

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Borrowing of Romanized Korean Words in Philippine English Tweets of Filipino Fans of Korean Culture: Exploring an Emerging Feature of Subculture Language

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### ABSTRACT

As Korean popular culture becomes more widely popular in the Philippines, Filipino fans of Korean popular culture engage online with fellow fans all over the world through Twitter, a social media platform where fans of Korean popular culture participate in transnational subculture discourse. While general users of Twitter may use a common language that the general public understands, subculture language, an understudied area, has distinct discursal features. One of these is the borrowing of Romanized Korean words as evidenced by the Philippine English tweets of Filipino fans. This study explored this feature by: 1) identifying the Romanized Korean terms that are mostly used in Philippine English tweets, 2) determining their frequency of use and 3) determining the grammatical system applied, and 4) analyzing the reasons for their use. Data were gathered by surveying 120 Filipino Korean popular culture fans on Twitter and extracting data from the tweets of the identified 30 most active Twitter public accounts from the set. Romanized Korean terms appear 1,280 times in the total of 2,737 tweets, with nouns and celebrity names being the most often utilized (95.98 percent).

Tweets generally followed both Korean and English grammar, with the exception of a few rules of Korean language that were deliberately ignored. Furthermore, Romanized Korean was reported to be employed on purpose since fellow fans are expected to have a schema of these as part of the context of fan discourse. There is also no better English equivalent for these words, according to users. Results imply that Romanized Korean is part of the vocabulary of Filipino Korean popular culture fans on Twitter. Further, Romanized Korean is used in English tweets of Filipino fans since it is part of the language of the transcultural digital subculture known as Korean popular culture fandoms.

*Keywords: Borrowing, Kpop Culture, Twitter, Kpop Fandom Subculture, Romanized Korean, Subculture language*

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### Introduction

Online engagement among transnational fans is evident in different online platforms, and Filipino fans of Korean popular culture (i.e., Korean-pop and Korean-drama in this paper) are one such group that actively expresses themselves and engages in discussions on social media. Such exchanges not only spread information about Korean popular culture but also share fans' sentiments about the celebrities they follow (Widita, 2018). Despite the various Korean dramas or celebrities that they admire, a network of Korean popular culture fandoms (i.e., fan kingdoms) share a common culture. Such fandoms are transcultural in that they “draw fans to transcultural objects despite linguistic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, further provoking transcultural identification” (Han, 2017: 2252). However, despite the transcultural interactions and culture-building among international fans of Korean popular culture, the language that reflects their specific fan culture is not widely studied (Werner, 2018).

Language use is linked to one's social network, a borderless network of people that could reach anyone in the world remotely (Milroy, 2003). The language of fandoms of Korean pop-culture perfectly reflects the social communication of complex groups because it is a collective engagement of networks of networks (Hills, 2017). However, even if K-pop fandoms have been examined on the social, individual, and cultural levels (Sun, 2020), their language in particular, and pop culture language in general, remain understudied (Werner, 2018), despite its “ubiquity and high social relevance” (Kaiser & Sina, 2016 as cited in Werner, 2018). Moreover, these social networks are composed of fans from various linguistic backgrounds, making the dynamics of their language use interesting to study.

English has become the common language of these fans who, despite their cultural and language differences, manage to understand one another through an emerging subculture language. Through time, this subculture language has acquired distinct discourse characteristics, one of which is the borrowing of Korean words spelled using the Roman alphabet (Romanization), a feature which often appears in the tweets of Filipino fans of Korean pop culture.

A tweet is a 280-character post on Twitter, a social networking site which connects people remotely. On Twitter, first and second order interactions can be viewed by individual users because of its functions such as: *retweet*, *quote tweet*, and *like*. Statements can be viewed, liked, or re-tweeted by a contact of a contact, thus resulting in complex interconnections within networks which make Twitter a mine of voluminous data for investigating language use.

