



Linguistics

Non-Standard Orthographic Practices in Stray Kids Fan Usernames on X

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A B S T R A C T

This study explores linguistic creativity in the usernames of Stray Kids fans on X (formerly Twitter) by examining non-standard orthographic practices used in digital fandom spaces. Usernames are treated as meaningful linguistics and semiotic artifacts rather than neutral identifiers, functioning as resources for identity construction and fandom affiliation. Using a qualitative discourse-analytic approach, this study analyses how fans creatively manipulate written forms and visual elements within usernames. The finding reveals several recurring patterns. These include the use of symbols and emoticons to convey affective meaning, non-standard orthographic forms that deviate from conventional writing norms, and multilingual combinations that reflect the transnational character of Stray Kids fandom. Usernames also frequently employ numbers and special characters as symbolic substitutes for letters, as well as non-Latin scripts particularly Hangul to signal cultural alignment and fandom literacy. In addition, explicit fandom elements such as idol names, song titles, and fandom slogans are embedded within the usernames as markers of group affiliation. Across all patterns, textual and visual elements are consistently combined, resulting in multimodal identity performances. These findings demonstrate that non-standard orthography in Stray Kids fan usernames is systematic and socially meaningful. The study contributes to digital linguistics and fandoms studies by highlighting usernames as underexplored site of linguistic creativity and identity construction in online fan communities.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has created new spaces for global communities to communicate and construct identities. Social media platforms such as Twitter (now X), Instagram, and TikTok have become key platforms for individuals to express themselves and interact with communities of like-minded interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Papacharissi, 2011). In this context, usernames function not only as technical identifiers but also as meaningful means of self-expression (Crystal, 2011). Usernames are often creatively modified for example, through symbols, numbers, non-standard letters, and alphabet combinations, creating spellings that deviate from standard conventions (Tagg, 2012).

One prominent community in this practice is K-pop fans. As a global phenomenon, K-pop has generated a transnational fandom with millions of active in digital spaces (Abd-Rahim, 2019; Jung, 2011a; Karsten Himawan et al., 2024; Park & Oh, 2012). According to the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), 2022) the number of K-pop fans worldwide is estimated to exceed 156 million. This community's presence on social media is powerful, not only in music consumption but also in the production of new identities and cultures, including through usernames (Cheriyah & Hadi, 2022; Sung, 2014). Usernames serve as a symbolic medium for demonstrating fans' affiliation, support, and even loyalty to their idols and communities.

K-pop fan usernames on social media frequently depart from conventional naming practices. Rather than using linguistically neutral personal names, fans creatively manipulate written language by incorporating symbols, emojis, numbers, mixed scripts, and unconventional typography. These practices reflect an intentional shift away from standardized norms towards expressive and visually distinctive forms, a pattern commonly observed in digital communication (Crystal, 2011). Within K-pop fandoms, such orthographic creativity is intensified by shared cultural knowledge and strong affective ties to idols, allowing usernames to function as compact expression of fan identity.

Linguistic creativity in this context is best captured through the concept of non-standard orthography. In this study, non-standard orthography is operationally defined as written practices in usernames that diverge from the conventional orthographic norms, including altered capitalization, symbolic use of numbers, incorporation of emojis and special characters, mixed with writing systems such as Latin and Hangul, and deliberate visual structuring through spacing or punctuation. These practices go beyond spelling variation and reflect broader semiotic strategies enabled by digital platforms (Androutsopoulos, 2013). Among K-pop fans, non-standard orthography allows users to embed fandom-specific meanings into their usernames in ways that are immediately recognizable to fellow fans. This selective intelligibility reinforces in-group solidarity within fandom spaces.

The use of non-standard orthography also plays an important role in constructing social identity. Language choices in digital environments are closely tied to how individuals position themselves within communities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2007). In K-pop fandoms spaces, orthographic features such as specific emojis, symbolic numbers, or Korean script often signal allegiance to particular idols or groups. These choices rely on shared interpretive frameworks within the fandom, reinforcing in-group solidarity while distinguishing insiders from outsiders. As a result, usernames function as identity badges that communicate membership without explicit explanation.

