

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The Korean wave, also known as *Hallyu* (한류) is a pop culture phenomenon that originated in South Korea and spread globally. This culture includes music, drama, fashion, culinary, lifestyle, and many other things. The Korean Wave gained popularity in the late 1990s and has influenced global popular culture in the decades subsequent (Jungsoo, 2016). Korean pop music known as “K-pop” is widely considered as the epicenter and core of the *Hallyu* phenomenon. K-pop expanded further in the 2000s with the development of idol groups and has grown in popularity and acceptance in the Western world over the last decade. As Jamie (2021) mentioned, K-pop's are popular has spread beyond East Asia and is spreading in Europe, North and South America, and Africa. K-Pop's global breakthrough has resulted in the establishment of diverse and eager international fan communities.

The number of K-pop fans can be quantified using a variety of concrete pieces of evidence that show the amount of influence and popularity of the K-pop phenomenon on a global scale. Like having a huge number of followers on social media platforms such as Twitter (as known as ‘X’ now), Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Some groups have millions of followers, proving their global online power. In other words, the expansion of K-pop is primarily attributed to its worldwide popularity on social media and the internet (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021). K-pop enthusiasts come from all over the world, representing many cultures and languages. According to the Korea Foundation's annual 2022 *Hallyu* Global Status Analysis, the number of *Hallyu* fans last year reached 178,825,261 people, with K-pop maintaining to be the main force behind *Hallyu*'s rise (CNN, 2023). Indonesia is among the countries with the most K-pop fans. Based on a survey conducted on Twitter, published on Wednesday, January 26, 2021, and based on Unique Authors, Indonesia has the most K-Pop admirers in the world. Not only is it the country with the most fans, but it is also the second country with the most fans Twitter users

talked about K-pop (Alifah, 2022). The enormous number of global K-pop fans come from varied social and cultural backgrounds. They may have different employment, education, interests, and age gaps.

Because the majority of K-pop fans' activities take place on online platforms, it may be said that K-pop fans mostly come from Generation Z (born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s). Generation Z has better access to technology and social media, allowing them to connect with Korean music and pop culture, particularly K-pop, more easily. Gen Z is a generation that grew up with the internet and social media, which has made them more receptive to other music genres and more inclined to connect with K-pop (Hyun-Kyung, 2018). In line with (Arisandi et al., 2023), K-pop is entertainment that spreads swiftly on social media, therefore K-pop is a hit among Gen Z who seek amusement on social media. Social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok are popular among Generation Z. These platforms are used effectively by K-pop to communicate with fans, share exclusive content, and develop online communities. A global census that conducted by BTS Army census (2022) of over 500,000 participants from the BTS fanbase, one of the K-pop groups, revealed that 170,379 (30.30%) respondents were under the age of 18 and 301,566 (53.63%) were between the ages of 18 and 29. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of K-pop fans are still in the Gen Z. However, K-pop followers are diverse in terms of age and demography.

The K-pop phenomenon has had a huge impact on worldwide communication and cultural interchange. K-pop has had a huge impact on cross-cultural communication and language learning (Middleburry, 2023). The K-pop community's activities have substantial effects on the global culture of English communication. The K-pop community is active on social media platforms like X, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and others, where English is often used. As Johnson (2023) said English is the language of the internet, and a large amount of the world's online content is in English, making it a portal to a wealth of information as well as resources. English is increasingly being used to translate K-pop content, including interviews, articles, and videos, making it readily accessible to global fans who do not speak Korean. K-pop groups frequently engage directly with international fans

via social media or particular platforms such as the Weverse app. Monica and Elizabeth (2023) also explain that fans must rely on what is known as fan subbing, which is the act of informally providing subtitles or translating content from Korean to English, but also into many other languages. This frequently occurs on social media, where fans must wait for English subtitles before enjoying content created by their favorite groups and or idols. This makes it possible for global fans to interact and connect. The K-pop community and worldwide fans may communicate effectively, build a sense of unity, and boost the global influence of the K-pop phenomenon by using English in numerous events and interactions.

