

K-pop Fans' Reaction Videos and Their Implications for Korean Language Learning

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Abstract

As social media platforms such as YouTube have become important access points for Korean popular music (K-pop), international fans have enjoyed recording and sharing their responses to K-pop music videos on social media. In particular, reaction videos have been the most convenient and popular way for many international fans to share their opinions on and reactions to K-pop songs with others. This study aims to investigate the unique characteristics of reaction videos to share K-pop fans' cultural experiences through YouTube videos and discuss the potential use of such fans' learner motivation and learning environment for Korean language education. Four YouTube reaction videos were investigated through thematic analysis and through a discourse analysis informed by interactional sociolinguistics. The findings show how the reaction video creators build a community with other fans by establishing familiarity through agreement, considering the audience, and exchanging information, not only about a specific song, but also about K-pop in general and Korean Wave genres. These creators also demonstrated multiliteracies by expressing their opinions and feelings through facial expressions, visuals, and dance. These creators make their reaction videos regularly, proving their long-term enthusiasm for K-pop and the Korean Wave. This research offers important implications for future Korean language education, which will embrace diverse groups of international learners who actively participate in K-pop fan activities online.

Keywords: K-pop, Korean Wave, reaction video, Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL), learner motivation, learner autonomy

Introduction

Since the early 2010s, Korean popular music (K-pop) has enjoyed popularity among increasing numbers of international fans in Asia, Europe, and North America. In 2012, Psy's "Gangnam Style" became one of the most popular songs in the world. It was particularly popular on interactive

social media platforms such as YouTube. Thanks to the enduring popularity of *Hallyu* [Korean Wave], many young international people have sought exposure to Korean culture; music has become one of the most important motivations for young people to learn the Korean language.¹

The influence of culture as a key motivation for foreign language learning is not surprising. K-pop fans can be considered potential learners of the Korean language who have a high possibility of becoming actual learners.² In an interview with *The Guardian*, the director of the Korean Cultural Center in New York recently said that K-pop has become a driving factor to learn the Korean language among young students.³ In teaching Korean as a foreign language (KFL), scholars have researched how cultural factors influence language learners' motivations and learning strategies,⁴ and how cultural products or texts such as Korean films, dramas, songs, and music videos can be used as pedagogical materials in the classroom.⁵

However, the uniqueness of the current *Hallyu* phenomenon, especially after Psy's "Gangnam Style," which facilitated the emergence of the so-called *Hallyu 2.0*, and its relationship to Korean language learning have rarely been investigated. As it will be explained later in detail, in the era of *Hallyu 2.0*, Korean language education is no longer limited to the traditional language classroom setting due to the potential use of the online learning environment in which contemporary Korean culture is widely spread and enjoyed by diverse groups of international people.

This article aims to show the unique characteristics of *Hallyu 2.0* with several examples of reaction videos, which are among the user-created content that K-pop fans spread through the interactive online format to share their cultural experiences with others. The article discusses the potential use of K-pop fans' learner motivation and learning environment for Korean language education. The specific research questions are: (1) What are the unique characteristics of K-pop fans' reaction videos on interactive online platforms? (2) What are the pedagogical implications of their activities in terms of learner motivation and learning environment for Korean language education?

Theoretical Background

Hallyu 2.0 and Social Media

To understand the characteristics of K-pop fans' reaction videos, one must first understand how social media has played a major role in the

Korean Wave (K-Wave). Jin Dal-yong divided the history of the K-Wave, which spanned 1997 to 2016, into two periods: *Hallyu 1.0* and *Hallyu 2.0*.⁶ This division was determined according to its primary genres, technologies, regions, consumers, and cultural policies. During *Hallyu 1.0*, which covered the period from 1997 to 2007, Korean television dramas and films were popular among fans in East Asia. The primary consumers of these genres during this period were in their 30s to 40s. During *Hallyu 1.0*, technology related to the K-Wave was relatively underdeveloped, with the exception of online games. Additionally, the Korean government's cultural policies were focused indirect support of the K-Wave. During *Hallyu 2.0*, which began in 2008 and continued to 2016, K-pop, video games, and animation became popular aspects of entertainment among fans, not only in Asia, but also in Europe and North America. The primary consumers during this period were in their teens to 20s. During *Hallyu 2.0*, online social media helped users produce cultural content through blogs, videos, and internet forums.

