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IMPLICATION OF THE USE OF REFERENCE USED BY K-POP FANS IN INSTAGRAM AND X

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Abstract
The K-pop industry has reached its peak. The influence of K-pop has been everywhere. Even in Korea itself, the K-pop industry has gained popularity among businessmen and youngsters who want to enter the K-pop industry. K-pop songs are also famous around the world. The fame of the song goes hand in hand with the fame of the singer. The singer, usually called an idol, has fandoms in other countries. The idols receive adoration from the fans by giving gifts, buying the album, and even defending the idols if they are "attacked" by another fandom. This kind of behaviour has resulted in the fans having a sort of behavioural disorder so-called celebrity worship syndrome. This study aims to reveal how the use of references by fans reveals their psychological state towards the idol. The data was taken from the comment session of the news about K-pop idols on Instagram and X. There were 100 data to be analysed. This research found that there are nine references used: *pacar*/*ayank*, *sayang*/love/*cinta*, *oppa*, *suami*/*istri*, king, prince/*pangeran*, my lord/ *tuan*, legend, and my life. Those references were analysed using the theory semantics to see the correlation between the choice of reference with the world the K-pop fans think they are in. The conclusion is that the fans see their idol as someone having an intimate relationship with them, and the fans also see the idols as someone they adore highly.

Keywords: celebrity worship syndrome, K-pop, reference

Introduction
Korean entertainment industry conquers the world indeed. Seeing how popular Korean dramas are, the size of Korean pop (K-pop) fandom, and other Korean-related things such as fashion and beauty care proves that Korean entertainment rules the world. The latest achievement is Jeon Jung Kook, the youngest member of BTS, who was chosen as the singer of the Qatar World Cup 2022 theme song. Surely this moment shows how successful the K-pop singer is.

The phenomenon so-called *Hallyu* wave refers to the era when K-culture spreads around the world. Kim Bok-rae, a professor at Andong National University, mentioned that the *Hallyu* wave is divided into four waves. (Bok-rae, 2015) Hallyu wave 1.0 was started when K-drama started to become popular around the world in the 1990s. Hallyu 2.0, based on Kim, is known as K-pop music becoming popular;

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Hallyu 3.0 is indicated as K-culture spreads around the world; and now Hallyu 4.0 in which K-style is followed by many people.

Entertainment is still the main sector in spreading K-culture. Everything related to K-pop singers becomes phenomenal easily. Each K-pop group has its own militant fandom. In many cases, they often have a war between fandom when they find that there is someone who is mocking or disregards his/her idol. The fan always shows his/her adoration to the idol. When there is news on social media reporting his/her idol's achievement, the fandom swarms the comment section with sweet words.

This study would like to portray the celebrity worship syndrome among K-popers. The portrayal was taken from analysing the word used to refer to the K-pop star. Through the choice of words, we can see how K-pop fans see their idol. The data was taken from the comment section on Instagram and X, as those two social media are commonly used by K-pop fans to share their idol's achievements or news.

Hopefully, this study can benefit in knowing and seeing the reason behind the vast phenomenon of the K-pop fandom war. The adoration towards K-pop idols has become more severe in the sense that the fans show unhealthy fanaticism. They show how they spend a lot of money to buy the album or go to the concert. They also defend their idol and commit "war" with another fandom. It shows that the adoration is toxic to their character. The fans can be considered having a psychological disorder, and this study is beneficial to portray how the fans have this disorder by showing an identity as a close person with the idol. Showing an identity can be seen through the choice of words in referring to their idol or themselves.

The problem in the K-pop fandom is not only about having hallucinations as the idol's partner but also about how easily the fandom starts a war with another fandom. As the focus of this study, analysis will be limited to how the fans identify themselves. The identification will be seen through the references they use for themselves and/or for the idols.

In order to answer the research questions, some theories were implemented to analyse the data. Those theories are the theory of celebrity worship syndrome and the theory of reference. The data of this study is in the form of a list of references. The definition of reference used will be the basic to know how K-pop fans see their idols. Through the analysis of reference definition, this study will conclude what kind of psychological state the K-pop fans have in relation to seeing their idols.