Depending on the phenomenon, the English language is essential for communication within the K-pop community. This indirectly stimulates youngsters to learn to communicate in English through social media. As (Faiza, 2020) Stated, that the role of K-pop on Twitter as a tool for English learning has the potential to stimulate English learning in a global community. In line with Faiza, Monica and Elizabeth (2023) also stated that K-pop online communities can have a favorable influence on EFL learning among students in terms of vocabulary, development of receptive macro abilities, and self-confidence in the language, and involvement in K-pop communities can be a valuable supplement to language learning processes. It can be concluded that K-pop has had a substantial impact on worldwide communication and language acquisition, with the K-pop community actively employing English on online platforms. Indirectly offers the thought that English is a language for accessing information globally, so encouraging the younger generation to study English.

English is commonly referred to as a "bridge language" because it allows communication between people with various cultural and language backgrounds. English, as the first world language, is regarded as the first global lingua franca, and it is the most widely used language in the world for international (Rao, 2019). English is the most frequently used language among native and non-native speakers, and it has been used since the 18th and 19th centuries (Yasarah, 2018) and it was the primary international language used to engage with other people throughout the world. Even though English is the dominant global language, some people might experience

difficulty with written communication in English. Most media and technology information has been written in English. English is the language of most online resources, tutorials, and technical documentation, making it a universal language for numerous aspects of digital life. Many phrases in the English language have multiple (ambiguous) meanings, and people who do not speak English as their first language may have less of a vocabulary, limiting their capacity to express ideas clearly.

As a result, English is one of the most important languages to learn, particularly for non-native speakers who use English as a foreign language. There are four English skills that non-native speakers have to understand and learn listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Council, 2023). Listening and speaking are two abilities that function in conjunction in real-life situations. As a result, combining the two aims to encourage great oral communication. This connection will ensure real-time and comprehensive communication. Reading and writing are skills that are intrinsically connected as tools for achieving great written communication (Sadiku, 2015). In reality, combining listening and speaking with reading and writing can help learners become better listeners, speakers, readers, and writers, allowing them to communicate more effectively.

Reading has a close connection to other skills, such as the relationship between reading and writing. As stated by Yang (1978) (cited in Setyaningrum, 2022) system theory, linguistic understanding, and linguistic development are two related parts of the textual communication system. Reading is the basis for writing, and writing is the most effective way to demonstrate and improve reading efficiency. Reading and writing are communication tools. Reading may be utilized to help structure writing. It can be said to state that reading and writing communicate with one another. Reading may be utilized to structure writing. In other words, for reading and writing to be communicative, the reader should comprehend the writer's meaning and the writer should understand what the reader requires (Hidayani, 2021). In summary, reading and writing are two essential phases in self-development that play an important part in strengthening communication skills, critical thinking, and capacities in numerous areas of life.

Reading and writing skills are a demanding and crucial part of English language acquisition, and EFL learners are required to learn them. In accordance with Nation (2009) (cited in Sari, Santihastuti, & Wahjuningsih, 2020) Reading in a foreign language is more challenging than reading in one's native language. It pertains to these reasons that readers should recognize the words and sentences, as well as understand what is the point of the text. Writing as noted by Nunan (2003) is a difficult cognitive activity that requires learners to control a variety of aspects. Writing requires the writer's imagination, and organization to recognize and organize ideas into good writing that is easily understood by readers. This difficulty happens because of a lack of practice and motivation in developing habituated to reading and writing activities.

K-Pop enthusiasts, especially Gen Z, are encouraged to learn English so they may communicate with their friends. To keep up with the K-Pop addiction, the need for English study grows rapidly. The use of social media in English studies helps non-native speakers develop their language reading and writing skills. K-pop tweets can be used to help K-pop fans learn English and improve their communication skills. Tweeting in English about their idol, favorite music, and favorite show represents their love for the language more than learning it from a book in a classroom. They learn and enhance their English by tweeting K-pop content in English. Then, K-pop fans improve their reading abilities by reading K-pop news, increasing their English vocabulary by watching K-pop, dramas, or Korean shows with English subtitles, and practicing English grammar and writing by tweeting their K-pop idol. Indirectly, K-pop and its fans have an impact on learning English as well, especially for fans that English is their foreign language.