The phenomenon is further shaped by the transnational nature of K-pop fandoms. Fans from diverse linguistic background interact within the same digital spaces, resulting in usernames that combine English, Korean writing, and visual symbols. This hybridity reflects the global circulation of K-pop and the ways fans negotiate cultural proximity to Korean popular culture through language use (Jung, 2011a). The inclusion of Hangul or Korean-inspired symbols in usernames often represents symbolic alignment rather than linguistic proficiency, highlighting the aspirational and affiliative dimensions of fandom identity.

The study of language in social media has grown rapidly in the last two decades. Crystal (2004, 2011) refers this phenomenon as Internet linguistics, which is the study of how digital media gives rise to new form of language, including abbreviations, emoticons, the use of symbols, and non-standard spellings. Tagg (2012) and Ayumi (2015, 2023) also assert that online communication patterns display unique variations that differ from conventional spoken and written communication. This suggests that the digital space creates its own linguistic ecosystem, where language develops creatively, flexibly, and often outside of standard rules.

The phenomenon of non-standard spelling in digital communication has been studied in various contexts, such as instant messaging (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008), online chat (Androutsopoulos, 2006), and even the use of emoticons and emojis (Danesi, 2017). These forms are often viewed as evidence of linguistic creativity, rather than mere “deviance.” Thus, non-standard spelling can be seen as a unique communication strategy and expression of identity in the digital space.

In the context of identity and language, Bucholtz & Hall (2007) emphasize that identity is not fixed, but rather performatively constructed through language practices. Norton (2013) also demonstrates that language is a crucial instrument in constructing and negotiating social identities. Studies on digital identity (Barton & Lee, 2013; Papacharissi, 2011) have found that social media allows users to express themselves in creative ways, including through usernames. Therefore, analyzing K-pop fan usernames is crucial for understanding how language is used to reinforce membership in specific communities.

Research on K-pop fandoms highlights that these communities are transnational, with fans spread across the globe (Jung, 2011b; Park & Oh, 2012). Social media usernames have become part of a fan

strategy to demonstrate their affiliation with a particular idol group. Sung (2014) found that K-pop fans actively construct global identities through digital practices, including the use of language and symbols associated with Korean culture. Saraswati and Nurbaity (2021) added that K-pop fandom functions as a transcultural space where identity, creativity, and solidarity are formed through online practices.

Furthermore, the use of multilingualism and visual symbols is also a hallmark of online fandom practices. K-pop fans often use Hangul, Chinese characters, or English in their usernames to demonstrate their affinity with Korean culture while simultaneously creating a global identity. This aligns with the findings of Herring (2013) who demonstrated that translingual practices in digital media strengthen the identity of global communities. In this context, emojis, emoticons, and non-Latin characters are not merely visual decorations but identity markers recognizable by fellow fans.

Thus, this literature review demonstrates that research on linguistic creativity, digital identity, and K-pop fandom is interconnected. Previous studies have discussed linguistic creativity in digital media (Crystal, 2008; Tagg, 2012; Danesi, 2016), identity formation through language (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Norton, 2013), and transnational practices of K-pop fandom (Jung, 2011; Kim, 2020). However, research specifically highlighting non-standard spellings in K-pop fan usernames on social media is still rare. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the phenomenon of non-standard spelling as a form of linguistic creativity and a means of identity formation within the global K-pop fan community.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine non-standard orthographic practices in the usernames of Stray Kids fans on X (formerly Twitter). A qualitative approach is chosen because the research aims to interpret meanings, symbolic representations, and identity-related functions embedded in usernames rather than to measure frequency or distribution. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of linguistic creativity as a socially and culturally situated phenomenon in digital fandom spaces.

The study applies discourse analysis as its primary analytical framework. Discourse analysis is used to explore how written forms in usernames—such as symbols, emojis, numbers, scripts, and visual arrangements—function as semiotic resources for identity construction and fandom affiliation. Through this approach, usernames are treated as meaningful texts that reflect broader social practices and fandom norms rather than as isolated linguistic units.

The data consist exclusively of usernames of Stray Kids fans on X, collected from publicly accessible profiles. X is selected as the sole data source because it is a central platform for Stray Kids fandom interaction, visibility, and identity performance. Data collection focuses on accounts that actively participate in Stray Kids-related discourse, including fan communication, fandom campaigns, and community interactions.