Reference

In linguistics, reference is defined as the word showing the relationship between the language and the external world. Language is used to explain the meaning, and meaning is the relationship between the words and the world. The use of certain words has a close relationship with the things they refer to, and it is called reference (Obande & Emike, 2024). It can be said that a reference contains information about the words and the surrounding things such as actions, events, and qualities. Reference is an important property to know the meaning (Marconi, 2015). Particularly in communication, the use of reference is meaningful to reveal the expression of thought.

The principal concepts used in semantics are reference and sense. These two concepts were found by German philosopher Gottlob Frege. Frege explained that their reference is the object that the expression refers to. The sense is the idea or cognitive significance of the expression (Issac & Gwunireama, 2020). From these principles, the study to reveal the world and the thoughts of the speaker towards something or someone is conducted under the notion of semantics and the study of reference, to be exact.

Many researchers have dealt with the theory of reference for a long time. Reference is defined as a word describing the things speakers intend to say. Kreidler, as cited in Purwasari, (2020) explained that reference is the relation between a language expression and whatever the expression is related to in a certain situation of language use, including what the speaker may imagine (Purwasari, 2020).

Similar to previous theories, Baker, as cited in Sultonov and Numonova (2021), mentioned that reference is the result of the relationship between words and reality. Many other linguists, based on Baker, also mentioned that reference is used for the relationship holding a word and what it points to in the real world (Sultonov & Numonova, 2021).

A reference contains the sense that it refers to which is the so-called referent. A referent is a certain thing, person, place, and so on that an expression stands for on a particular occasion of use. In other words, each word has a referent it has by virtue of a certain act on the part of the speaker which is called a reference (Riemer, 2010). A reference is the manifestation of a person's expression of a particular thing.

Martí (Martí, 2021) explains that a reference is the relation between the words we use and the pieces of the world those words represent, a relation that allows us to talk about things. If semantics is conceived as a theory of truth conditions, the theory of reference constitutes the foundation of semantics, since it focuses on the fundamental blocks that contribute to truth conditions and that determine the capacity of language to represent fragments of the world.

To put it short, a reference is a word representing the referent. The use of reference may differ in meaning, in connotative meaning to be exact, from one person's use to another person. Thus, the study of reference can give a glimpse of what a person thinks towards a particular object or person.

Celebrity worship syndrome

The researchers agree that celebrity worship syndrome is included in psychological disorders. Celebrity worship syndrome is defined as the obsessive and addictive behaviour shown by the fans that involves knowing the idol's private life (McCutcheon & Aruguete, 2021). This behaviour includes glorification towards the idols. This syndrome has three dimensions. Based on Maltby et.al, those three dimensions are social entertainment, intense personal feeling, and borderline-pathological tendency (Griffiths, 2024).

There are three stages in celebrity worship syndrome. The low stage includes individualistic behaviours such as watching and reading about a celebrity. The second stage takes on a social character. The highest stage is characterized by having a mixture of the feeling of empathy towards the celebrities' success or failure, showing over-identification behaviour with the celebrity, showing

compulsive behaviour, and being obsessed with the celebrity's private life. (Griffiths, 2024).

The focus of this study is what is called over-identification. Over-identification is defined as someone who identifies his/her quality excessively. As it was explained by McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran, the example of having an over-identification behaviour is showing one's relationship with the celebrity excessively (Griffiths, 2024). In this study, the choice of words was analysed to reveal what kind of relationship the fan thinks she/he has with the Korean boyband/girlband member.

The choice of words as the portrayal of psychological state

This study will be conducted based on the notion that there is a correlation between choice of word and psychological state. Words are often used to sharpen the visual representation towards the stimulus (Fugate, O'Hare, & Emmanuel, 2018). As celebrity worship syndrome is included as a form of psychological disorder, the choice of words can be the indicator of someone's psychological state. Psychology is also related to emotion. This emotion is shown because of the stimulus, which is the K-pop idols. As an example, when one is happy, one tends to show one's happiness with a smile, singing, and sweet words.

The idea that language and thought correlate to each other has been researched for a long time. This idea is known as linguistic relativity. Words are the mirror; they reflect the speaker's way of thinking. The other person can learn the speaker's world through the language and words the speaker uses (Alpium & Ehrenberg, 2023). In other words, we can say that to reveal one's emotion, we can analyse the words one uses.