Social media has played a significant role in the popularity of K-pop.⁷ For example, Psy's "Gangnam Style" syndrome emerged mainly due to the popularity of its music video online. The song's official music video was watched more than three billion times on YouTube, and more than four million comments were made on the music video as of September 2018. The number of fan videos responding to the "Gangnam Style" music video reached a record 75 only six weeks after Psy's video was released.⁸ The emergence of *Hallyu 2.0* is reflected by another K-pop boy band, BTS (The Bangtan Boys), which won the Top Social Artist Award at the Billboard Music Awards in 2017 and 2018. As its name implies, this award is given to an artist who earns the most fan votes each year. Indeed, BTS's frequent use of Vlive (a Korean real-time mobile broadcast application), Twitter, and fan cafés for communication facilitated support from thousands of international fans.⁹ The band has more than 12,000,000 followers on its official Twitter account, and the average number of retweets, which counts the number of re-posts of someone else's tweet or one of your own, surpassed 100,000. For instance, the video of BTS's speech at the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2018, which was originally uploaded to UNICEF Twitter and retweeted to the BTS official Twitter, was retweeted more than 300,000 times in one day.

K-pop fans create and share extensive amounts of content with others through social media. Kim Soo-chul and Kang Jeong-soo categorized the contents of fan videos into three groups: reaction videos, (dance) cover

videos, and parody videos.¹⁰ Reaction videos show group or individual responses to K-pop music videos, and (dance) cover videos show fans dancing to the music. As the term indicates, parody videos deliver a parody of songs in terms of melody and lyrics with visual content in the video. Kim and Kang found that cover videos and parody videos have more complex themes, so it takes more time for K-pop fans to create them.¹¹ In contrast, it is relatively easy for any individual to make and upload a reaction video to social media and receive immediate feedback from others.¹² These fans can also leave their opinions in the comment box under the video, which sometimes results in the creation of discussion forums or bulletin boards. In this sense, the contents of reaction videos including reaction videos created by K-pop fans are very participatory and interactive.¹³

In addition to their interactive orientation, reaction videos have multiliterate characteristics. Due to the globalization, technological development, and social diversification, several scholars have examined the importance of the concept of multiliteracies beginning in the 1990s. The New London Group argued that educators should prepare students for new forms of literacy and the future society in which they will participate.¹⁴ Michele Anstèy and Geoff Bull defined a multiliterate person as someone who is “flexible and strategic and able to understand and use literacy and literate practices: with a range of texts and technologies; in socially responsible ways; in a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse world; and to fully participate in life as an active and informed citizen.”¹⁵ Given Anstèy and Bull’s definition of multiliterate people, K-pop fans’ reaction videos provide good examples of how learners develop multiliteracies and demonstrate multiple talents in their creation of videos. Fans’ reactions to K-pop music include talking, singing, dancing, and performing. In other words, K-pop fans participate in diverse multiliterate activities when enjoying music and sharing their responses with others.

Learner Motivation and Autonomy

Recent statistics by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) encourage a consideration of K-pop fans to be potential learners of Korean as a foreign language. MLA’s report on enrollment in languages other than English at institutions of higher learning in the United States showed that Korean had experienced the most rapid increase in enrollment from 2009 to 2013.¹⁶ During this period, the number of students enrolled

in Korean language courses increased by 45.1 percent from 8,449 to 12,256. From 2013 to 2016, enrollment continued to increase, rising 13.7 percent to 13,936 students. Given that Psy's "Gangnam Style" was released in 2012, it is speculated that one of the important reasons of this dramatic boost in student enrollment is the popularity of K-pop and K-Wave among the American youth. Duolingo, a mobile language application launched a Korean course in September 2017. The application had over 2,780,000 users. Some of the messages left on the company's board described how K-pop and Korean TV inspired them to learn Korean.¹⁷