Data collection is conducted through purposive sampling, targeting usernames that clearly display non-standard orthographic practices. These practices include the use of symbols and emoticons, unconventional capitalization and spacing, numbers and special characters with symbolic functions, multilingual combinations, non-Latin scripts (particularly Hangul), explicit fandom elements, and the combination of visual and textual elements. This sampling strategy ensures that the data are directly relevant to the research focus on orthographic creativity in fandom contexts.

The qualitative data analysis proceeds in several stages. First, usernames are examined to identify recurring patterns of non-standard orthography. Second, these patterns are interpreted to explain their social and identity-related functions, such as signaling fandom affiliation, expressing emotional attachment, and reinforcing in-group solidarity. Finally, the interaction between textual and visual elements is analyzed to understand how fans construct multimodal digital identities within Stray Kids fandom on X.

Ethical considerations are central to this qualitative study. All usernames are anonymized in accordance with established guidelines for online research ethics (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Usernames are treated as textual artifacts, identifying information is removed, and the data are used solely for academic purposes without attempting to identify or contact account holders.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the increasingly digital world, usernames have become a primary means for individuals to express their identity and affiliation with a particular community. Taking linguistic phenomena into account, this analysis explores the use of non-standard spellings, symbols, emojis, and other elements that shape linguistic creativity in these usernames.

This analysis will focus on several key aspects, including the use of symbols and emojis that add meaning to usernames, the adoption of non-standard linguistic elements that reflect linguistic innovation, and the incorporation of fandom elements that reinforce a sense of community among community members. We will also discuss how the combination of visual and textual elements in usernames can create complex and communicative messages.

Using a qualitative approach, this analysis aims to delve deeper into how usernames are not merely digital identities but also tools for building social connections and creating personal narratives. This study hopes to uncover the dynamics of language interaction within the rich and diverse context of K-pop fandom. This chapter is expected to provide deeper insights into the role of language and symbols in shaping identity in the digital age, as well as the contribution of usernames to the formation of solid fan communities.

Use of Symbols and Emojis

The use of symbols and emojis in K-pop fan usernames on social media is a very interesting phenomenon to analyze in the context of linguistic creativity. These symbols not only serve as visual ornaments but also hold deep meaning for their users, particularly in communicating their identity and affiliation within the fandom community.

Symbols such as stars (★, ☆), hearts (♥, ♡), and animal emojis (🐱, 🐰, 🐔) often represent emotions, feelings of love, and loyalty to a particular K-pop idol or group. For example, a blue heart (💙) or a green heart (💚) might be used by fans to express love and support for their K-pop group, such as Stray Kids or NCT Dream, where these colors are synonymous with a particular fanbase. Star symbols or other characters (such as 👑 for crown) are also often used to indicate the status or achievements of their idols, such as chart success or awards wins.

Animal emojis such as 🐱 (wolf), 🐰 (rabbit), or 🐔 (chick) are often associated with characteristics or imagery associated with specific group members. For example, the wolf (🐱) in the username “No Easy Bang 🐱 방찬” refers to Stray Kids’ leader, Bang Chan, who is often associated with strength or protection. The use of these emojis not only demonstrates identification with a particular idol but also strengthens emotional bonds and symbolic respect for the idol members.

Furthermore, the use of emojis can also serve as non-verbal codes understood only by the K-pop fan community. For example, the 🐱 symbol in many Stray Kids fan usernames has become part of the fandom lexicon, holding special meaning within the community. These can be used as symbols of exclusive affiliation, indicating that the user is part of an “insider group” that understands the symbol’s meaning.

In a digital context, these emojis and symbols become visual communication tools that allow fans to express their identities more richly than text alone would allow. The use of visual elements like these helps define users’ digital identities in online spaces and connects them to the larger community. In this regard, linguistic creativity in the use of emojis and symbols is a crucial aspect of social interaction within K-pop fandoms, combining visual and linguistic aspects to strengthen social bonds and solidarity among fans.

Use of Non-Standard Orthography in Usernames

The use of non-standard orthography in K-pop fan usernames on social media is a form of linguistic creativity often used to express individual identity within online communities. This non-standard orthography can appear in various forms, such as irregular capitalization, numbers, special characters, or altered letters to create a specific meaning or aesthetic. The use of this technique not only serves to distinguish one username from another but also to reflect the personality, affiliation, or style of the fan in

question.