Filipino fans interact with fellow fans worldwide on Twitter to engage in discourse about their various interests in Korean pop culture. In the Philippines, Twitter is a widely used online platform with 10.4 million users (Ancheta, Gorro, & Uy, 2020). The application has become a space for a variety of discourses, from disaster rescue and relief (Takahashi, Tandoc, & Carmichael, 2015), class suspensions (Ancheta, Gorro, & Uy, 2020), to pageant commentaries (Aguilar, 2018). Twitter has become a dominant discursive space among Filipinos, not only for local topics but also for Korean pop culture. In fact, Philippine Twitter users ranked 5th worldwide in terms of the amount of mentions and discussions on K-pop in 2020 (Tayao-Juego, 2020), revealing that Twitter has evolved into a major digital discourse platform for Filipino Korean pop culture fans.

Philippine English is the primary language used by Filipino fans of Korean pop culture on Twitter, particularly by those who would like to engage in discourse with fans worldwide. Their tweets usually borrow Romanized Korean, probably because the Korean script, Hangeul, is not readily accessible on communication devices in the Philippines, and some Filipino fans may not know Hangeul well enough to use it. As a result, instead of using 오빠, fans borrow a Korean word and use Romanized spelling in their tweets (as in 'oppa'). Examples of often adopted Korean words in local tweets include *oppa* (older brother- among female speakers), *noona* (older sister- among male speakers), *unnie /connie* (older sister among- female speakers), *hyung* (older brother – among male speakers), *sunbae* (senior), and *maknae* (youngest member of a group). However, this combining of borrowed Romanized Korean terms with English is not a new phenomenon. In 2012, Korean singer performer PSY did this when he used *oppa* (instead of 오빠) in “*Oppa* Gangnam style,” his song that popularized the term oppa also made it popular even among non-Koreans.

Borrowing reflects the ingenuity or innovativeness of strategic language users who may borrow foreign words because they are either imperfect learners or pickers-up of useful bits of a given target language (Aitchison, 2004). Filipino fans of Korean popular culture may fall into one or both categories as they may not know much Korean language and rely only on terms normally learned from K-dramas or K-pop shows. The ubiquity of these Korean words in their consumed media encourages their integration into the discourse vocabulary of Filipinos, which is primarily Philippine English. Useful bits of language that are likely to be borrowed are: 1) “elements... which are easily detached from the donor language and which will not affect the structure of the borrowing language,” 2) “adopted items (that can be) changed to fit ...the structure of the borrower’s language,” 3) bits that reflect “aspects of the donor language which superficially correspond fairly closely

to aspects already in its own,” and 4) words that require minimal structural adjustments (Aitchison, 2004, pp. 142-143). It is worth investigating whether these characteristics are present in the borrowed Romanized Korean in Philippine English tweets of Filipino fans in order to achieve a deeper understanding of how fans use subculture language.

Overall, this study intends to enrich the currently scarce literature on the language used by fandoms, particularly that used by Filipino fans of Korean popular culture, who are expected to wield greater influence in the various emerging fan discourses on social media as their numbers grow. The language that this expanding group uses in their communication warrants careful study in that it transcends the realm of the subculture. Since fans are bound by the same interest and fascination, they are expected to share a distinct set of vocabulary that helps them manage the challenges of communicating with transnational fans, some of whom are not familiar with English or Korean. This paper focuses on a specific set of vocabulary, the observed borrowing of Romanized Korean words in the Philippine English tweets of Filipino fans by: 1) identifying the Romanized Korean terms used in Philippine English tweets, 2) determining their frequency of use and 3) identifying the grammatical system applied, and 4) analyzing the reasons for their use. Through presented data, the paper provides insights on an emerging transnational vocabulary, a repertoire of borrowed Romanized Korean words, and discusses how these lexical choices are utilized purposively by Filipino fans to express meaning.