Focusing on such learners of Korean, this section discusses foreign language learner motivation and autonomy. In foreign language learning, one of the most commonly accepted conceptualizations of learner motivation from a social constructivist view is the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations proposed by Edward Deci.¹⁸ According to his definition, intrinsic motivation entices learners to engage in language activities for their own sake, whereas extrinsic motivation drives learners to participate in the activities for an external reward, such as money, prizes, grades, and positive feedback. Zoltán Dörnyei and his colleagues have explored these types of motivation as powerful driving forces for language learning. Dörnyei and Kata Csizér argued that intrinsic motivation was more powerful in the long term than extrinsic motivation.¹⁹ More specifically, they examined sociocultural variables that could affect foreign language learners' motivations and found that integrativeness, which is understood as the basic identification process within the individual's self-concept, is still the most important factor in second language learning motivation.²⁰

Intrinsic motivation is also related to the concept of learner autonomy. The Phil Benson's definition of learner autonomy is "the capacity to control one's own learning."²¹ The importance of learner autonomy can be described from several perspectives. Above all, it derives from the idea that foreign language teaching should help learners use language outside the classroom. The learners' autonomous abilities are connected to long-term success in foreign language learning beyond the classroom.²² Earlier, Henri Holec emphasized that lifelong learning is as important as learning in school.²³ Adults have opportunities to learn foreign language in resource centers rather than being directly taught by teachers. On the other hand, Leni Dam, Rigmor Eriksson, David G. Little, June Miliander, and Turid Trebbi viewed learner autonomy as "a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's own need and purposes,"²⁴ and "a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with

others, as a social, responsible person”.²⁵ In their view, learner autonomy emphasizes not only one’s individual but, also interactive characteristics in the sociocultural context.

In light of the importance of learner autonomy, current K-pop fans are strong candidates for autonomous learning, as they actively participate in social media activities with an interest in Korean culture while they have little access to schools or institutions offering formal Korean language classes.

While there have been some studies that investigated learner motivation and autonomy in relation to KFL learners, such as Choi Jung-sun, Hong Jong-myung, Jung Yon-hee, and Koh Hyung-jin and Kim Young-joo, few studies have explored the relationship between K-pop fans’ activities and their motivation for Korean language learning. These researchers mainly conducted surveys among Asian learners of Korean studying in higher educational institutions in Korea.²⁶ They found that learners’ high intrinsic motivations and teachers’ supports for their intrinsic motivations helped them keep motivations and high achievements in Korean learning.²⁷ Nam Ae-ree, Lee Si-won and Cho Hae-won investigated learners studying Korean in the U.S. Nam found that cultural interests such as K-Wave became an intrinsic motivation for students to begin studying Korean.²⁸ Similarly, Lee and Cho found that learners who shared an imagined community of K-Wave fans as one of the major motivations for Korean language learning.²⁹

Methods

This qualitative study adopts a netnographic approach. Initially developed by Robert Kozinets, netnography is a research method used to investigate a consumer’s behavior in the cultures and communities present on the Internet. Informed by the ethnographic method in anthropology and cultural studies, Kozinets argued that researchers’ field notes combined with artifacts of the online culture or community can provide data to be collected during a netnography study.³⁰ As online conversations have rapidly increased in prevalence since the late 1990s, a netnographic approach has been used as a research method for qualitative social scientific investigation in various fields.³¹

With a netnographic approach, K-pop fans’ reaction videos were collected as the major data sources for this study. The data consisted of four reaction videos to the music video for Psy’s “New Face,” uploaded on YouTube. “New Face” was chosen, as it was the latest song by Psy,

who is considered the best-known K-pop artist at the time this study was initiated in 2017. The “New Face” music video was released on May 10, 2017.

