유튜브와 케이팝 팬의 트리뷰트 활동

Youtube and K Pop fan's Tribute Activity

노광우

고려대학교 정보문화연구소

Kwang Woo Noh(nkw88@korea.ac.kr)

요인

본 논문은 한류의 전세계적 확산이 유튜브라는 새로운 SNS 서비스의 등장으로 확산방식이 달라진 것에 주목한다. 싸이의 '강남스타일'은 유튜브와 SNS의 매개를 통해 전세계적으로 성공했고 이로 인해 미디어 학자들은 한국 대중문화의 전세계적 확산과 유통의 새로운 양식에 대해 주목하게 되었다. 따라서 음악의 직접적인 전파뿐만 아니라 유튜브 사용자들의 K-pop의 전유양식에 대한 검토도 역시 필요하다. 즉, 단순히 대중문화 수용자들이 문화적 텍스트를 보거나 듣는 것을 넘어 어떻게 이러한 전유양식이 대중문화의 국제적 확장과 증폭에 기여하는 지를 검토할 필요가 있다. 이전에는 CD나 DVD와 같은 유형의 재화의 유통을 통해 대중문화의 유통이 매개되었으나 유튜브의 등장으로 유형의 재화 없이도 문화 교류가 이루어지는 새로운 현상이 발생한다. 이 연구는 어떻게 이런 유튜브 사용자들의 전유양식, 특히 K-pop 팬들이 만든 동영상이 K-pop의 전세계적 확산에 어떻게 간접적으로 기여하는 지를 살펴 본다. 이론적 측면에는 팬덤 연구등을 검토한다. 연구방법으로는 온라인 공동체에 대한 민속지학적 연구방법인 넷노그래피를 사용한다.

■ 중심어: | 한류 | K-pop | 유투브 | 온라인팬덤 | 참여문화 |

Abstract

The global success of PSY's Gangnam Style was mediated through combination of YouTube and SNS. PSY's success led into some communication scholars' consideration of new international circulation of Korean pop culture (Korean Trend 2.0). In terms of global circulation of pop culture, it is noticeable how users appropriate YouTube channel beyond mere watching music videos and mere international circulation of Korean pop culture. The mode of fan's activity and appropriation contributes to the expansion of the width and amplification of the volume of Korean popular culture as well. The circulation of pop culture was considered in the level of exchange of tangible commodities such as CD, DVD, and so on until the adoption of digital media and Internet. YouTube has brought new mode in which the international circulation of pop culture is mediated without exchange of tangible commodities but was amplified with the diffusion of network. This study grasps how the mode of users' appropriation contributes to international circulation of pop culture through case studies of some K-pop music videos and international K-pop fans' tribute activities. In terms of theoretical perspective, fandom studies will be examined. In terms of research method, the researcher adopts netnography, a participatory observation on network, to find the feature of fandom and its contribution to the international circulation of pop cultures.

■ keyword: | Korean Wave | K-pop | YouTube | Online Fandom | Participatory Culture |

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine how K-pop fans contribute to spread of K-pop through their fan activities. YouTube changes people's appropriation of popular culture. Until the advent of Internet service, including YouTube, audience have received and consumed popular culture mainly through mass media. However, users begin to upload their contents (User-Created Contents: UCC) on YouTube, and similar SNS of file sharing, rather than merely receive cultural contents on mass media. The activity of UCC makes user to be prosumer (combination of 'producer' and 'consumer') rather than merely a receiver[1]. Hence, it is as noticeable to examine users' mode of participation as to research audience's mode of interpretation of media contents. Studies on international spread of Korean popular culture, aka Korean Wave, have focused on the international reception. So, it is necessary to examine new mode of appropriation with the change of media atmosphere.

In terms of popular cultural phenomenon, PSY's music video of *Gangnam Style* was internationally through YouTube in 2012. Even though the CD was not released or broadcast through radio in USA, *Gangnam Style* was second-ranked for seven weeks in a row on American Billboard Chart. The international success of *Gangnam Style* led into many Korean media scholars' analysis and examination on its textual feature of music, mode of reception and mode of diffusion[2-6].