For example, in the username “AKU∞B-Day MO★GIANT★**ARCANE**,” we can see how the combination of non-standard orthography and special characters creates a unique identity for the user. The unusual use of lowercase letters (such as “B-Day” for “B-Day”) demonstrates the use of small caps, which serves to create a distinctive and attention-grabbing style. The symbol “∞” and the number “8” have specific meanings, possibly referring to the concept of infinity or “8,” a number that holds significant significance for K-pop fans, especially Stay (Stray Kids’ fanbase), as it represents the number of members in the group.

Additionally, the use of non-Latin alphabets and characters, as in the username “리노링樂☆ //  WANT SO BAD,” demonstrates the cross-alphabetical fusion common in the K-pop fan community. Fans often mix Hangul (Korean script) with the Latin alphabet to demonstrate bilingualism or an interest in Korean culture. The use of Korean characters here (리노링樂) may refer to a nickname or a specific idol, while the musical symbol “樂” and the addition of food emojis like  indicate a specific cultural and personal affiliation with that user.

Non-standard orthography can also be used to replace letters with numbers or symbols that resemble them, such as “t4m,” which uses the number 4 in place of the letter “A.” This technique is known as leet speak (or leetspeak), and while more common in the gaming community, it has also been adopted by K-pop fans as a way to express themselves creatively in the digital world. This phenomenon not only illustrates the uniqueness of each fan but also demonstrates how the K-pop fan community plays a role in creating a collective identity through orthographic adaptations. Each orthographic variation or the addition of non-standard symbols creates a visual and emotional connection between the user and the idol, while also distinguishing them from other users on social media platforms. Linguistically, this non-standard orthographic variation can be seen as a form of linguistic innovation that thrives in the digital world, where the boundaries of conventional orthography variation are often ignored for the sake of personal expression and deeper social connections.

Thus, usernames using non-standard orthographic variation serve not only as a means of communication within the community but also as a form of identity representation that strengthens the connection between the individual, the fandom community, and the idols they support.

Multilingual Combinations in Usernames

One of the most prominent linguistic phenomena in K-pop fan usernames on social media is the use of multilingual combinations, where fans often mix multiple languages within a single username. These combinations often involve the use of the Latin alphabet, Hangul (Korean script), and even Mandarin Chinese or Japanese katakana characters, all used simultaneously to create a unique identity. This mixed language use is not only a means of personalizing usernames but also reflects the global, cross-cultural identity of K-pop fandom.

An example of the use of multilingual combinations can be seen in usernames like “리노링樂☆ //  WANT SO BAD.” This name combines the Hangul character “리노링” (which may be a name or nickname associated with an idol, such as Lee Know of Stray Kids), the Mandarin character “樂” (which means “music” or “fun”), and the English word “WANT SO BAD,” which is the title of a song by Stray Kids members Han and Lee Know. This combination demonstrates how fans leverage their linguistic abilities to demonstrate their affinity for Korean culture and the global K-pop fandom in general.

In this context, bilingualism and multilingualism become crucial elements in usernames, where cross-linguistic and cultural understanding allows fans to create names that are understood not only by local fan communities but also by international fans. For example, the use of English words like “WANT SO BAD” makes the username more recognizable to fans worldwide, while the Hangul script maintains affiliation with Korean culture. K-pop fans often adopt this model to demonstrate their ability to understand multiple languages and cultures, while also expressing their love for K-pop artists.

This linguistic phenomenon can also be seen as part of the globalization trend, where cross-cultural and cross-linguistic influences are increasingly blurring language boundaries. K-pop fans, spread across

multiple countries, often learn Korean through song lyrics, social media content, and interactions on online platforms. The use of Hangul in usernames, even if simple, serves as a sign of solidarity with Korean fans and demonstrates recognition of their idols' language. In this case, multilingualism becomes a way to demonstrate cultural affiliation and fan identity within the global K-pop community.

On the other hand, multilingualism also reflects social status within online communities, where fans who are proficient in multiple languages may be perceived as having higher status or knowledge within the community. By mixing multiple languages, fans can demonstrate their linguistic competence and their connection to various cultural aspects. This creates an interesting social dynamic within the community, where language is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of prestige and social identity.

Thus, the use of multilingualism in K-pop usernames on social media can be seen as a form of linguistic hybridity, where fans intentionally combine elements from different languages and cultures to create a unique identity while simultaneously communicating with the global community. This phenomenon underscores the importance of translingualism and cosmopolitanism within the K-pop fan community, which utilizes language as a means to construct individual and collective identities in the digital world.