Two criteria were used to select the four reaction videos: (1) the popularity of the video measured in terms of the number of views of the video and the number of comments on the video; (2) the continuity of activities made by the reaction video creators measured in terms of the number of K-pop reaction videos, the number of subscribers,³² and the duration of uploading on the channel.³³ Table 1 depicts information about the selected videos and channels as of September 29, 2018.

Table 1: Background Information of Selected Reaction to Videos and their Channels on YouTube (as of September 2018)

	JREKML	EMANUSIC (The BRWZ)	105DEGREES	5Guys Official
Approximate number of views of the reaction video to “New Face”	309,000	11,000	127,000	118,000
The number of comments on the reaction video to “New Face”	573	1136	61	89
The number of K-pop reaction videos on the channel	76	100	728	141
Approximate number of subscribers to the channel	1,200,000	77,000	37,000	103,000
The duration of uploading on the channel	Over six years	Over one year	Almost one year	Almost two years

Source: Developed by the author from multiple sources.

All of the reaction videos to “New Face” were produced soon after Psy’s song’s music video was released. Generally, K-pop reaction videos tend to be released right after official music videos are released due to the convenience of making them.³⁴ The video submitted by JREKML was released on May 10, 2017, and the one produced by EMANUSIC (whose previous channel name was The BRWZ) was released on May 11, 2017. The reaction videos by 105DEGREES and 5Guys Official were released on May 14 and May 26, 2017, respectively. It is interesting to note that their uploading dates were quite different depending on the number of creators for each video. For example, JREKML is a channel with a sole creator, whereas BRWZ has three creators. 105DEGREES has four members, and 5Guys Official has five. It is speculated that channels with several members would need more time to watch the artist’s newest music video, collaborate, and record their reactions together at one time. All of the contributors investigated for this study are amateur producers who do not use cutting-edge technology or hire professional staff to make their products. Each channel has more than 30,000 subscribers, which means their videos are quite popular.

This study used two methods to analyze the data collected: thematic analysis and discourse analysis informed by interactional sociolinguistics. First, the data for this study were analyzed according to John Creswell’s definition of thematic analysis.³⁵ The researcher watched and transcribed the four “New Face” reaction videos to find key themes that emerged repeatedly and importantly in the data. The key themes were categorized into three common themes: online community building through reaction videos; multiliteracies in reaction videos; and long-term enthusiasm for K-pop and K-Wave.

Second, interactional sociolinguistics was used to examine both the verbal and non-verbal languages presented in the reaction videos. Interactional sociolinguistics is an approach to spoken discourse that investigates the way people use language in different contexts. It emphasizes the importance of small, subtle non-linguistic elements of verbal communication that can make big differences in meaning-making.³⁶ In this study, the researcher focused on the contextualization cues as conceived by John Gumperz that are presented in spoken discourse, such as intonation, pitch, stress, pause, hesitation, speed, and volume.³⁷ The researcher attempted to interpret the hidden meaning of all of the messages conveyed within the reaction videos.

To reduce the bias of the researcher in the data analysis process, a peer debriefing was conducted.³⁸ A non-Korean international graduate student, who grew up with a different culture from that of the researcher, helped uncover possible biases and assumptions on the researcher’s side.

Findings

Online Community Building Through Reaction Videos

The most prominent finding of this study is that reaction video creators build a community with other K-pop fans. Their community building activities are categorized into three elements: making familiarity through agreement, considering the audience, and exchanging more information about K-Wave. First, they enjoy exchanging their opinions and feelings about Psy’s music videos and those of other K-pop artists with other fans through the reaction videos and the comments related to the videos. For example, as JREKML gave a positive reaction to Psy’s performance in the “New Face” music video, such as “He is s(..) so:: extra!,” he received comments from other fans who agreed with his opinion.

