repetition have the same underlying meaning, reinforcing the central emotional message.

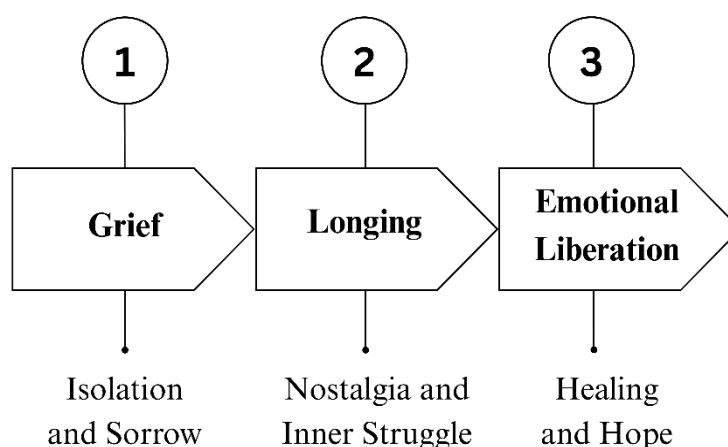


Figure 1. Diagram of Emotional Stages Based on Visual Analysis of Spring Day

Source: *Author(s) analysis (2025)*

In the “Spring Day” music video, every scene is not just visually beautiful; it also carries a deep symbolic meaning. From the series of scenes shown, we can see that there is a clear emotional journey from grief, longing, and finally to emotional liberation. Each stage is shown in different scenes, but they are all connected by the same core themes: loss, memory, and hope (see Figure 1).

1. Grief - Isolation and Sorrow (00:13, 00:57, and 01:36)

In the first scene, V stands alone on a snowy train track, trying to “listen” to the past, which shows his longing for something or someone who is no longer there. RM stands alone in the train carriage, symbolizing how grief can make someone feel lonely even while life keeps moving forward. Lastly, Jin is at the bottom of the stairs, watching others go up. This shows that, while others may have moved on, he is still stuck in his sadness and is not ready to let go.

2. Longing - Nostalgia and Inner Struggle (01:46 and 02:41)

In the first scene, Jungkook stands in an empty abandoned amusement park. The place that once brought joy now feels cold and lifeless, showing how happy memories can become painful when someone has gone. Suga then sits on a pile of clothes, which represents someone holding onto the past. This shows how hard it is to move forward while still feeling close to someone who is no longer there.

3. Emotional Liberation - Healing and Hope (03:20, 04:49, 04:58, and 05:19)

J-Hope throws a paper plane while riding a train, which symbolizes moving forward and sending hope to the future. Later, all BTS members walked together under an open sky, showing unity, support, and the journey of healing together. The dry trees in the snow show that even in difficult times, there is still strength and life. Finally, a pair of shoes hanging on a tree represents letting go and accepting the loss of peace.

4.2 Lyrical Analysis

In addition to the visual scenes, the lyrics on Spring Day also carry rich emotional depth. Each line expresses the stages of loss, longing, and healing through symbolic language that resonates with the listener. To better understand the emotional layers of the song, several key lyrics were analyzed based on their denotative and connotative meanings. Table 2 presents examples of these lyrics and their contribution to the overall narrative of grief and hope.

Table 2. Denotations and Connotations related to BTS Spring Day Lyrics

Lyrics	Denotation	Connotations
Second 00:25 "Miss you"	The first lyric sung by RM means "I miss you" in Indonesian. These lyrics express a longing for someone.	Missing has the meaning of "The Art Of Loving" where humans experience deep emotional attachment causing feelings of loss when there is a separation.
Minute 01:07 "It's all winter here even in August"	Lyrics that mean "Here is still winter even in August". This shows that even though it's August which is usually summer in South Korea, the atmosphere is still like the winter that should have happened in December.	Winter is often associated with loneliness, sadness and loss. August is supposed to be a warm summer, but in these lyrics everything still feels cold and frozen, as if winter never passes (hard to forget).
Minute 01:15 "Wanna get to the other side of the earth holding your hand . Wanna put an end to this winter"	"The other side of the earth" refers to a place far away from its current position. These lyrics mean wanting to go to the other side of the earth while holding someone's hand and ending the winter.	The phrase "holding your hand" indicates a desire to be together again with the person you missed.
Minute 01:20 "How much longing should we see snowing down to have the days of spring"	This lyric means how long to wait (winter) before spring arrives.	The snow that keeps falling symbolizes the sadness and longing that is still going on. "Days of spring" describes the happy times that are desired after going through sadness.
Minute 01:33 "Will I get to you a	"Would i be able to reach you faster if I were a snowflake in the air?" Describes a person who wants to	These lyrics describe a longing so great that he wants to meet soon like the speed of snow blown by