### Method

Data were collected through an online survey and data extraction performed on tweets. The survey, launched on Twitter, Facebook, and Messenger, engaged a total of 120 Filipino Korean popular culture fans who use Twitter. The survey informed respondents of the study's objectives, data collection, and data storing protocol. Continuing with the survey meant giving consent for data use. Those who were unwilling to share data were directly led to the end of the survey. Respondents' identities are protected and could not be traced in the analyzed data. Confirmatory interviews were conducted with verbal consent from the interviewees.

The expert-validated online survey consists of profiling questions about the respondents' Twitter use, account type, and language used in tweets. It also asked for the most commonly used Romanized Korean words as well as the context and reasons for using them. A short list of observed common Korean words in tweets was presented to aid recall of Romanized Korean words, and respondents were invited to add other words they use to this list. The survey data were analyzed to determine which Romanized Korean

words respondents reported using in tweets and the reasons for their use. These factors inspired the generation of themes.

A statistically readable base of 30 accounts (Delice, 2010) were randomly selected from the 120 survey respondents for data (tweet) extraction. Each account was checked to ensure that it had at least 300 followers to secure a wide reach that would yield ample data. Among these, three sets of 10 accounts represent public fanbases (which may have multiple administrators), fan/stan accounts (those used by fans to remain anonymous and have a single administrator), and individual accounts. Following the social network analysis framework, 10 accounts from the survey were pre-selected for data extraction, and the fan/stan accounts and public fanbases were chosen at random from those that respondents followed.

Octoparse, a web scraping program, was used to extract the tweets from the 30 accounts. It was programmed for this study to have loops (one loop is one extraction of all the elements on one screen page) depending on the number of followers that the accounts have. The more followers and posts per day that an account has, the more loops were created for the extraction. Overall, 3,820 tweets were scraped with 2,737 of them qualifying for the final analysis because they used Philippine English. Among these, 802 tweets had Romanized Korean in them. All the tweets curated were in the public domain during data collection. Tweets were coded and labeled in the discussion via these codes.

To determine the frequency of the common Romanized Korean words that the survey yielded, each of their occurrence in extracted tweets was counted. The grammatical systems used in the tweets, whether English or Korean, were identified. Grammar analysis focused on morpho-syntactic behavior and applied mechanics conventions.

### Results and Discussion

This section presents gathered results and the emerging insights and issues from the data collected.

#### *Borrowed Romanized Korean Words and Frequency of Use*

A total of 69 Korean words were specified by the respondents in which the highest frequency of mentions (73.65%) are for nouns pertaining to people and food. The other words are interjections, adjectives, negations, and pleas. For expediency, Table 1 presents only the 10 Romanized Korean words that earned the most number of reports from respondents. The most often used Romanized Korean word, according to respondents, is *oppa*.

**Table 1.** *Most Reported Borrowed Romanized Korean Words*

Borrowed Romanized Korean Words with English Translation	% of response
<i>oppa</i> (older brother, term used by a female speaker)	66%
<i>maknae</i> (youngest member of a family or a group)	57%
<i>connie/ unnie</i> (older sister, term used by a female speaker)	53%
<i>hyung</i> (older brother, term used by a male speaker)	43%
<i>sunbac/ sunbaenim</i> (senior)	43%
<i>noona</i> (older sister, term used by a male speaker)	30%
<i>sarang/hac/yo</i> (love/ I love you)	13%
<i>daebak/debak</i> (awesome)	10%
<i>annyeong/ haseyo</i> (hello)	10%
<i>chingu/chinggu</i> (friend)	8%

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The majority of the words reported by respondents are nouns, although other terms recorded include the Romanized Korean phrase “I love you,” the Korean greeting *annyeong*, and *daebak* (‘awesome’).

In terms of the frequency of Romanized Korean words in tweets, celebrity names appeared the most, with 1,280 mentions, followed by words for awards with 26 mentions and familial terms. The popularity of award-related terms could be attributed to the timing of data collection, which coincided with awards show season. Tweets at the time frequently expressed encouragement for celebrities and called for support to make them trend on Twitter. For brevity, Table 2 presents only the 10 most frequently used Romanized Korean words from the extracted data from Twitter.