Figure 1. Other Fans’ Comments on “He is so extra!” by JREKML



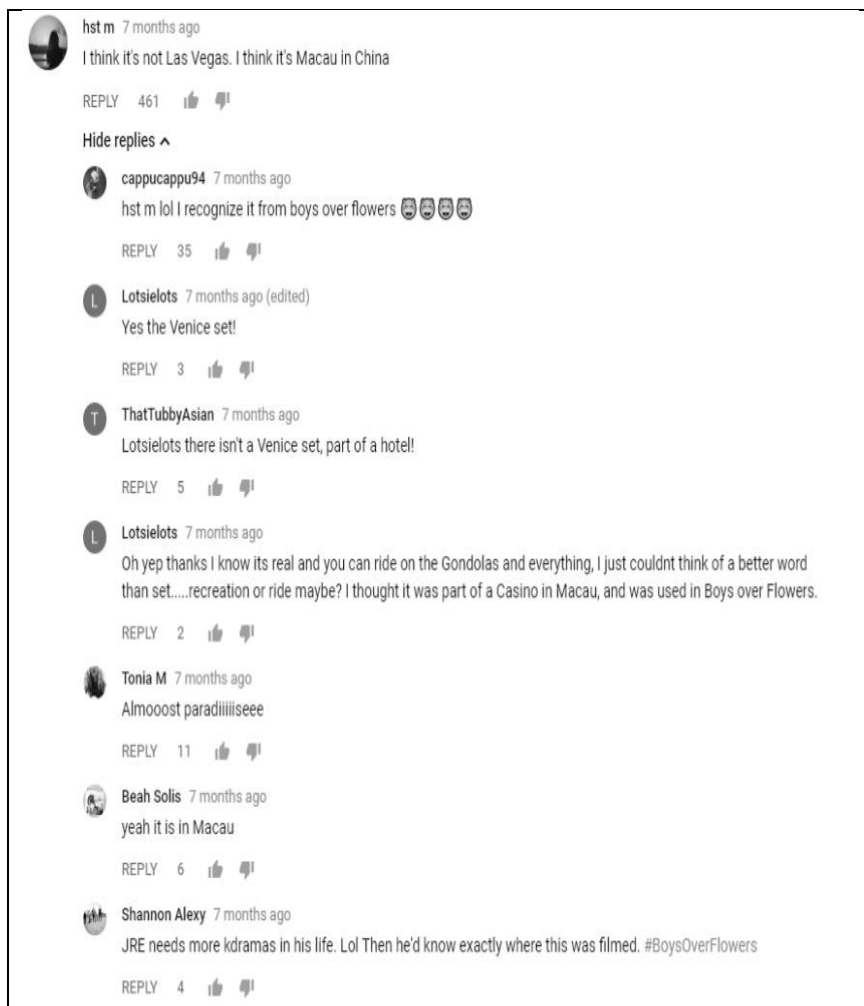
As shown in Figure 1, one fan named “BTS snatched my weave and I need it back” agreed with JREKML’s opinion about Psy’s performance by saying, “extra+ordinary,” and “I see what you did there JRE.” Another fan named “lkuto Crystal” also agreed with JREKML by saying, “Psy’s dab is so extra.” Such agreement might be a basic step toward establishing familiarity among members in any online community. Kang In-ae, Lim Byung-ro, and Park Jung-young, who investigated several college

classrooms that adopted Smart Learning, argued that such familiarity among members helps them build an online learning community.³⁹

Second, the reaction video creators also included comments in their videos targeted at their own audience. For instance, JREKML asked a question about the main female character in the “New Face” music video, saying, “↑Who’s **this** girl?” He then received many responses from other fans telling him that the main female character is Naeun, a member of the K-pop girl group, Apink. A fan in Figure 1 also made a comment that shows his surprise about JREKML’s question by saying, “Lol I was dying inside when JRE didn’t recognize Naeun first.” In addition, many other fans left comments related to this reaction video because Naeun is a quite famous artist among K-pop fans; therefore, the fans were eager to provide JREKML with more information about her.

Third, the reaction video creators exchanged their knowledge about the larger K-Wave with other fans through their reaction videos. For instance, JREKML said that, based on the background scene of the “New Face” music video, he assumed it was set in Las Vegas: “No, it is Las Vegas. I just realized this.” In response to this statement, he received many comments from other fans who knew it was actually Macau.