This hypothesis is also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This hypothesis believes that languages determine thought. Language is only the reflection of the thought that gives rise to meaning; thus, the life of the society is formed through the language they use (Sugianto et.al, 2018). This hypothesis is supported by the belief that there is a relation between emotions and experience. Emotion is a subjective reaction towards experiences, and this experience brings physiological and behavioural changes (Lestari & Bassaria, 2021). In turn, it can be implied that different language suggests different perceptions and thoughts (Dong, 2022).

Although some experts question whether there is a correlation between emotion and language, Lindquist, MacCormack, and Shablack explained that based on Conceptual Act Theory (CAT) emotion has a crucial role in emotion because language supports the conceptual knowledge used to make meaning of sensation from the body and world in a given context. They argue that what people say affects emotions, and the same things happen, language can be used to describe emotions (Lindquist, MacCormack, & Shablack, 2015).

In anthropological linguistics, language is seen as a window on emotions. This statement is supported by the study of how human language contributes to defining, structuring, and producing social identities, groups, and interactions. Anthropological linguists believe that language is a social tool to know how the emotional state of the speakers (Ponsonnet, 2022).

Method

This study was conducted under the notion of semantics studies. This method was chosen since the data used in this study is the reference used by K-pop fans to their idols. The reference found in the comment section was used to portray the reality in which the K-pop fans thought they had with their idols. The analysis went beyond portraying the celebrity worship syndrome among the fans. Through the analysis of their diction in referring to K-pop singers, this study wants to examine what kind of world and imagination they have with K-pop idols.

The data was gathered by browsing Instagram or X looking for news about K-pop idols. The idols chosen were random; the data were gathered randomly from any news about K-pop idols. The researchers browsed the news on different days and made sure that the data was not taken from the same commenters. When the news was found, the researchers went to the comment section and sorted the comments that contained words referring to the idol.

Screenshotting was the method used to store the data. The researchers screenshot the comments containing the reference. The data was both in Bahasa Indonesia and English. The social media used to gather the data are Instagram and X. This study collected 100 comments to be analysed. Further, the gathered data, which is in the form of a set of comments from K-pop fans, was analysed by listing the words fans used to refer to their idol.

Findings and Discussion

Understanding K-pop fans' world through their expression

The mental state of K-pop idol fans has been quite widely researched. Almost all the research found that fans tend to indulge themselves in the fantasy of how close they are to their idols. Pan (2021) researched the motives for being a fan by interviewing some fans and gathered the data through a questionnaire asking about their motivation in joining a fandom. Based on this research, Pan found that the fans admit to being a better person after following their idols' careers and feel motivated by the idols' statements. Among those fans, there was a small number of fans who went to the extremes in showing their adoration. Among K-pop fans, those extremists are called *sasaeng* (Pan, 2021).

Those extremists often cause war among fandoms. Iqbal et al (2022) did research on ARMY, the BTS fandom. They are often caught in a war with other fandoms. This research was conducted by interviewing some ARMYs. They admitted that they liked BTS very much to the extent that they want to spend much money to buy the official light stick and buy the concert ticket. They also admit that they feel irritated if other people insult their idols and try to defend their idols from haters (Iqbal et al, 2022).

From those previous studies, it is clear that most studies about this fandom phenomenon and celebrity worship syndrome among K-pop fans were done in the psychology realm. This study enriches those findings by focusing the analysis on how the fans express their adoration through the use of references. Reference here means the reference they used to refer to their idols. Through the analysis of the use of reference, this study portrays the fans' behaviour towards their idols.

Based on the idea of linguistic relativity, 'knowing the K-pop fans' world is an important aspect of learning their behaviour. K-pop has gained popularity since the influence of K-pop has reached many aspects. Even nowadays, it is called K-

culture, which means people do not only like the music or drama but also like the culture, such as food and fashion. This global K-wave encourages the agency to form boybands and girlbands. The comparison of the number of boybands and girlbands in the past and now is pretty huge. In the past, the global market only knew TVXQ, Super Junior, Girls Generation, or Big Bang, but now they know more boybands and girlbands. It seems "easy" for the new band to gain popularity outside South Korea, and it is supported by the advancement in technology.