The Use of Numbers and Special Characters in Place of Letters

Another interesting phenomenon in the analysis of non-standard orthography in K-pop fan usernames is the use of numbers and special characters in place of letters. This practice is a hallmark of linguistic creativity in the digital world, where fans use numbers or certain symbols to replace letters or syllables. The use of these elements not only demonstrates fans' adaptability to the limitations of social media platforms, which often limit username length, but also reflects an effort to create a more unique and distinct identity from other users.

One example of the use of numbers in place of letters can be found in usernames like "AKU∞⁸🐱." In this case, the number eight (8) and the infinity symbol (∞) are used to add meaning related to the group or fandom. The number eight in the context of K-pop fandom, particularly Stray Kids fans, often refers to the number of group members, making this number carry special significance for the fan community. Furthermore, the use of the infinity symbol can be interpreted as a representation of boundless loyalty or undying love for their favorite artist. These symbols replace the literal meaning of certain letters or words, yet still convey a powerful message to the community that understands the codes.

In addition to numbers, special characters such as stars (☆), hearts (♡), or other emojis are often used in usernames to replace letters or as additional aesthetic elements. For example, in usernames like "slump ☆," stars are used for visual effect while also conveying additional meaning, perhaps symbolizing idol status or appreciation for them. The use of these characters not only adds aesthetic value to the username but also helps create a visual identity that is easily recognized by other fan communities.

This phenomenon can also be seen as a response to standard spelling conventions, which are often perceived as restrictive by users in the digital world. By replacing letters with numbers or symbols, fans can create more creative variations in their usernames. This is both a form of resistance to traditional linguistic norms and an adaptation to a digital culture that encourages linguistic innovation and experimentation.

Furthermore, the use of numbers and symbols is often influenced by digital subcultures such as gamer or hacker culture, which often adopt similar practices to create unique online identities. K-pop fans, who interact extensively in digital spaces, may have been inspired by this subculture in creating their usernames. This practice demonstrates how linguistic innovation can emerge through the interaction between fan culture and broader digital culture.

Overall, the use of numbers and special characters instead of letters in K-pop fans' social media usernames is a form of linguistic creativity that demonstrates how fans utilize language as a tool to construct their digital identities. This practice not only helps them stand out in a crowded community but also allows them to express personal affiliation and emotional attachment to K-pop artists in unconventional ways.

Use of Non-Latin Letters (Hangul and Other Characters)

In the context of K-pop fan usernames on social media, one prominent non-standard spelling phenomenon is the use of non-Latin letters, particularly Hangul (the Korean alphabet), as part of the username. This reflects the significant influence of Korean culture and language on K-pop fans, both Korean and international. The use of Hangul in usernames indicates a deep linguistic and cultural affiliation with the K-pop artist or group they follow.

For example, in a username like “리노링樂☆,” we see a combination of Hangul (리노링), Chinese characters (樂), and aesthetic symbols (☆). “리노링” is a combination of the name of Stray Kids member Lee Know (리노), followed by a particle that likely serves as an expression of affection or attachment. This demonstrates how fans actively adopt and use the Korean language to show support for their idols, even if they may not be fluent in the language.

The use of Hangul by international fans, the majority of whom do not speak Korean fluently, also demonstrates that the Korean alphabet has become a symbol of identity for K-pop fandom. K-pop fans use it as a way to demonstrate their authenticity and involvement in a global community that shares a passion for K-pop culture. These usernames often serve as visual and linguistic markers that other members of the fan community quickly recognize as part of a larger “family.”

In addition to Hangul, some fans also incorporate Chinese characters or other Asian language elements into their usernames, as seen in the use of the character “樂,” which means fun or music in Chinese. This incorporation not only demonstrates the multiculturalism within K-pop fandom but also reflects how fans combine various symbols and languages to construct a richer and more complex identity. These fans, despite not speaking Korean or Chinese, use these characters to add depth and meaning to their online identities.

This practice can also be seen as a form of global linguistic creation, where traditionally unrelated languages are integrated into a single username. K-pop fandoms, with their geographically expansive fan base, offer a space where languages and symbols from different cultures can be combined to create unique and dynamic online identities. This signifies K-pop’s global influence, transcending language and national boundaries.