**Table 2.** *Most Frequently Borrowed Korean Words Extracted on Twitter*

Borrowed Romanized Korean Words	Examples from Data with English Translation	Frequency of Appearance in Tweets
Name of celebrities and K-drama characters	<i>Kim So Hyun, Nam Do San</i>	1280
Terms used for awards titles	<i>Daesang</i> (top excellence award), <i>Bonsang</i> (main prize)	26
Familial terms	<i>oppa</i> (older brother for female speaker), <i>hyung</i> (older brother for male speaker)	23

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Borrowed Romanized Korean Words	Examples from Data with English Translation	Frequency of Appearance in Tweets
Post-position noun markers	<i>-nim</i> (used as an honorific after a name as in <i>sunbaenim</i> , <i>sconsaengnim</i> ), <i>-ie</i> (used as either an endearment or subject marker)	18
Interjections	<i>omo</i> , <i>aigoo</i> , <i>kycopta</i> (cute or “It’s so cute” as an interjection)	17
Brand names	Sports Chosun	16
Names of places	Seoul, Myeongdong, <i>noraebang</i> (karaoke bar/ room)	12
Titles	songs, lyrics, music charts	6
Greetings	<i>annyeong</i> (hello), <i>saengil chuka hae</i> (happy birthday)	5
Expressions	<i>Komawo</i> (thank you), <i>Kwaenchana</i> (It’s okay), <i>Saranghae</i> (I love you)	5

N.B.: Email the main author at [jrombaoa@ateneo.edu](mailto:jrombaoa@ateneo.edu) for the full list of data.

The findings show a strong representation of Romanized Korean phrases in the tweets of Filipino Korean entertainment fans. *Oppa* was reported as a Romanized Korean term borrowed and used in tweets by the most number of respondents, and its popularity is confirmed by its appearance on the list of the most frequently used borrowed Korean words in extracted tweets. Names of celebrities are on the top of the list of most frequently used Romanized Korean words. *Oppa* and *maknae* are terms commonly used to refer to actors and idol group members; thus, the data gathered from the respondents reveal the subject of discourse of the tweets that the participants engage in. This aligns with results on the most frequently used Romanized Korean words - the names of celebrities, proving that Philippine English discourse of Korean popular culture fans revolve around personalities.

The fact that nouns have emerged as the most frequently used Romanized Korean words reflect the characteristics of commonly borrowed terms (Aitchison, 2004). The use of Romanized Korean names and nouns in primarily English tweets will not significantly alter English grammar, particularly syntax; that is, Romanized Korean nouns can easily replace English nouns in sentences. Borrowing of Romanized Korean requires

minimal syntactic adjustments in composing Philippine English tweets. Further, the modifications in borrowed Korean words are the result of the transition from Hangeul script characters to Roman alphabet letters.

### *Applied Grammatical System of Borrowed Romanized Korean Words*

Out of the 1,442 occurrences of Romanized Korean words, 1,121 (98.16%) applied the grammar convention of Philippine English, while 320 (28.02%) involved deviations in capitalization, with the proper nouns either spelled in all capital letters or small letters. Since tweets are informal texts, users were likely aware of capitalization conventions but were not pressured by the informal context to strictly adhere to rules.

In terms of grammar application, data revealed three morpho-syntactic issues in borrowing Romanized Korean words in Philippine English tweets: one, whether Korean honorifics which are placed after names (e.g., *Jay hyung*, *Seonho hyung*) should follow Philippine English syntax which requires the opposite (i.e., *hyung Jay*, *hyung Seonho*); two, whether plural Romanized Korean nouns should follow Philippine English pluralization rules, and three, determining a standard for orthography. These instances may yield a conflict in the grammatical choices that users will make.

The first issue is illustrated in the verbatim line from Tweet 787 below where the Romanized Korean *hyung* (*kuya* in Filipino and *brother* in English) appears before the noun it refers to, Jay.