Based on the study, K-pop came first and K-culture is spreading because this pop music gains popularity worldwide. The effect of this phenomenon is that Korea is everywhere. Supported by the technology advancement, the influence spread more quickly. Social media such as YouTube, Instagram, and X become the main sources for fans to get close to their idols. Social media also becomes the place for them to show their adoration and support. One common action to show adoration and support is by leaving a positive comment on the news or post about the idols. Extremely, fans also swarm other fandoms' accounts or comment sections to leave harsh comments or replies if that account mocks or disgraces their idols. Since the fans cannot directly or always support their idol in Korea, they send their support through social media.

As fans who are mostly in the age of a teenager, based on research, they have much time to browse about their idols and they are in the stage of finding their life purpose. During the teenage life, they tend to look for a role model to be the example and inspiration (Jamilah, Nurhudaya, & Budiman, 2020). Since they spend more time browsing social media, they are exposed to the recent trend; and one trend nowadays is K-culture. It is not unusual for adolescents and teenagers to idolize K-pop singers or boybands and girlbands. In short, K-culture, technological advancement, and adoring K-pop idols are interconnected with each other. The fans are in the age of looking for an idol to look up to, and they know K-pop idols from the exposure of K-culture on social media.

When they are talking about their fans, the language they use can be a reflection of their experience with their idols. A reference can be a hint on how the fans see their idols and reflect fans' experience with their idols. This study found that fans use references that show intimate relationships since they think the idol is their lover or a close one. Some fans imagine that their idol is someone who can achieve such a remarkable achievement like no other idol. Usually, the reference showing this adoration is addressed to idols who are regarded as the "best" such as having many hit songs, being appointed as a brand ambassador of a global brand, or receiving an international award.

Reference used by K-pop fans

Upon gathering 100 data which are in the form of K-pop fans' comments found in X and Instagram, here is the number of the occurrence for each reference.

Table 1. Reference found to be Used by K-pop Fans

NO	REFERENCE	FREQ.
1	*pacar*/*ayank*	40
2	*sayang*/love/*cinta*	26
3	*oppa*	13

4	*suami*/*istri*	9
5	king	5
6	prince/*pangeran*	3
7	my lord/ *tuan*	2
8	legend	1
9	my life	1
TOTAL		**100**

From 100 data that have been collected and analysed, this study found that there are nine references that are used by K-pop fans to call their idol. Based on the result, we can see how high the adoration is and how intimate the fans feel towards their idol. Some others feel like their idol is their worship since they used such a high reference, such as king or my lord.

When we love and adore a celebrity, we tend to look for the news about that person. He or she feels proud of the celebrity's achievement and feels sad when his or her idol gets into trouble. When the celebrity posts an achievement or other event, the fans will swarm the comment section with sweet words showing the adoration. The same case is when a fan likes a certain K-pop idol, that fan will use a sweet word and call the idol with a certain nickname.

The discussion of each reference will be divided into two. The first part will be the reference showing close and intimate relationships. The second part is the discussion on the words used to show high adoration towards someone of high rank. The words that show close and intimate intimacy are *pacar*/*ayank*, *sayang*/*cinta*/my love, *oppa*, and *suami*/*istri*; while the words showing adoration to someone higher are king, *pangeran*/prince, my lord/*tuan*, and legend.

Showing intimate relationship

a. Pacar/*ayank*

The most used reference is *pacar* or *ayank*. In Bahasa Indonesia, this reference is used to refer to a boyfriend or girlfriend. *Ayank* is used as its variation, which makes it cuter and more intimate between the couple. By using this word to refer to their idol, it can be seen that a fan feels having an intimate and romantic relationship with their idol.

Obviously, they do not know each other, however, despite the long distance and limited interaction, a fan can feel and imagine having a romantic relationship with their idol. A fan who shows this kind of behaviour can be considered to have a hallucination. It is impossible to build a romantic relationship with someone we do not know or hardly meet. This impossibility is as high as the impossibility for the idol to notice the fans.

Yesung Super Junior (SuJu) was called *ayank* by a fan. She said that her *ayang*, Yesung SuJu, has a kind heart although he was harsh with the junior idols since he wanted the juniors to be a successful boyband in the future. It is known among the fans and trainees that Yesung was a harsh and disciplined person when he trained them.

b. Sayang/*cinta*/my love

The second most-used reference is *sayang*/*cinta*/my love. Similar to the previous reference, this word is used by a couple who is in a relationship or

marriage. It is also a common pet name in relationships such as dating and marriage. Based on the article published in Women's Health magazine, it is a common thing to give our partner or spouse a pet name. Furthermore, giving a pet name is considered an important aspect of a relationship (Aloian, 2023).