No Korean singer has made on US pop chart until PSY. The main reason why K-pop is absent on US pop chart is that there has been no official channel or program to introduce international pop music, including K-pop, on US and Western mainstream media like MTV. Under the situation of Western media's neglect of non-English pop music, it is only

YouTube that allows music fans to find international pop musics, including PSY's *Gangnam Style*. Hence, it requires to examine modes of cultural diffusion through YouTube for understanding the transnational spread of K-pop.

Before Psy's success, some Korean celebrities already enjoyed stardom and fandom in Asia[7]. Their popularity was mainly mediated through transnationally circulated films and TV shows on satellite TV and cable TV channels[8]. But Korean TV dramas and K-pop were mainly distributed in Asia.

The advent of Internet and YouTube does not leave the appropriation of Korean popular cultural contents only on traditional one-way flow of media contents. In addition, YouTube makes Korean pop culture go beyond Asia and spread to digitally networked regions. Audience and users actively reveal their response and tribute through Internet and SNS. The mode of appropriation changes from mere reception and interpretation to participation. YouTube users appropriate their YouTube channels to show their respect and taste of Korean pop culture. It indirectly contributes to expansion of the width of K-pop circulation and construction of global and online K-pop fandom. Hence, it is worth examining new mode of online appropriation of K-pop with theory of fandom and research method of netnography, the ethnography on online culture.

II. FANDOM AND PRODUCTIVITY

Activities of uploading cover plays and opening channels are grasped with the idea of fandom studies. John Fiske indicates that fandom shows productivity and participation. Productivity occurs at the junction of cultural products and fans' everyday lives. Fiske makes three categories of productivity: semiotic productivity, enunciative productivity, and textual

productivity. Semiotic productivity means that fans make their social identities and social experiences through semiotic capital of their favored cultural capital. Semiotic productivity is interior. Enunciative productivity is externalization of semiotic productivity: Fans express their identities by imitating their stars' fashion or wear jerseys of their favored sports team. Fans also produce derivative and secondary texts which fans circulate and share in their fan communities. Fiske calls it textual productivity. Fanzines and fanfics are the example of textual productivity. Another feature of fandom is that fans accumulate cultural capital for their favored popular cultural text. The typical mode of accumulation is collection: fans collect information and commodity in relation to their favored stars and texts[9].

Fans' activities on YouTube are grasped through Fiske's ideas. We can consider the archive of videos on users' channels the collection of related items. Channel owners' tribute activities are derivative texts which can be compared with fanzines and fanfics. However, fanzines and fanfics are written texts for circulation whereas cover videos are performed and recorded by channel owners. So, considering textual productivity as the emphasis of written language, we may call the tribute and cover videos as 'performative productivity'.

Henry Jenkins delves into Fiske's idea of fans' participation and productivity and develops the study of 'participatory culture'. In participatory culture, fans actively engage in the process of production, circulation and consumption of textual meanings. Jenkins uses the term, 'textual poaching', to call fan's producing fanzines for sharing information and fanfics for creating new meanings from original texts when he examines the fan culture of *Star Trek*, a Sci Fi TV series. Further, estimating Pierre Levy's concept of collective intelligence for explanation of fan

community, Jenkins studies that the advent of computer and Internet contributes to construction of online fan community beyond mere circulation of fanzines and fanfics[10].

It is not unusual to examine the construction of online fandom as we see Nancy Baym's study on the computer-mediated fandom of soap opera and Robert Kozinets's netgraphy of *X-phile*[11]. Later it is extended to examine the fandom through YouTube[12]. Overall, theories of fandom admit audience and user's active appropriation of popular cultural texts. Fan's active appropriation is not only the index of textual popularity but also one factor of diffusion and mediation of it.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In terms of K-pop and Hallyu research method, former studies mainly adopted textual analysis, depth interview and survey. It is useful to figure out K-pop fans' reception and relationship between their positive impression to Korea and their motivation of tourism. However, we need other method to examine more concrete mode of cultural diffusion. Even it is hard to collect international interviewees from where researchers hardly have research trips. As an alternative, netnography is useful.

Netnography, which I use as a research method, is an online practice of ethnography. Robert Kozinets, a Canadian consumer researcher, has developed the netnography as a research method. In 1995 when doing a field research of *Star Trek* fan convention, Kozinets discovered that some fans had made their own online communities. Kozinets adapted the traditional ethnographic research methods to approach online consumer cultures in his research projects from then on. Since then, some scholars also adopted

netnography for their own online research[13][14].

