

Jamie Shinhee Lee (University of Michigan-Dearborn, USA)

K-pop stars and Korean language teaching on YouTube

The global recognition of Korean pop culture, expedited by the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*), has led to increasing interest in learning the Korean language. Lee (forthcoming) argues that the rise of K-pop, in particular, signifies the importance of pop culture in enhancing the power of a language that is not traditionally viewed as politically and economically valuable. Transnational fans of K-pop demonstrate familiarity with Korean address terms (e.g., *oppa* and *unnie*) as well as colloquialisms including Koreanized English expressions (Lee 2018).

This study analyzes *YouTube* videos featuring K-pop stars teaching Korean. These videos show celebrities such as *BTS*, *Day 6*, *NTC127*, *Seventeen*, and Tiffany from *Girls' Generation* giving unrehearsed and informal instructions regarding contemporary Korean lexical items that are related but not limited to K-pop. The study shows that K-pop celebrities assume the role of the language instructor, albeit temporarily and informally. The findings of the study indicate that a clear division of labor is observed between English-speaking members and Korean-speaking members in each group. One or two English-speaking members define words by analyzing morphemes and explaining morphological processes such as acronyms, clipping, and blending, whereas Korean-speaking members generally engage in role-plays demonstrating actual uses in sentences.

Social media platforms such as *Facebook* and *YouTube* serve as useful pedagogical tools for English learners (see e.g., Shafie et al. 2016; Silviyanti 2014). The study argues that social media and pop culture can also be useful in teaching “less commonly taught” languages. In addition, the bond between stars and fans can be strengthened through speech convergence, which may be achieved through informal vocabulary lessons.

References

- Lee, Jamie Shinhee. Forthcoming. World Englishes and K-pop. In Kingsley Bolton (ed.), *Encyclopedia of World Englishes*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lee, Jamie Shinhee. 2018. The Korean Wave, K-pop fandom, and multilingual microblogging. In Cecilia Cutler & Unn Røyneland (eds.), *Multilingual youth practices in computer mediated communication*, 205–223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shafie, Latisha Asmaak, Aizan Yaacob & Paramjit Kaur Karpal Singh. 2016. Facebook activities and the investment of L2 learners. *English Language Teaching* 9(8). 53–61.
- Silviyanti, Tengku Maya. 2014. Looking into EFL students' perceptions in listening by using English movie videos on *YouTube*. *Studies in English Language and Education* 1(1). 42–58.