Korean Language Education and *Hallyu* Content

Since Korean culture has become widespread around the world, K-pop, K-dramas, K-movies, and even K-games are receiving more attention than ever. Specifically, K-dramas are not only highly ranked among popular dramas in the world, but huge fandoms have also been forming due to the influence of K-pop. Concurrently, the number of people learning the Korean language is increasing. As a result, *Hallyu* (Korean wave) content, including K-pop, K-dramas, etc., has been considered to be beneficial for Korean language education (Lee & Chu, 2015), although there have not been many attempts to incorporate such content into teaching Korean (Bae, 2020; Erdenesuren, 2013; Jang & Kim, 2012; Lee, 2019; Ryzhkov & López Rocha, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by developing an instructional model for Korean language learners using *Hallyu* content.

Regarding methodology, I first conducted a questionnaire-based survey among 18 Korean language learners taking an undergraduate course synchronously in the U.S. Next, Korean language instructions using content inspired from K-pop songs (i.e., “Genie” and “Tell Me”) and K-games (i.e., traditional Korean games) were provided. The merits of and suggestions for improving the Korean language instructions were investigated qualitatively through in-depth interviews with nine participants. Based on the responses, an instructional model for utilizing K-pop and K-games was designed.

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that among the different types of *Hallyu* content, K-pop (42.1%) is the most popular, followed by K-dramas (21.1%), K-TV shows (15.8%), K-games (10.5%), and K-food (10.5%). In addition, the responses show that 83.3% of the respondents were willing to learn Korean via *Hallyu* content and expected that this type of instruction would improve their listening (41.7%), speaking (29.2%), vocabulary (16.7%), etc. (12.5%) abilities.

The results from the in-depth interviews show that K-pop motivated people to learn Korean and helped them develop their listening and pronunciation skills (1), while K-dramas, films, and TV variety shows led to a better understanding of Korean expressions, grammar usage, and culture (2). Moreover, Korean instruction utilizing K-pop was intriguing to the participants; however, the Korean songs should be chosen carefully and should be accompanied by additional grammar and usage explanations (3). In addition, despite the space constraints, some participants thought that the Korean class using K-games was enjoyable and broadened their knowledge related to Korean culture (4). In the future, the participants anticipated that a variety of *Hallyu* content would be incorporated into their Korean classes and that these would encompass new activities and assignments (5).

Based on the findings from the in-depth interviews, an instructional model for Korean language learners using *Hallyu* content is proposed: 1) pre-class (providing a list of vocabulary); 2) warm-up (providing information related to K-pop or K-games); 3) grammar explanations; 4) watching/listening; 5) an individual activity; 6) a group activity; 7) singing or game play; and 8) after-class (providing an assignment) (Figure 1). For future research, the educational effects of the instructional model are needed to be investigated through an experiment.
In-depth interviews

(1) I have become a devoted fan of BTS and their music which motivates me to learn more about the language and culture of South Korea. It is also interesting to follow their conversations as to how they address each other and in which situations given they are all of different ages. (Participant E)

(2) I think the most beneficial has been variety shows since the interactions are more natural and (it) helps me to identify correct usage of certain expressions and allows me to test my abilities through the native speakers' actual speed and fluidity of Korean language. (Participant D)

(3) I really enjoyed it as it was like re-visiting a younger me. So, I found myself singing along a lot. I would recommend incorporating songs that use the grammar that we’re studying, or perhaps looking at metaphors and similes in songs. (Participant B)

(4) Being able to learn how to play certain games and even how to make our own ddakji was enjoyable. I have made many ddakji with my daughters at home since then which allowed me to share some Korean culture with them too. Learning about games also helped us to connect with the holidays or festivals they are associated with. (Participant E)

(5) Doing song lyric analysis can be helpful because they’re short and students could do a project where they each pick a Korean song and present on its meaning to the class. That would be an interesting exercise that all students would be interested in, and it wouldn’t take too long either. (Participant C)

Figure 1. Research process

References