For example, Xun and Reynolds adopted netnographic research for online discussion to influence on the consumer's decision making process[15]. Jennifer Sandlin also examined the consumers' learnings on informal consumer education sites by netnography[16]. Giesler and Pohlman applied netnography to grasp the way music fans appropriated the Napster for downloading music files and creating their own online imagined community[17]. Rokka and Moisander approached to an online site for travelers[18]. They explicated how travel enthusiasts constructed consumer citizenship actively by sharing environmental knowledge on an online community web.

In comparison with the traditional ethnography, netnography provides information that is unobtrusive without researcher elicitation. In addition, it is easy to download, summarize and analyze the data online. In terms of research ethics, users of YouTube are publicly known and their information is openly accessible, which makes the anonymity of informants unproblematic.

IV. MODES OF APPROPRIATION: COVER VIDEODS AND INTRODUCTION CHANNELS

[Table 1] is the list of YouTube channels with distinctive appropriation. Some users cover K pop songs and dances, and play K pop music with their instruments. With this cover performances, reaction videos and introduction channels are another mode of appropriation. Beyond examination in this paper, we may find videos of fan's tribute performances of K-pop songs.

Table 1. Modes of appropriation

Appropria tion	Channel	Country	Launching	Members
Song	CherryLexie SeorinNorae	Norway Netherlands	2009 2008	1,987 1,358
Dance	jplover363 xCricket11x	Spain USA	2008 2006	2,943 14,266
Play	Joselito Acfalle	Guam	2006	832
Introduc tion	Eat your Kimchi.com	Canada/Korea	2008	485,767

February 2014

Cover song

1.1 CherryLexie

'Cheryy Lexie' is the YouTube account of a woman with the same name[19]. She lives in Norway and once has visited Korea as an exchange student. Since then, she has become a fan of K-pop and uploaded videos of her cover songs. She had uploaded eighteen videos of cover song until February 2014. 1,987 YouTube users subscribed to her channel for the news of uploading. Videos of her cover songs show similar patterns. In the beginning, she says hi in either English or Korean, explains briefly about the song and its artist, and sings the song. Sometimes she imitates dance movement, too.

Her cover of Girls' Generation's *Gee is* most clicked (295,240 times) among all videos (2010). 706 comments are followed. There are with 902 clicks for 'like' and 769 for 'unlike'. Comments are written in many languages: English, Korean, Japanese, Spanish and so on. Comments on her channel consist of applaud to her Korean language, applaud to her beauty, estimation of her song, and pro and cons for her performances.

1,2 SeorinNorae

'SeorinNorae' is the channel of Sharon, an early twenties Dutch woman[20]. The name of Seorin is a Korean adaptation of Sharon and Norae means Korean term for 'song'. She began her YouTube uploading in 2008. Until 2014, eighteen videos remain on her channel. Presumably, she uploaded more videos in which she sang Korean songs before. Recently, however, she did not show her face but uploaded some cartoon images and still photos with her song cover. 1,358 people subscribed her channel. While Cherry Lexie covers Korean idol groups' dance music, Seorin uploaded her cover of Korean TV drama and film OST, mostly slow tempo ballad songs. She put subtitles for her cover songs. Seorin's account implies her in shy personality.

The most viewed video is her cover song of 'The World Spread with Rain' (2010) with 5727 views and twenty nine comments. Comments are written in English and Korean. Seorin puts her replies of gratitude with each language.

2. Cover dance

The key element of K-pop is idol groups who perform dance music. Some people imitate their dance, and their choreographies become trend. Some users upload the video of their cover dances on their YouTube channels. Here are two examples of cover dance videos: jplover363 and xCriticket11x.

2.1 Canal de iplover363

'jplover363' is the ID and account of Vanessa, a Spanish teen age girl[21]. According to her introduction of the account, Vanessa once liked J-pop and J-Rock, and recently fell into K-pop. Since 2008, Vanessa has uploaded videos of cover dance. Her favorite Korean Idols groups are Super Junior, B.A.P, Girls's Generation, and T-Ara. She uploads seventy on the channel and has 2,943 subscriptions. She takes the video of her cover dance at her bedroom or living room.

In 2012, she sent videos of her cover of A-Pink's My My and Hello Vinus's Venus to the committee of

K-pop Cover Dance Festival for participation. Users comment on her movement, body, and appearance. Considering her cover of K-pop, some users comments with pun.