By having a pet name, the fans want to show that their idols have been an important aspect of their lives. No wonder many fans acknowledge that the idols' story of life or song can be the source of encouragement when the fans are down. It shows the fans position their idols as someone important.

A fan called Jennie Blackpink as *sayang* when the fan saw a picture of her wearing a hijab. BLINK, Blackpink's fandom name, was excited when they saw the picture of Jennie wearing hijab, especially Indonesian BLINK.

c. Oppa

Oppa is a Korean word which means older brother. Besides being used to refer to a sibling, this word is also used by a woman who calls her older male friend, boyfriend, and husband. Since they have an adoration towards K-pop idols, Korean-pop idols, the fans sometimes use Korean words to call their idol. Thus, the reference *oppa* occurred quite often. This Korean word has become popular since the K-culture is becoming popular as well. Knowing that Korean women use this reference to their boyfriends, Indonesian fans do the same.

Suho EXO was called *Oppa* by a fan. She said that her *Oppa* was a wonderful man since he was very patient dealing with the other EXO members. Every girlband and boyband has a leader. A leader plays a role as glue in the group and as the "parent" since usually they live in the dorm, thus the group needs someone to keep them "in control". It is the reason why the oldest member or the most mature member of the band is chosen as the leader. EXO in its early career has twelve members. It can be imagined how hard it is to be the leader in such a big number boyband. Suho is a patient person in leading his bandmate. They are known to be "a little bit naughty"; but Suho can always handle them.

d. Suami/*istri*

Based on the category of celebrity worship syndrome, the references above are included in over-identification. As has been explained earlier, over-identification means fans excessively value their relationship with their idols. Obviously, none of the fans is in a marriage relationship with their idols; thus, calling their idols husband or wife means the fans have a fantasy of marrying their idol while, in fact, they even do not know each other.

Chanyeol EXO was called *suami* by a fan. When there was news about Chanyeol's performance with one of his bandmates, a fan was amazed by how good the performance was. A fan showed her support by saying that it was her husband who showed such a fine performance.

There are two fans called Jennie Blackpink *istri* looking at her photo wearing hijab when she visited the Sheik Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi. BLINK Indonesia is exceptionally amazed by the picture of Jennie wearing a hijab. Some male fans even said that they wanted to make Jennie their wife.

e. My life

As the least occurrence, the reference "my life" is also not very common to be used as a pet name. Maybe the closest similarity is the Queen's song *Love of My Life*. This song tells the story of a person who misses his love. He wants her love to get back since he needs her as much as life. K-pop fans also feel the same need. They need their idol to liven their life; to be the love of their life. It shows how dependent K-pop fans are on their idols.

BTS has gained militant fandom. One fan even regards BTS as her life; referring to BTS as the reason she is living and breathing. Indeed, BTS has one of the most militant fandoms. Other fandoms even regard BTS as having one of the most loyal fans. BTS fans always shower BTS with sweet words and encouragement; even ARMY defends BTS pretty aggressively when BTS is hated by other fandoms.

Showing adoration to someone higher

a. King

The word *king* is defined as someone who holds the highest authority in a certain area. In certain religions, king is also used to call God, like worshiping the King of kings, and this expression refers to God who is the highest, even higher than king as a monarch. Referring to their idols as a king shows how a fan sees him/herself as someone unworthy in front of the idol. The situation in which a fan uses its reference is when an idol has achieved something big, such as being a global ambassador of a worldwide brand, reaching first place in a music chart, or being a performer in a global event. Seeing those achievements, a fan looks at the idol as someone beyond human; meaning to say the idol can achieve something difficult for a "normal human being".

ARMY, BTS fandom, refers to their idols as kings. The reference king is used since BTS has a global influence and even the Korean Government appointed them as the Korean Culture Ambassador. ARMY regards BTS as a hardworking boyband. Their label, HYBE, was not as big as it is now. This achievement is because HYBE formed BTS and BTS brings fame to HYBE. BTS's popularity is gained because of hard work and their achievements are recognised worldwide.