Lyrics	Denotation	Connotations
little faster if I was the snow in the air"	meet the person he misses soon.	the wind.
Minute 02:19 "Passing by the edge of the cold winter, until the days of the spring, until the days of the flower blossoms"	These lyrics describe the journey through winter until they reach spring, where the flowers begin to bloom.	These lyrics depict the process of recovery for the loss of someone that starts from the beginning of separation which causes a sense of loss of "cold winter" until finally reaching the process of sincerity and happiness (days of the spring and flower blossoms)
Minute 02:54 "I try to exhale you in pain like smoke, like white smoke"	"I'm trying to blow you out in pain, like white smoke." Describes a person who is trying to get something out of him, such as when someone exhales smoke from his mouth.	Exhaling smoke symbolizes an attempt to detach a person from memory. White smoke is mild and quickly disappears, symbolizing the difficulty of erasing past memories but can slowly fade.
Minute 03:58 "No darkness, no season can't last forever"	These lyrics mean "No darkness or season can last forever."	These lyrics affirm that no matter how heavy a person suffers, there will be a point where they can feel happiness again because no sorrow (winter) lasts forever.

The lyrics of Spring Day articulate the emotional trajectory of someone grappling with loss, from initial despair to eventual hope. The song metaphorically contrasts winter and spring; winter symbolizes sadness and stagnation, whereas spring represents renewal and hope, reinforcing the idea that no sadness is permanent.

Key lyrical moments include the following.

1. Profound Loss and Clinging to Hope (00:13 – 01:33)

These lyrics express the depth of emotional pain and intense desire to reconnect with someone who is no longer present.

00:25 "I Miss You" → Immediately set the emotional tone of longing and sorrow.

01:15 "Wanna get to the other side of the earth holding your hand. Wanna put an end to this winter" → Represents the longing to escape sadness and find emotional warmth.

01:20 "How much longing should we see snowing down to have the days of spring" → Uses the metaphor of snow to describe overwhelming grief and the yearning for healing

01:33 "Will I get to you a little faster if I was the snow in the air" → A poetic wish to be close again, even though only metaphorically.

2. Struggling with Normalcy (01:07)

This moment reflects the difficulty of carrying on with everyday life while coping with grief.

01:07 "It's all winter here even in August" → Signifies an emotional state of numbness and sadness persisted, regardless of time.

3. Emerging from Despair (02:19 – 02:54)

The persistence of memory creates an emotional loop, making it difficult to move forward.

02:19 "Passing by the edge of the cold winter, until the days of the spring, until the days of the flower blossoms" → Represents a slow and painful emotional transition from sorrow to hope.

02:54 "I try to exhale you in pain like smoke, like white smoke" → Captures the effort and The struggle to let go of the past free from despair.

4. Message of Hope and Closure (03:58)

A comforting affirmation that sadness is temporary, and healing is possible.

03:58 “No darkness, no season can’t last forever” → A key line offering emotional reassurance that all grief eventually passes.

Based on an analysis of nine scenes and eight key lyrics, BTS’s music video (MV) conveys a powerful narrative centered on themes of longing, loss, and hope for reunion. This analysis employs Walter Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm theory to explore how visual and lyrical elements construct a cohesive, emotionally resonant story that aligns with communication theory principles.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL AND LYRICAL CONCEPTS

Coherence is an important standard for assessing narrative rationality. By considering coherence, we can determine whether a story or narrative makes sense and is acceptable or rejected. Coherence refers to the internal consistency of a narrative, where the audience judges whether the story has a coherent plot and is not logically contradictory. Stories that have coherence will be easier to understand, be delivered artistically, and be more convincing to their listeners (Putra et al., 2022). Coherence in a narrative can be seen in three main aspects: structural, material, and characterological coherence. Structural coherence is related to conformity and connectedness between the parts of a story. If a narrative has an unclear plot or if its parts are not connected, then its structural coherence can be said to be weak or missing. Coherence refers to the extent to which a story aligns with other narratives that are relevant in the same context. The inconsistency between one story and another that is supposed to be related can reduce material coherence. Characterological coherence refers to the credibility of a character or a source in a story. If the source of the story is not trusted, its coherence will be questioned (Tantama & Agustiningsih, 2013).

In addition to considering coherence, the assessment of narrative rationality also involves the principle of truth or the credibility of a story (fidelity). Fisher (1985) argued that when the elements in a narrative can accurately portray social reality, the narrative has true value. Fisher also developed a method called good reason or the logic of sound judgment to assess the validity of a narrative (Martilova, 2024). If a story has truth, it can serve as a plausible foundation for individuals to build confidence and make decisions. Therefore, fidelity in the narrative paradigm allows for a more objective evaluation of the value and credibility of a story. The BTS Spring Day music video has a narrative structure that is not linear, but emotionally and symbolically interconnected. It can be seen from each scene that presents visual elements such as trains, dead trees in the snow, and piles of clothes that form a unified story about loss and longing. In addition, the music video’s reference to the literary work *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula K. Le Guin (Cao, 2021), which discusses sacrifice for the happiness of others, shows that the narrative in this music video does not stand alone, but is rather related to other stories that reinforce its meaning. The concept of fidelity or narrative truth is reflected in the depiction of feelings of loss that are general so that the audience can feel the same emotions as those conveyed in the lyrics of the song. In addition, many interpret this music video as a representation of the tragedy of the Sewol Ship, which adds a deeper social meaning.