"you could be good dancer if just train the <u>koreography</u>more(sic)" NinjaaPink(a comment on her cover of Miss A'sBreathe) [21].

NinjaaPink(it can be pronounced as Ninja A-Pink) changed 'ch' of choreography to 'k' of koreography to highlight Koreanness of the original performance.

2.2 xCricket11x

'xCricket11x' is the nickname of Danielle, an American girl who lives in Wisconsin. xCricket11x opened her account in 2006. She has uploaded twenty four videos and 14,266 subscriptions[22]. She usually dances outdoor, a backyard surrounded by woods. Recently, she made her tribute performances at a lakeside and a parking lot. Despite outdoor settings, the sound of her video is clear and sufficiently loud. She put original music after she records her dance.

The most popular video is her dance of Brown Eyed Girls' Abracadabra. It has over a half million views and 787 comments. She took the video at a snowy outfield by wearing a mini skirt. At the moment that she imitates Gain's kneeling down with bare knees, she shows her red underpants. Knowing already that people may have noticed the moment, she left message on the introduction of this video. "I am wearing shorts under there you guysssss haha. I'm not THAT crazy!" The responses are mostly positive.

"Dancing in the Snow?! Wow!" Farisha Dhamiera. "HOT!!! and Cold," viewvi.

"we can your red pants… lol you are great!" Dany Filth. "If you go to the training in Korea you'll be BIG ... Cause you have talents and your legs is as nice as SNSD. I really hope you can be in one of those Korean girl group, or you wants to be solo also can." SylversterYgrain[22].

3. Cover play

Some YouTube users play K-pop music by their musical instruments. Here we just pick one example. Joselito Acfalle is a drummer who lives in Guam. On his YouTube channel, he writes that he visited Seoul twice to see Dream Concert and Girls' Generation Concert. He opened his channel in 2006. He has 852 subscribers to his channel and 12 hundred thousand views[23]. He uploads fifty eight videos. He plays in his studio or outer place. In addition to his play, he also collects music videos and video clips of his favorite idol groups, news of Korean entertainment, and some episode of variety shows of idol groups' performance.

Now, he falls into Crayon Pop, a group that had its debut last year. His drum cover of Crayon Pop's Lonely Chrismas has 12,645 views, which is higher than any other video clips. Even in the clip, he wears red hat of Santa Clause following Crayon Pop's outfit. He writes real names and stage names of members of Idol groups whose music he covers both in English and in Korean. It shows that he has learned Korean written language.

4. K-pop Introduction

In 2008, Simon Stawski and Martina Stawski came to South Korea for being English teachers. When they came to South Korea, their parents worried about their safety because North Korean missile issue was big news in that time. Simon and Martina opened their YouTube channel to show their parents the safe everyday lives in Korea. Later, they uploaded their

experience and comments of Korean culture and society[24]. It became a window for English speaking users to understand and watch Korean culture. They also made their own website linked to the YouTube channel. They call the website as 'Eat your Kimchi.com' [25–27].

They changed an English expression 'Eat Your Vegetable' for balanced nutrition to 'Eat Your Kimchi'. Through this change, the term signifies balanced cultural nutrition in this international and multicultural context.

In February 2014, Simon and Martina had 485,767 subscriptions around the world and 129,127,437 views. They uploaded total 954 videos. While other YouTube users upload videos sporadically, Simon and Martina do periodically, which makes 'Eat Your Kimchi.com' an Internet TV channel. Simon and Martina's humorous talk style make this channel look like a comic talk show.

Simon and Martina make weekly schedule of videos. On Monday, they upload their comments on newly released K-pop music on the program, 'K-pop Music Monday'. They have the program 'TJ;DR (Too Long; Didn't Read: We Answer Your Questions about Korea!)' on Wednesday. In this program, Simon and Martina answer to questions that non-Koreans ask through email and SNS about Korean pop culture, customs, tourism, and so on. There are two programs, 'WANK (Wonderful Adventure Now Korea)' and 'FAPFAP(Food Adventure Program For Awesome People)' on Thursday. WANK consists of Simon and Martina's visit to famous places such as Hongdae Street, Itaewon, Lotte World, and N-Tower, and their drive to the outskirts of Seoul. In FAPFAP, they try to eat Korean food and make Korean cuisine such as Pajeon, Soondooboo Jjigae, and JJajangmyeon. By using various pop music for sound effect and background music, they make it look like a cable TV

cuisine show.