One fan was caught calling EXO King. This fan was amazed by how EXO conceptualized the concert. EXO-L, EXO fandom's name, is always amazed by the concept presented by EXO at their concert. The fans can feel EXO's love for them. In addition, EXO has one song that is performed only at the concert. This treatment makes EXO-L feel special.

b. Pangeran*/prince*

Another reference shows how distant a fan sees the idol is *pangeran*/prince. *Pangeran* is the Indonesian version of prince. Similar to king, prince has the meaning of second-in-throne or the son of the king. There is no difference in the use of this reference compared to king. A fan calls the idol *pangeran* or prince usually when the idol is wearing a certain outfit or doing a photoshoot session, thus the idol looks so handsome like a prince; the idol looks majestic. On certain occasions when the idol has ever starred in the drama as a prince, the fan will call him a prince in real life.

The first boyband to be called prince is SHINee. They are known globally as the Prince of K-pop since they debuted at such a young age and they have gained vast influence around the world. This title was bestowed on them by the industry and Korean media. Unfortunately, this study cannot find SHAWOL, SHINee fandom's name, gave comment, and most of the data found came from BTS, Super Junior, EXO, and Blackpink. It needs further analysis and more thorough data on why this happens. As the limitation of this study only analysed the data found over a certain period of time, most news came from those four boybands and girlbands.

An example of the use of this reference is a fan calling Jimin BTS Dior Prince. Jimin is referred to as a prince on the post reporting he attended the Dior event. For information, Dior appointed Jimin to be Dior Global Ambassador. Fans saw Jimin to have a princely aura when he was wearing clothes from Dior.

c. My lord*/tuan*

My lord is often used in a prayer to call God. As it can be found in the prayer in memorial services used in St Nicholas Hospice Care (Prayers that have been used in memorial services, 2020) mentions Lord God. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' official website also uses My Lord as the title of the prayer on care for our common home *Laudato Si*. The prayer entitled *Praise be to you, My Lord,* which was taken from the opening words used by Pope Francis to open the encyclical (Bishops).

During the medieval era, My Lord was used to address the duke (The Protocol and Etiquette for Adressing People with Noble Titles, 2023). Tuan is used until now in Malaysia to refer to their ruler. As cited in Azrae (2020), the ruler of Malaysia is called *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*. Not many fans refer to the idol as *tuan* or my lord; it is plausible that the use of My Lord or *Tuan* is limited nowadays.

Especially in the Indonesian context, *tuan* is used for the employer or the honourable person, such as the guest in the restaurant; even though it rarely happens nowadays. Malaysia is maybe the only country which still uses *tuan* as in *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* to refer to their king. Among many comments, a certain fan uses the word *tuan* and my lord when the idol posted a photo in which the idol looks rich and dignified. It is in line with the people whom other people refer to as My Lord or *tuan* who comes from a noble family, most of them are members of royalty and are rich.

d. Legend

As the least reference in use among K-pop fans, there is still a small occurrence in the comment sections where K-pop fans use the word *legend* to refer to their idols. Usually, this word refers to the old K-pop boyband or the newer era, but the group has made certain achievements which have not been achieved by their predecessors. It is known that the definition of the word *legend* is a very old story or a person who is famous and admired in a certain field. As a legend, fans believe that their idol will be remembered for a long time.

Unlike the references used to show close or romantic intimacy, the previous three references show how high the adoration given to the idol is. The fans see their idol as someone beyond their reach or someone who deserves the ultimate worship. Although it is not included as over-identification, having excessive worship can be

considered a psychological disorder. Moreover, even the name itself suggests that worshipping a celebrity excessively is seen as something abnormal.

Similar to worshipping God or Goddess in certain religions that drive worshippers to do anything to manifest their adoration, K-pop fans can do the same thing. They can spend a lot of money to buy concert tickets, official merchandise, or gifts. While, ironically, they do not have the same attention as their closest relative.

K-pop fans have a certain imagination towards their idols. This imagination is the result of their experience with their idols. They get this experience through social media by browsing the news about their idol, following their idol's social media account, and supporting their idol by watching their drama and streaming their songs. The fans often show their adoration and support through social media. One of the most common manifestations of this adoration is swarming the comment section with encouragement. The fans also use certain references to show how intimate their relationship with their idol is.