Furthermore, this phenomenon underscores the importance of visual symbols in online communication, particularly on platforms like Twitter and Instagram, where space for usernames is limited. By using Hangul or other non-Latin characters, fans can create a more visually striking identity that is instantly recognizable by fellow K-pop fans. The use of non-Latin alphabets, therefore, not only demonstrates cultural affiliation but also serves as an effective visual communication tool within online communities.

Overall, the use of non-Latin alphabets like Hangul in K-pop fan usernames on social media demonstrates how language can be creatively used to shape cultural and community identities. This practice not only reflects the adoption of Korean cultural elements by international fans, but also highlights how K-pop functions as a cross-cultural phenomenon that brings together languages, symbols, and identities from different parts of the world.

The Use of Fandom Elements

The use of fandom elements in K-pop fan usernames on social media is an important aspect of the linguistic creativity and identity of the fan community. These fandom elements can include group or idol names, song titles, iconic phrases, numbers associated with the group or members, and symbols or jargon specifically associated with that fandom. Through these elements, fans not only demonstrate their affiliation with the K-pop artist or group but also communicate their status as active members of the fan community.

For example, in a username like “No Easy Bang 🐱 방찬,” we can see the use of several very specific fandom elements. “No Easy” is a direct reference to Stray Kids’ album NOEASY, while “Bang” refers to Bang Chan, one of the group’s members. This name combines the album title and the group members’ names as a way to express affiliation and loyalty to Stray Kids, and specifically Bang Chan.

Furthermore, fandom elements can also take the form of symbols or emojis associated with the group

members. In the same example, “🐾” is often associated with the wolf, a symbol used by Stray Kids to convey their themes of freedom, team spirit, and group identity. The addition of this emoji reinforces the message of fan identity as part of the Stay community, the name for Stray Kids fans.

Another frequently used fandom element is numbers, which have special meanings within the K-pop fandom context. For example, the number 8 is often associated with Stray Kids after they became an eight-member group. Stray Kids fans often include this number in their usernames to emphasize their support for the entire group, as in the username “SKZBestFriend 🐾 🐾♥OtATE 🐾 🐾” where “OtATE” stands for “One True 8,” referring to all the Stray Kids members.

This phenomenon also demonstrates that fandom elements are not just symbols of identity but also communication tools that are instantly recognizable among fellow fans. Usernames containing fandom elements make it easier for other fans to recognize and connect with them on social media. By using album names, symbols, or numbers associated with their favorite K-pop groups, fans can quickly build social connections and strengthen a sense of solidarity within the fan community.

The use of fandom elements in usernames also signals active participation in fan culture. By choosing to adopt names or symbols associated with K-pop groups, fans not only demonstrate their musical preferences but also demonstrate their level of engagement in discussions and interactions within the fandom community. This demonstrates how fan identity on social media is formed through active participation in fandom cultural practices, such as celebrating new album releases, supporting voting campaigns, or sharing experiences attending concerts.

Finally, these fandom elements serve as social codes within the broader K-pop community. Fans not involved in a particular fandom may not understand the meaning of the terms or symbols used, while fans who are deeply involved can immediately recognize and respond to these elements. Thus, usernames containing fandom elements also serve as exclusive tools for establishing identity within a specific fan group, while simultaneously distinguishing themselves from fans of other K-pop groups or those not involved in the K-pop community at all.

The use of fandom elements in usernames demonstrates the powerful role language and symbols play in shaping social identity online. This is another example of how language is used to express cultural and community affiliations, while strengthening connections between individuals within a highly global and cross-cultural fan community.

The Combination of Visual and Text Elements

The combination of visual and text elements in K-pop fan usernames on social media reflects a high level of linguistic creativity and is a rich representation of fan identity. In this context, visual elements such as emojis, symbols, and special characters are combined with text to create catchy, unique, and recognizable usernames. The use of these visual elements not only enhances the aesthetics of the username but also conveys a specific message that is immediately understood by members of the fan community.

For example, a username like “리노링樂☆ // 🍷 WANT SO BAD” demonstrates a striking combination of text and visual elements. Here, “리노링樂” uses Hangul (Korean alphabet) letters that can refer to specific idols or groups, while the symbols “☆,” “//,” and “🍷” serve not only as decoration but also carry meaning. “☆” can be seen as a star symbol, representing the artist or idol, while “//” and “🍷” may refer to cultural aspects or experiences associated with the idol, such as food or places the fan loves. This combination allows fans to express their affiliations and interests in a richer and more multidimensional way.