On Saturday, they have two programs: 'WTF (Wonderful Treasure Find)' and 'DICKS (Discussing Interesting Contemporary Korean Slang)'. Considering the feature of Saturday for enjoyment, the vulgar expression of WTF and DICKS attracted attention. In WTF Korea, they talk about non-Western but distinctively Korean household items. For example, they show how to use bamboo salt toothpaste and compare it with the scent of peppermint in 'Bamboo Salt Toothpaste'. In 'Korean Ear Picks', they try to use ear picks and compare it with Q-tip. On Sunday, they have the program of 'K Crunch Indie - Korean Indie music' to introduce Korean indie music. In comparison with other videos (over hundred thousand views for each), the videos of Korean Indie music have twenty thousand views. Considering K Indie music is not well known even in Korea, this channel functions as the only channel to introduce Korean Indie music abroad. 'Eat Your Kimchi.com' shows the evolution of a personal use of YouTube to a semi-Internet TV with the contents of Korean pop culture.

In the case of Eat Your Kimchi.com, Simon and Martina call the audience of their videos as 'K-pop community'. The member of 'K-pop community' put their comments and replies on YouTube to share their idea, information, and interest to Korea and Korean pop culture. Danielle has regular visitors for her channel, xCricket11x. Subscribers get news of update of those channels. These fans communicate with one another through these channels. Fan communities are constructed through communicative activities on YouTube channels as well as online. They resemble Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined community[28]. Even though fans do not make their own channels on YouTube, they reveal their interest and support for idol groups through their comments and replies on artists' YouTube channels[29].

V. CONCLUSION

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Korean popular culture was rapidly spread in Asia through newly adopted cable TV and satellite TV service. The Asian economic crisis in the mid 1990s also forced Asian media industries to pursue relatively low cost contents. Korean film and TV drama were suitable for this situation. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, K-pop followed the success of Korean audio-visual contents. Korean TV dramas on Asian TV services awakened Asian audience's desire and expectation[30][31].

The transnational success and expansion of K-pop beyond Asia is mediated mainly through YouTube rather than existing one way-communication technologies of TV or hardware of DVD. Recently, former is termed as Korean wave 2.0 while latter is Korean wave 1.0 [Table 2] summarizes the feature of Korean wave 1.0 and 2.0.

Korean Wave 1.0 Korean Wave 2.0 Genre TV Drama, Feature K-pop music film Main Channel TV, Cinema YouTube SNS Direction of One-way Multiple ways Flow Audience Passive audience Participatory audience Mainly Asia Asia, Europe, North Area

America

Table 2. Feature of Korean Wave 2.0

PSY's, or any other Korean artists' albums, are not officially released in Western hemisphere but attract attention through YouTube. Even on YouTube, fans' performances such as reaction videos and parody videos are noticed as much as PSY's original music videos. Before PSY gets his international attention, there are already built fan's online communities for many Korean pop idols and artists. PSY's success is based on the already constructed fan culture.

The spread of YouTube is related to fan's

participatory culture. Fan's performance means their tribute to some popular products as well as their desire of recognition. Circulation of fans' tribute videos expands the width of K-pop and YouTube. Fan's active responses and exchanges of opinions amplify the volume of K-pop and YouTube.

This study examined only four modes of appropriation and seven YouTube channels as examples. Future research needs to check more channels to search for other possible modes of appropriation. It also needs to grasp the mode combination of YouTube and other social network communication of twitter and Instagram. It also needs compare modes on YouTube and other similar channels.

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저 자 소 개

노광우(Kwang Woo Noh)

정회원



- 1993년 2월: 고려대학교 신문방 송학과(문학사)
- 1995년 8월 : 고려대학교 대학원 신문방송학과(문학석사)
- 2003년 5월 : 미국 뉴욕대학교 영화연구학과(문학석사)
- 2009년 12월 : 미국 서던 일리노이 대학교 매스커뮤 니케이션 학과(철학박사)
- 2010년 6월 ~ 현재 : 고려대학교 정보문화연구소 연 구원

<관심분야>: 영화연구, 문화연구, 국제커뮤니케이션