5. CULTURAL AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF SPRING DAY

Beyond individual emotional catharsis, the video resonates at a collective level, symbolizing broader social experiences such as communal mourning and trauma recovery. Several scenes, such as the abandoned amusement park and imagery of empty train stations, echo a shared atmosphere of loss that

mirrors real-world tragedies (Lee & Lee, 2025). In particular, Spring Day has been widely interpreted as a subtle tribute to the 2014 Sewol Ferry tragedy, which deeply impacted South Korean society. The symbolism of waiting, frozen time, and grief not only personalizes loss but connects it with national trauma (Bhattacharya et al., 2023).

This emotional universality has contributed to the formation of a global affective community, particularly within the BTS fanbase ARMY (Naik, 2024). The shared interpretation of Spring Day within online fan spaces through fan edits, translations, theories, and tribute posts demonstrates how digital platforms enable a participatory meaning-making process (James, 2024). Through digital ethnography, scholars such as Jenkins (2006) have argued that fan communities not only consume media, but also actively produce cultural meaning and solidarity through narratives (Hamai, 2024).

From a cultural sociological standpoint, popular culture products, such as music videos, play an increasingly important role in shaping social cohesion and psychological resilience (Sonke et al., 2025). The narrative of Spring Day, moving from grief to healing, not only mirrors psychological recovery stages, but also offers a collective space for emotional support (Park et al., 2021). Research in media psychology (Barton & Riddle, 2022) has shown that music with empathetic narratives contributes to a sense of shared humanity and comfort during crises (Naik, 2024).

In this sense, Spring Day functions as both a narrative of personal mourning and a symbolic vehicle for collective healing (Blady, 2021). The coherence between visuals and lyrics enhances narrative strength, while the fidelity of its message rooted in emotional truth connects deeply with audiences across different cultures (Gutierrez-Jauregi et al., 2025). Through its layered symbols and emotionally grounded storytelling, BTS's Spring Day provides not only a reflection of grief, but also an invitation to remember, process, and heal together (Roshita & Wibawarta, 2024).

6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study show that songs are a powerful medium for conveying an artist's emotions through both music videos and lyrics. In the case of BTS's Spring Day, these elements work together to create a layered narrative that resonates emotionally and psychologically with audiences. This study identified nine key scenes in the music video, each contributing to the construction of an emotional journey represented by the three stages of grief, longing, and emotional liberation. The scenes are symbolized by imagery such as empty train stations and cold tones to depict isolation and sorrow, looping locations, imagined reunions to reflect nostalgia and inner struggle, and warmer lighting, sunrise, and group scenes to signify healing and hope. These visual elements correspond to narrative arcs of grief, longing, memory, and emotional recovery.

In parallel, the analysis of the eight key lyrics revealed a complementary narrative structure that aligns with the emotional journey portrayed visually. The lyrics express four stages of profound loss and clinging to hope, struggling with normalcy, emerging from despair, and messages of hope and closure. Music videos and lyrics together create a holistic narrative of loss and resilience. This research affirms that BTS's Spring Day not only delivers a deeply personal and culturally resonant message, but also exemplifies how visual and lyrical storytelling can intertwine to evoke universal human emotions and experiences.

Furthermore, the application of the narrative paradigm theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the storyline presented both visually and lyrically. Each scene comprises interconnected concepts that form an integrated narrative, ultimately delivering a cohesive explanation of the overall storyline. This narrative structure resonates deeply with listeners, particularly with those who have experienced loss, by fostering emotional engagement.

This research contributes to the field by demonstrating how Spring Day functions not only as an artistic expression, but also as a form of communication that inspires and offers emotional solace to its audience. However, beyond the emotional impact, this study highlights the potential of music videos and lyrics as complex communicative texts that influence meaning-making processes. For future research, it is recommended to explore the psychological impact of BTS narrative techniques on the fan community (ARMY), examining how these narratives affect emotional well-being and social behavior. Additionally, further studies could investigate persuasive communication strategies embedded within BTS's work and their effectiveness in shaping attitudes and beliefs. Research on the dynamics of fan engagement and community building through music narratives could also provide valuable insights into the social influence of popular cultural phenomena. By adopting interdisciplinary approaches combining semiotics, communication psychology, and social behavior analysis, future research can deepen the understanding of how music and visual storytelling shape meaning and influence audiences at both the individual and collective levels.

Ethical approval

This research did not require ethical approval.

Informed consent statement

This research did not require informed consent

Authors' contribution

Conceptualization, DAS., and SSN; methodology DAS., SSN., ANF; validation, DAS., and SSN; formal analysis, DAS., SSN., ANF; resources, DAS., and SSN; writing original draft preparation, DAS., and SSN; writing review and editing, DAS., SSN., ANF; supervising all the process, ANF.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data availability statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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