“...he called his dad upon knowing the plans of his Hyung Jay to confirm something!...” (787)

In contrast, familial honorifics are placed after a name in Korean (i.e., *Jay Hyung*), as shown in Tweet 536 below.

“that ‘seonho hyung’ is music to my ears aaahh i love their friendship” (536)

In this study, Tweet 787 is deemed grammatical based on the Matrix Language Framework principle (Myers-Scotton in Mugo & Ong’anda, 2017) that the matrix language (the base language, which in this case is English) and not the embedded language (guest language or Romanized Korean in this case) determines the morphosyntax of sentences with combined languages. Nevertheless, the presence of Tweet 787 confirms that fans consider this use and their bases for preferring it to the syntax of Tweet 536 could be instructive in that it reflects how multilingual language users negotiate the differing morphosyntactic rules of the languages they use. It should be noted that Filipino fans are typically bilinguals. The fans may know three languages (i.e., Filipino, English, and Korean) in varying degrees, hence there

may be instances where the rules of these languages conflict. When users employ Romanized Korean honorifics in their Philippine English tweets, do they feel a conflict or none at all? Do more users prefer *Jay hyung* or *Hyung Jay*? Does this issue affect non-Filipino readers' comprehension of their tweets? Future studies can explore these concerns and shed more light about this particular issue.

In the case of Tweet 787, the user was likely to have purposively used the Philippine English syntax represented by *Hyung Jay*. Filipino fans are unlikely to have missed the markedness that *Jay Hyung* has in their consumed Korean pop culture media. This form is explicitly marked relative to the form, *Hyung Jay*, which is more reflective of Filipino and English syntax for this noun phrase. It is also possible that the user chose to utilize Philippine English syntax on purpose because this tweet is mostly in Philippine English. For now, the issue is minimal in that the meaning of the concerned noun phrase is unaffected, and the concern only affects forms that appear close together. Whether Tweet 536's noun phrase syntax is considered a syntactic innovation or deviation will rely on emerging usage trends, which can be investigated in future studies.

The second issue concerns the pluralization of borrowed Romanized Korean words. A borrowed Korean noun, such as *ahjumma*, a common noun for a middle-aged woman, is pluralized using English morphosyntax rules, with the addition of *-s* or *-es* inflections, following the Matrix Language Framework. Contrastingly, Korean pluralization requires the addition of suffixes *-eul* (-을) and *-deul* (-들). Hence, the Romanized Korean plural form of the word is *ahjummadeul*. In Tweet 1121 below, the English plural inflection is used for *ahjumma*.

“Reply 1988: Appreciating The *Ahjummas* Of Ssangmundong.” (1121)

While data revealed the application of Philippine English morphosyntax on borrowed Romanized Korean, some tweets (though not included in this study's data) show the addition of Romanized Korean plural inflections rather than using the Philippine English ones (e.g. *chingudeul* which is a Romanized Korean for 친구들 the English term for 'friends'). While such tweets are not part of the study's data, their occurrence has been observed online, and their use is interesting in that users may have their own reasons for preferring this way of pluralization over another. Future studies can look at how fans, language users, decide which grammatical rules to follow in instances such as these, and discover more about the appropriations they make in using the languages as they desire.

The last emerging issue is the current absence of an orthography standard for spelling borrowed Romanized Korean. Gathered data revealed varied spellings (e.g., *aigoo/aiguu*, *connie/unnie*, *araso/ arraseo/ arasso* etc.) which probably show the predilection of users to spell Romanized Korean using the orthography standard of the languages they know, either English or Filipino. This suggests that Romanized Korean spelling may vary greatly, just as the spelling of fans of other nationalities is likely to be impacted by their first or familiar language. Such differences in orthography are interesting to track and study as they may possibly result in a communication hiccup. However, as long as the Romanized word is recognizable and is orthographically transparent, fans in transnational and transcultural spaces will still be able to communicate with one another. Future research can investigate how they negotiate these differences.