Regarding the explanation above, several researcher did research on the impact of K-pop on English learning. The first was conducted by Hayanda (2022), who carried out a study entitled "The Influence of Korean Wave in Improving English Language Skill." The main aim of this research is to determine whether people are benefiting from the Korean wave, or, in this example, English language improvement. This study solely looks at English in general. In this study, the quantitative method was applied, with data collected through questionnaires. This

study's participants are K-Pop lovers. K-pop and K-dramas do not only have a negative impact; there are many positive things we can take from this fangirling activity, such as indirectly learning English and enjoying the learning process more.

Furthermore, the other study conducted by Malik & Haidar (2023) in their study entitled "Online community development through social interaction — K-Pop stan Twitter as a community of practice" This qualitative study collects data using semi-structured interviews and participant observations and analyzes it using qualitative coding. Browse the replies under the ten most recent tweets made by the official Monsta X account to find active Twitter members. According to the findings of this study, members of K-Pop Stan Twitter build interpersonal relationships, communicate frequently, and create a close-knit community in which everyone contributes in their way.

The emergence of K-pop as a global cultural phenomenon has significantly influenced the way Generation Z (Gen Z) communicates, especially in the context of English written communication within the K-pop community. With the rapid globalization of K-pop, English has become a lingua franca among international fans for discussing and engaging with K-pop content online. Understanding Gen Z's perceptions of their English written communication in the K-pop community is crucial for exploring the intersection of language, culture, and digital communication in contemporary society.

Investigating Gen Z's Perceptions of their English Written Communication in the K-pop Community offers valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and digital communication practices in contemporary society. By exploring the motivations, attitudes, and challenges faced by Gen Z individuals, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on language use and identity formation in online communities.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are Gen Z's perceptions of the K-Pop Community for English Written Communication?
2. What are the obstacles and opportunities faced by Gen Z in expressing themselves effectively in English within the K-pop community?
3. What are the impact of K-pop content on Gen Z's English language proficiency and literacy?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To find out Gen Z's perceptions towards on K-Pop Community for English Written Communication.
2. To identify obstacles and opportunities faced by Gen Z in expressing themselves effectively in English within the K-pop community.
3. To investigate the impact of K-pop content on Gen Z's English language proficiency and literacy.

1.4 Scope and Limits of the Research

The scope of this research is to find out about K-pop fans' perceptions, particularly those of Generation Z, and whether their English written communication abilities improve after joining the K-pop community. To limit this research the researcher focussed on Gen Z's perceptions of K-Pop Community on Learning English, particularly on Twitter, to enhance their written communication skills by joining fandom communities.

1.5 Significance of the Research

1. For Teacher

Teachers have to realize that English written communication skills are equally important as other English language abilities since they help students' future lives in this global era. As a result, teachers are required to be able to motivate and be facilitators for students to improve their English written communication abilities based on their interests by taking advantage of current social media and applying them to global communication.

2. For Gen Z's

This research contributed to a deeper understanding of how English language use shapes Gen Z's experiences and interactions within the K-pop community. The findings have implications for language education, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication, informing strategies for enhancing English written communication skills among Gen Z individuals engaged in online fandoms.

3. For the Researcher

To obtain new findings regarding the influence of the K-Pop community as well as to provide answers to the research question problem.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

a. Perception

Perception is the integration of sensory information from the environment with the individual's prior knowledge and experience. Receiving information from the five senses is the first step in the process.

b. Gen Z

"Gen Z" is an abbreviated form of "Generation Z," which refers to a group that was raised in the digital and internet eras. The phrase "Gen Z" refers to people of the present generation who have distinct qualities and talents that set them apart from prior generations.

c. English Written Communication

Written communication refers to sending messages, commands, or instructions in writing via different mediums. In today's society, written communication is also a way of communication employed via social media utilizing conversation that is short, straightforward, and easy for the recipient to grasp.

d. K-pop Community

K-pop enthusiasts usually gather on social media platforms and create a community known as a fandom. They usually communicate with one another or participate in activities together, both online and offline. The K-Pop community is often classified into fandoms based on the groups they participate in.