As reference is the fundamental blocks that contribute to truth conditions and that determine the capacity of language to represent fragments of the world, the choice of reference by K-pop fans can be a hint about the world of K-pop fans. Understanding their world is in line with understanding their behaviour towards K-pop; for example, spending a lot of money to buy merchandise or concert tickets, spending much time watching their drama, and even being a *sasaeng*. It can be implied by what reference they used towards their idol. No one can accept their loved one getting hurt by someone else, and someone will stand to defend their belief or God from the haters; thus, it is understandable how possessive the fans are towards their idols.

K-pop fans showing over-identification towards their idols

As presented earlier, in general, there are two groups of meanings of references used by K-pop fans toward their idols: references showing intimate relationships and references showing adoration towards someone higher. From those two categories, it can be concluded that K-pop fans show signs of having celebrity worship syndrome in the category of over-identification.

Over-identification means someone values him/herself excessively. None of the K-pop idols knows that their fans exist. On the other hand, the fans think that he has an intimate relationship with the idols. This phenomenon is shown by looking at how the fans refer to their idol as love or prince as the reference they use for the idols.

In line with the notion that the choice of words has something to do with the state of mind, what is inside the mind of K-pop fans is having a close relationship with their idols. The argument that the choice of reference can give the sensation towards the body and emotion can be the reason the idols feel empathetic towards their idol: they can cry when knowing that their idols got an accident, and they can feel absolute happiness seeing that their idols have been able to achieve something, and even the fans can get angry knowing that there is someone who stalks their idols and make their idols uncomfortable.

This reaction is given since the fans think and feel like they are the support system of their idols. No one or no other group will do such things unless the fans themselves. It is the reason the fans are always there to support their idols. Being

given a special name for the fandom or showered with gratitude by the idols at a concert or other activity makes the fans feel like their idols acknowledge their existence. Indeed, the idols acknowledge existence as a group but not a person.

Over-identification behaviour by referring to the idols as boyfriend or husband is included in the borderline-pathological tendency dimension. In this dimension, the syndrome is characterised by having a fantasy to be the idol's girlfriend and wife. They often used many love or love eyes or fire emoticons to show their raging emotion. This written expression can be "heard" as the fans are hysterics just by seeing or hearing the news about their idols. These emoticons that were used along with the reference become the cue that the fans have a borderline-pathological tendency since they show hysterical behaviour towards their idols.

In short, seeing the choice of reference used by K-pop fans toward their idol gives a clue to the context of the fans-idol relationship. It is clear to see that the context here is the fans have a close and romantic relationship with their idols. Their closeness and romance encourage the idols to shower the idols with sweet words, affirmation, and adoration. To some extent, looking at their age, which is most likely to be in adolescence and teenage, the way they call their idols can be the inspiration to have future boyfriends as their idols or to be a successful person like their idols.

Conclusion

K-pop fans who are mostly in their adolescence and teenage years are in the phase of looking for their idol to look up to. This characteristic leads to the behaviour of adoring K-pop idols as the idols often show and publish their achievement. Surely this publication is meant to gain popularity and fandom members. This results in much exposure to K-pop by the fans, and fans have many ways to get to know about their idols.

Referring to the results on how often a reference occurred in comment sections, this study concludes that most K-pop fans over-value themselves. Over-valuing here is shown by how close they think their relationship is with their idols. Referring to the idols as someone they are deeply in love with is regarded as a behaviour that shows that the idol is their possession. In further cases, this kind of possession leads to violent behaviour towards those who do not like their idols or other fandoms who mock their idols. This behaviour shows that K-pop fans suffer from over-identification syndrome. They are fans who identify themselves as the idol's closest person or the lover.

Other fans see their idol as someone of a high status. The way the fans refer to their idol as *king*, *prince*, *my lord*, or *legend* shows how high their adoration is towards their idol. It can be concluded that those references show that the fans are over-proud of their idols' achievements. The fans can feel proud because the idols can achieve some awards or win in song charts. This behaviour is considered as a celebrity worship syndrome since they express their feeling excessively by using references to someone of high status, even somewhat "overusing" words such as *legend*.

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