*Purposes for using Borrowed Romanized Korean Words in Philippine English Tweets*

Gathered responses reveal four themes that reflect respondents' purposes for borrowing Romanized Korean words: (1) shared schema with other fans, (2) absence of a direct translation of the borrowed word in English, (3) for humor or entertainment, and (4) limited Korean vocabulary. Table 3 below presents these themes, their frequency of mentions in the data, and selected verbatim lines that represent them.

Table 3. Respondents' Reported Purposes for Using Borrowed Romanized Korean Words in Tweets

Purposes for Using Borrowed Romanized Korean Words	Examples of Given Explanations	Frequency	Percentage
Shared schema with other people in the discourse	The context is in Korean, so people who read my tweets will understand.” I know other fans I interact with understand.	78	65%
No direct translation in English and Filipino	There’s no better word to use. Not everyone can understand <i>Hangeul</i> .	45	39%
For one’s own enjoyment or entertainment	I think it’s cool. I tend to use ‘juseyo’ as a form of sarcasm.	17	15%
Limited Korean vocabulary	I don’t know the exact spelling in <i>Hangeul</i> . I can’t write using the Korean alphabet.	6	6%

The primary reason for the use of Romanized Korean among the respondents is the shared schema with other fans engaged in discourse, showing that tweets using borrowed Romanized Korean are targeted at an audience with a similar linguistic repertoire and a shared schema for Korean pop culture which they have acquired by belonging to the same big group of fans. In a transnational and transcultural subculture community, Romanization of Korean words is the Filipino fans' way of discoursing with fellow fans all over the world, and this is achieved by mixing English, an international lingua franca, with their common target culture's language, Korean. Romanization, therefore, is the act of blending the target culture's language with the intention of conversing in the language of their subculture. Similarly, relying on the fans' common schema increases group identification or belongingness, which is highly valued in fandoms.

Filipino fans of Korean popular culture belong to a transcultural network of multiple fandoms that share a borderless culture and language (Han, 2017; Hills, 2017). The fans' sense of belongingness to the fandom may be heightened by a deeper identification with Korean culture (Kyungmin Bae, personal conversation, December 28, 2020), and this may be achieved by being more like Koreans, that is, by using (writing) their language, albeit through Romanized spelling. Doing so possibly bolsters Filipino fans' membership in the sub-culture in-group and, consequently, elevates their fan status higher in the fandom hierarchy.

Having a shared schema refers to the use of Romanized Korean in the absence of an English translation that fully reflects the semantic nuance that fans seek to express. For example, *oppa* translates to "brother" in English; yet, the Korean cultural connotation of *oppa* is absent in "brother". For a Korean fan, the term *oppa* may not necessarily mean 'an older brother to females.' Given the context of fan discourse, it is more likely to be used as a term of endearment for an older person, or a male celebrity admired, thus, fans may choose to borrow Romanized 'oppa' over 'brother.' Interestingly, this particular result conflicts with the reported purpose of borrowing because of the absence of a direct English translation. A particular example is the popularity of borrowing the word *daebak* even if it has a direct English translation. The word *daebak* (대박) has a direct English translation, *awesome*.

However, going back to the result of the first research question, fans who answered the survey, mentioned that *daebak* is a Romanized word that they commonly use. This contradicts the claim that fans use Romanized Korean for words that have no English counterpart because *daebak* has an English parallel in the same context as an interjection. Thus, further research may be conducted to determine why fans object to the use of a Korean term with a straight English translation.

Results of the study imply that Filipino fans are aware of semantic nuances of Korean words that they Romanize and use in their Philippine English tweets. However, some semantic nuances of terms have been observed to be willfully ignored by users and replaced with new meanings that are more reflective of the Philippine context or culture. In the Philippines, for example, ‘*oppa*’ may be used to refer to any random handsome man without regard for the Korean cultural nuance that the language user ought to be female and younger than the person called *oppa* (Kyungmin Bae, personal conversation, December 28, 2020). This semantic appropriation of borrowed words may compromise understanding, especially when Filipino fans communicate with Koreans or non-Filipino fans. The question of whether this type of appropriation impedes communication can be addressed in future research.