Figure 2: Comments on “No, it is Las Vegas. I just realized this.” by JREKML



The comment from one fan, who pointed out that the setting was Macau, sparked an exchange of dialogue about K-drama. As shown in Figure 2, one fan named “hst m” said, “I think it’s not Las Vegas. I think it’s Macau in China.” This fan then received many comments from other fans, including those about a K-drama, “*Boys over Flowers*.” The fans who

replied to this comment, including “cappucappu94,” “Lotsielots,” and “Shannon Alexy,” recognized the set in “New Face” in Macau as the same one used in the most famous K-drama in 2009. The fan named “Shannon Alexy” even said, “JRE needs more kdramas in his life. Lol Then he’d know exactly where this was filmed.” Moreover, this fan hashtagged “#BoysOverFlowers” to provide a link to more detailed information. Attention should be paid to the way in which JREKML’s reaction video created an instant online forum for the fans to discuss and share more information on the K-Wave with one another beyond the specific music video to which the original comments referred. Both the reaction video creators and other fans build the K-pop community, in which they share their ideas and information, promoting the larger Korean popular culture.⁴⁰

Multiliteracies in Reaction Videos

The reaction video creators generally activated multiliteracies including facial expressions, visual effects, and dance. As music video became a way to promote K-pop through social media, the audience can intake visual signs more easily than linguistic cues while watching music video. Visual representations are helpful for international fans to enjoy music, especially songs written in a foreign language.⁴¹ For example, Psy used ten different characters to attract one female character in the storyline. The lyrics of the song “New Face” are about a man who is seeking a new love. Although not all the reaction video creators fully understand the meaning of the Korean lyrics, they seemed to grasp the main theme of the song by watching the visual storytelling. This point is demonstrated by some of the speeches quoted from the selected reaction videos:

“He’s everybody. He’s lowkey stalking in a way.” (JREKML)
“He’s like I’ll play all the workers in the hotel. All of them.”
(105DEGREES)
“He’s the face of the hotel, literally. Like when you see him,
(shaking a left hand) Psy, (shaking a right hand), Psy, (shaking a
left hand), Psy.” (105DEGREES)

The phrase “new face” sounds like “Konglish,” a Korean way of speaking English, so the audience might be somewhat confused about its meaning. Psy’s music video did not include the English lyrics, except for some catchy English phrases in the highlights of the song. Hence, the reaction video creators tended to interpret the main themes of the music

through visual aids in the videos. They verbally expressed their understanding about the themes in their reaction videos.

In addition to verbally expressing their understanding of the themes of the song, the reaction video creators also included non-verbal expressions in their reaction videos. One of the most common non-verbal expressions found in all four reaction videos was an imitation of the dance moves from the music video. One of the dance moves repeated frequently in the “New Face” music video was a “dab,” which is a famous playful and youthful dance move recently originating in American hip-hop culture.⁴² It is an eye-catching dance movement used in the music video, The reaction video creators imitated it in their own videos. All the selected reaction video creators repeated the “dab” dance move whenever the dance was shown in the music video, as they were accustomed to seeing it repeatedly. When they recorded their reactions using the video format, they appeared to treat their non-verbal reactions as importantly as their verbal reactions. It is implied that most of the selected reaction video creators recognized their imaginary audience by saying, “Thank you for watching,” at the end of the videos. Furthermore, the non-verbal reactions included not only dance moves but also facial expressions, laughing, clapping, body gestures, and physical moves. Since “New Face” was a rhythmical song with a comic storyline and visuals, all of the selected reaction video creators made pleasant facial expressions while watching the music video. They also laughed loudly and clapped in the reaction videos. Clearly, these video creators’ expressions are not limited to spoken language, which is the most conventional means to make meaning.