The use of special characters and emojis in usernames also helps create a deeper emotional tone. For example, the “❤️” or “💕” emojis are often used to show love and support for a group or idol. In a username like “❤️SKZMOM💕 OT8 IS FATE 🍷,” the blue emoticon represents love and support for Stray Kids, while also demonstrating the fan’s closeness to all the group members (OT8). This use of visual elements allows fans to directly and effectively convey the emotions and connection they feel with their idols.

Furthermore, the combination of visual and text elements creates a more interactive form of

communication within the fan community. Usernames rich in symbols and emojis can attract attention and encourage interaction with other users. Other fans who see the username may feel compelled to interact, whether through comments, likes, or retweets, thus building a broader social network. This also creates a warmer and more welcoming community atmosphere, where fans feel connected to one another through shared interests and aesthetics.

This phenomenon demonstrates that social media usernames serve not only as digital identities but also as communication tools capable of conveying information and emotions. In the context of K-pop, where fanbases often interact actively on social media platforms, this combination of text and visual elements allows fans to share their experiences, participate in discussions, and strengthen social connections with fellow fans.

The combination of visual and text elements in K-pop fan usernames also reflects the power of linguistic creativity in the digital age. By utilizing various symbols, emojis, and characters, fans demonstrate their ability to innovate in their use of language and create unique identities. This also reflects how language and visual symbols can complement each other to create a richer and more rewarding user experience online.

Considering these findings, the combination of visual and text elements in usernames demonstrates the complexity and dynamics of K-pop fan culture on social media. This not only creates space for individual expression but also strengthens a sense of community and solidarity among fans. Thus, visual, and textual elements play a crucial role in creating a strong social identity within the K-pop community in the digital world.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of K-pop fan usernames on social media reveals various linguistic phenomena that reflect the creativity, identity, and dynamics of social interactions within the community. First, the use of symbols and emojis in usernames demonstrates how K-pop fans utilize visual elements to reinforce their identity. These symbols serve not only as decoration but also carry meanings that can convey affiliation and love for a particular group or idol. For example, heart-shaped or star-shaped emojis are often used to express emotional support and affection, while other symbols may refer to pop culture elements or personal aspects relevant to the fan.

Second, the adoption of non-standard linguistic elements in username spellings reflects a high level of linguistic creativity. K-pop fans often alter spellings or add special characters to create unique and engaging usernames. For example, the unconventional use of capital and lowercase letters, the replacement of letters with symbols, and the combination of characters from different languages (such as Hangul and the Latin alphabet) demonstrate innovation in language use. This not only creates a distinct identity but also demonstrates the interconnectedness between language, culture, and community.

Third, the use of fandom elements in usernames creates a sense of community among community members. Many usernames include phrases or terms commonly used within the fandom, such as group or song names. This indicates that users feel connected to other fans and identify themselves as part of the community. By including these elements, fans demonstrate their loyalty and involvement in the larger K-pop culture.

Fourth, the combination of visual and text elements in usernames enriches fans' self-expression. The combination of text and emojis creates more complex and meaningful messages. For example, the use of emojis related to specific themes (such as food, weather, or feelings) helps convey fans' experiences and emotions about their idols. This demonstrates how fans create personal narratives that others within the community can relate to.

Furthermore, this analysis reveals that social media usernames are not just digital identities but also important communication tools. Users can build broader social networks through engaging and conversational username-based interactions. As fans interact with each other, usernames rich in symbols and linguistic creativity serve as gateways to expanding social connections and building solidarity within the fandom.

Overall, the results of this analysis highlight the importance of linguistic creativity in creating identity in the digital world, particularly among K-pop fans. Usernames serve as a reflection of the experiences, emotions, and connections between community members. Through the use of symbols, emojis, and non-standard linguistic elements, K-pop fans not only shape their personal identities but also strengthen a sense of togetherness and community within the ever-evolving global pop culture.

This conclusion confirms that further research in this area could provide deeper insights into how language and visual symbols interact in digital contexts and how this contributes to the formation of social identities in the modern era.

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