Another reported purpose, borrowing Romanized Korean for humor or personal entertainment was reported to be a case especially involving respondents who think that doing so is fashionable or impressive. In Tweet 832 below, *juseyo* (please) is used as a sarcastic marker of a request that ends up being humorous because the fan is directing the request for a selfie to a celebrity who is unlikely to receive or comprehend the message. Humor results from the request’s boldness which was motivated by the unlikelihood of being read.

“Adorable *selcas* (Romanized Korean slang for ‘selfie’) with the new baby *juseyo*” . (832)

The humorous purpose of borrowed Romanized Korean may not be easily detected by one who is unfamiliar with the context and vocabulary of fans. For some, using borrowed Romanized Korean is a fashionable and creative activity of code-mixing.

Finally, despite their inadequate grasp of Korean language and script, participants’ eagerness to employ Korean phrases learned through Korean popular culture media motivated them to use Romanized Korean. They are likely to have noticed the use of Romanized Korean in entertainment internet discourse. This practice shows that, despite their lack of knowledge of the Hangeul orthography, fans have learned Romanization as a clever and innovative approach for employing Korean vocabulary. Filipino fans use their knowledge of the Roman alphabet to write the Korean words they want to borrow. While some Filipino fans borrowed Romanized Korean, some (2%) did not do so because it irritated Koreans and they would rather use Hangeul, implying that some fans studied the Korean language and are proficient enough to use the script. The latter reveals the possibility that

if they have mastered the Hangeul script, an increasing number of Filipino Korean entertainment fans may use it in their tweets.

### Conclusions and Implications

Filipino K-pop and K-drama fans do use Romanized Korean in their English tweets because these words belong to a culture that they engage with regularly online. As long as Korean entertainment flourishes and is discussed by fans on the transnational and transcultural realm of social media, there will be a continued presence of these borrowed words in fans' Philippine English tweets. This study has shown that borrowing words from Korean and using the Roman script for them is a strategic way for Filipino fans to communicate with transnational fans, and this possibly heightens their membership in fandoms, as some think that doing so is fashionable.

More importantly, data revealed that borrowing facilitated Filipino fans' appropriation of Romanized Korean in terms of syntax and spelling, implying that they may have already acquired a certain degree of confidence in using this distinct lexicon in their own way. Nevertheless, while Filipino fans may have taken liberties with the syntax and orthography of Romanized Korean in their Philippine English tweets, these borrowed words show minimal deviation from grammar conventions and are likely to remain clear and understandable to transnational K-pop and K-drama fans. The resulting variations in morphosyntactic use of Romanized Korean by fans with diverse languages is an interesting feature to watch out and study in the future.

However, since the borrowed Romanized Korean terms appear in a borderless virtual platform like Twitter, they are not restricted to the use of Filipinos or Korean pop culture fans and are very likely to be picked up by non-fans and spread outside the realm of this subculture. After all, discourse in the digital setting knows no geographic, cultural, and national boundaries. Hence, similar to Korean popular culture fandoms, the subculture language of fans may evolve with the rise of digital communities.

Since it is a language that transcends the world of the subculture, the language used by this expanding group in their communication deserves close study. That is, the transnational negotiation and expectations in this particular subculture language may illuminate how diverse meanings, some of which are culture-specific, might be expressed when using a lingua franca with people from different countries. Since fans are bound by the same interest and fascination, they are expected to share a distinct set of vocabulary that will help them manage the challenges of communicating with transnational fans, some of whom may not be as familiar with English. Results of this study encourage future research on fan sub-culture discourse,

linguistic characteristics of borrowing, and fans' linguistic appropriations of Korean in subculture language.

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