Long-term Enthusiasm for K-pop and K-Wave

The selected reaction video creators continued making and uploading reaction videos regularly for at least a year. JREKML had the longest history of uploading his videos, starting in January 2012. 105DEGREES had a shorter history but had uploaded the highest number of videos, 728, as of September 2018. Although the total number of videos and the duration of uploading varied, all the video creators uploaded videos regularly. Their persistence reflects their enthusiasm and passion for K-pop and for their activities as hobbies. Although attracting a large number of subscribers might help the creators to earn some money from YouTube, it might not be easy for any individuals or groups to continue engaging in these activities for several years.

The content of the reaction videos evolved over time. While the creators repeated a large portion of the content throughout different videos they made, thus produced essentially the same kind of reaction videos, they sometimes added new features. Representative examples of the new elements include K-pop singers' album unboxings (105DEGREES, 5Guys Official), informal talks (JREKML, 5Guys Official, EMANUSIC), Vlogs (105DEGREES, 5Guys Official, JREKML), song covers (EMANUSIC), and street interviews (5Guys Official). In the case of JREKML, other features were also added, such as K-snack experiences, K-pop games, and trips to South Korea.

Through the diverse video contents, these creators share aspects of their daily lives that are related to K-pop and the K-Wave, though sometimes they are not directly about K-pop. These features did not belong to what Kim Soo-chul and Kang Jeong-soo consider as the first category of videos that the global fans made when Psy's "Gangnam Style" came out in 2012.⁴³ Since then, fans have become more passionate about K-pop and developed other video content to share their interest in, and love for, K-Wave while continuing to make reaction videos. This new content demonstrated that the reaction video creators' interests have expanded to include the K-Wave and Korean culture in general.

This expansion of K-pop fans' interest to Korean culture implies that their deepened curiosity about Korea can be long-lasting, eventually leading to their language learning. Nam Ae-ree pointed out that not every student who starts learning Korean has interest in K-pop or K-drama. Interestingly, however, students who expanded their interests to general Korean culture or the country of Korea kept learning the Korean language for the long term.⁴⁴ In my study, I found that one reaction video creator directly mentioned his motivation to learn Korean. EMANUSIC said that he wanted to make and upload song cover content and recognized the need to learn the language to sing K-pop songs better in Korean. He added that he tried to read the Romanized Korean lyrics with the help of a mobile application that provides the pronunciation of Korean phrases, but had difficulty pronouncing them in Korean. He realized that he could not sing all of the parts of a song in Korean and decided to sing only one rap part that he was able to imitate.

More recently, BTS's international fans, who are called "I-ARMY," showcased another example of the relationship between K-pop and Korean language learning. They transcribed BTS's songs in the Korean

script and uploaded their writing on Twitter on October 9, 2018, Hangeul Day, which commemorates the birth of the Korean alphabet.

Figure 3: Hangeul Day 2018 Event on Twitter by an International BTS Fan



As shown in Figure 3, an international BTS fan handwrote her favorite lines of a song and added comments about her love of Korean language learning. Other fans shared hashtags such as “#감사합니다_방탄소년단 (Thank you BTS)” and “#한글날(Hangeul Day).” The fact that BTS fans voluntarily participated in this activity shows how K-pop can draw upon the fans’ long-term enthusiasm and inspire motivation for Korean language learning.

Implications for Korean Language Learning

Three pedagogical implications can be drawn from the three unique characteristics of the K-pop reaction videos for future Korean learners worldwide. First, because these K-pop fans are mainly active on interactive social media platforms, Korean educators should consider the online space to be an important learning and teaching environment. Despite rapid growth in the size and scope of online learning—as evidenced by the Massive Open Online Course—the online format is not yet considered a legitimate classroom setting. Lee showed that many K-pop fans still could not find schools or learning centers in which to learn the Korean language near their home.⁴⁵ Therefore, online learning should be treated as an important future learning environment that optimizes interactive social features. The emphasis of learners' sharing and participation is the major difference between Web 1.0 e-learning and Web 2.0 e-learning, which is also called Smart Learning.⁴⁶ As shown in this study, many K-pop fans are willing to share their thoughts and feelings with others to build their own community. Therefore, an online Korean learning platform should be designed with effective interactive tools that enables learners to establish a learner-centered community in which they share their study habits and achievements and exchange questions and answers.

Second, future Korean language education should encourage the development of learners' productive skills as required in multiliterate activities as a way of attracting more attention from potential learners. As pointed out previously, K-pop fans tend to express their thoughts and feelings through music, visual images, dances, facial expressions, and diverse other ways of meaning-making in their own reaction videos. But learners' creative products had not been researched in depth.⁴⁷ Earlier studies tended to focus on the use of popular songs as a tool to develop listening skills and acquire vocabulary and grammar in foreign language education. Hence, online learning materials and activities should be designed in such a way that encourages more creative and productive aspects of multiliteracies. For example, the selected reaction videos in this study were made in English. However, teachers can encourage their students to make reaction videos or other kinds of products using Korean to increase their opportunities to speak and write the language. Teachers can also encourage learners to incorporate a critique or analysis of cultural contents of K-pop into their reaction video as Kim Ae-lim suggested.⁴⁸

Third, future Korean language education should address potential learners' intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy for long-term learning. As demonstrated in this study, many K-pop fans who created their own reaction videos received inspiration from K-pop and Korean culture for their own activities; they were not driven by any extrinsic motivations. They voluntarily and spontaneously participated in these activities without pressure from others or material rewards. In addition, their activities continued for years without being controlled by supervisors or teachers. Thus, they can be said to have had high learner autonomy. Given these findings, their enthusiasm about and passion for K-pop should be valued for future Korean language learning. More attention should be paid to this kind of intrinsic motivation related to K-pop and the K-Wave, which can be ultimately transferred to a long-term interest in Korean language learning.

Conclusion

In this study, four reaction videos on YouTube were investigated as examples of K-Wave-based Internet social media with respect to their unique characteristics and potential for use for Korean language learning. The fans' reaction videos provided a forum for both video producers and other fans to share their ideas, feelings, and information on specific songs, K-pop, and K-Wave news. The reaction videos also encouraged their creators to become multiliterate by conveying the main themes of the songs with visual aids from the short videos and expressing their opinions and feelings through non-verbal signs such as facial expressions and body movements. It is also notable that their reaction videos and other content videos related to K-Wave were uploaded regularly for many years, demonstrating that the video creators' enthusiasm and activities were not the result of a short-term bandwagon effect. Their passion for K-pop is enduring and evolving.

From these findings, educators can obtain several pedagogical implications for future Korean learning and teaching. The online space should be considered as an important learning tool in Korean language education that promotes interactions among students in a learning community. Future Korean language education should also encourage learners' productive skills on multiliteracies, which potential learners can actively develop. Future Korean language educators should also consider potential learners' intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy that are fully

shown by their creation of reaction videos and other content videos for long-term learning.

With the above findings, this study has some limitations in its scope and detail that can serve as sources for further research. The four reaction video creators' activities and others' reactions to them were interpreted and analyzed using only their representative reaction videos for one particular song on YouTube. Future researchers could gather data about their activities from multiple sources such as interviews with video creators and other fans who leave comments on videos. Long-term research could also be conducted to trace changes in potential Korean language learners' motivations and learner autonomy over time. Finally, this study focused only on the reaction videos made by English-speaking creators due to their popularity and accessibility. Given that the global spread of K-pop fandom, future research on reaction videos that are mediated by other language speakers could enrich data on the relationship between the K-Wave and Korean language education on social media.

Appendix

Transcription Convention

All remarks in parentheses () are movements.

= = latching

[] overlap

: elongated word

? rising intonation

↑ marked rise in pitch

↓ marked lowering of pitch

Bold: emphasis on word

Pause: (3) pause of 3 secs

(.) very slight pause

(..) pause of less than .5 of a second

(...) pause of more than .5 of a second (and less than 3 secs)

Notes:

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