

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The publicizing of the Korean Pop (K-Pop) industry has been one of the most talked-about topics in recent periods of time, owing to its widespread popularity in many parts of the world. The high number of sales of K-Pop-related music, concert tickets, and merchandise is evidence of its boom and success. It also contributes to the presence of numerous K-Pop fan communities all over the world. The majority of people, according to Gray et al. (2007), are fans of something. If not, they must be familiar with someone who is. Currently, fandom is a very powerful and widespread phenomenon (Black 2008; Booth and Kelly 2013).

Similar to any community in general, the K-Pop fans community has specific kinds of activities they generally do. In-person activities such as attending concerts, holding gatherings, and doing dance covered are some examples. Another activity that K-Pop enthusiasts do is collecting merchandise. The music of K-Pop artists also gives some fans comfort through the memorabilia of their idols. A significant portion of artists' revenue comes from the sales of merchandise, particularly during the pandemic when they are unable to go on tour. Fans are fortunately spoiled for choice because of the vast array of merchandise released by artists, ranging from *lightsticks* and albums to photocards.

However, due to the pandemic situation, there have been some changes in the K-Pop community's activities in which direct contact activities have shifted to distant activities. As a result, the utilization of social media as a tool to interact with the members of the community is unavoidable. Collecting merchandise among K-Pop fans has increased in popularity with the advent of social media (Gloria 2022). Through social media platforms, the members of the community take part in activities such as K-Pop merchandise selling and trading, TikTok unboxing video-making, and many more. This community is made up of merchandise sellers and buyers who can be found all over social media. Nevertheless, due to the existence

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of Twitter *autobase*, many members of the community prefer to use Twitter as a platform to communicate with one another.

To put more details, *autobase* is derived from the words “automatic” and “fanbase,” and it serves as a platform for followers to send messages automatically and in an anonymous way via DM (Direct Message) (Agoestin 2019). *Autobases* are only available on the Indonesian Twitter platform and use a monthly subscription-based bot technology. This feature allows other Twitter users to send DM to the *autobase*, and later the DM will be uploaded automatically into tweets from the *autobase* account (Syam and Maryani 2019). The tweets can only be uploaded automatically with *triggers*. *Triggers* are specific keywords that have been determined in advance by the admins of the *autobases* that need to be put alongside the message and cause the system to automatically post the message sent to the DM. Without those *triggers*, the direct messages sent to the *autobases* cannot be uploaded automatically into tweets.

On Twitter, there are a large number of *autobases*, and each one has a unique topic or purpose. For instance, the @womenfeeds account is a base solely dedicated to female-related topics like self-care and makeup. Additionally, there is the @indomymenfess account, a forum for BTS enthusiasts (Dwiwina and Putri 2021). Apart from them, there is also an *autobase* dedicated to merchandise collectors which they can use to sell, buy, or even trade any kind of merchandise from a particular Korean group or idol. For example, the *autobase* @enhypenmart is an *autobase* for merchandise collectors of a Korean boy group called Enhypen.

Those activities that fans engage in are more than just an indication of being a fan; it is also about being a part of a community with its own culture and language. As a result, studying the community’s language variations can lead to a better understanding of their culture. Merchandise collectors—which also consist of merchandise sellers and buyers—have their own social group and communicate with each other in their group community by using special codes in their language that is based on the function. Halliday (1989) stated that there are two types of language variation: social and functional. Dialects are distinguished by social or

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regional variation, whereas registers are distinguished by functional variation. The language variations that the members of the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter autobases are distinguished by their functional variation, which is to sell, buy, or trade. Therefore, this new set of language variations that occur in the community is referred to as register.

In addition, according to Holmes (1992), register refers to the language used by groups of people who share common interests or occupations. The term “register” refers to a series of language items that are connected with a specific occupation or social group (Wardhaugh 2010). The usage of certain words, or the use of words in a specific context, is usually what distinguishes register (Trudgill 1992). In addition, according to Holmes (2001), register also has a limited range of lexical items and syntactic variation. This means that the formula’s exact qualities are not chosen at random; they are driven by the demands of the situation, such as offline and online-based situations.

Register can be found on a variety of media, including printed media, electronic media, and the internet, throughout its development (Holmes 2013). The usage of a register as a means of communication is getting increasingly widespread every day. According to Holmes (2013), the evolution of register is driven by the desire for quick, efficient, and precise communication among people who share similar experiences, knowledge, and abilities. Apart from that, register can also be identified from the formality scale employed by the language users (Trudgill 1992). In linguistics, there are several types of language registers that are different from each other. According to Joos (1967), there are five different types of language registers: casual, consultative, formal, frozen, and intimate which are different in characteristics.

Furthermore, Yule (2010) also added that the forms of register are also derived from the word-formation such as coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, back-formation, conversion, acronyms, and multiple processes (Yule 2010). Due to Twitter’s character limitation for each tweet, many members of the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter autobases invent new

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variations of language when they want to send a DM to the autobase in order to keep them short. This corresponds with the fact that in written communication, several morphological features are common means of simplifying the register (Yule 2010). The simplified version of register results in the language variation that differentiates the community from other groups on a particular social media platform. The way that sellers and buyers transact affected the variety of language that was utilized since buyers and sellers may employ various degrees of formality. This also corresponds to the fact that the term “register” is frequently used as a shorthand for formal or informal style (Trudgill 1992).

In this study, the writer focused on the word-formation processes analysis of the English register used by the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter autobases. The researcher is interested in studying the word formation processes of registers found on Twitter autobases of K-Pop merchandise collectors because there has not been a study that examined the interaction of two distinct communities—a trading community and a K-Pop fandom community—that came together to form one. Furthermore, although there have been many studies that analyzed registers in an online community, but just a few researcher who analyzed registers on Twitter autobases. There has not been a study that analyzed a combination of two kinds of communities that merged into one, which is a trading community and K-Pop fandom community. Since there are many autobases of the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter, this study focuses on three Twitter autobases, which are @jualanengene, @enhypenmart, and @engenejajan, which are autobases dedicated to a Korean boy group named Enhypen. Enhypen is a popular South Korean boy group under Hybe labels whose albums have charted on many music platforms including international platforms such as Billboard. Those autobases were chosen as the objects of study because they are considered the most active K-Pop merchandise trading autobases in terms of the number of tweets made each day as well as the level of interactions among the members.

To support the analysis, the writer employed the theory proposed by O’Grady and Archibald (2016) to find out the types of word-formation processes

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in the English register used by the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter autobases. In addition, the writer also employed the theory proposed by Joos (1967) to identify the type of register that occurred in the data. In terms of positionality, the writer positioned herself as the insider. Positionality reflects the researcher's choice of position within a certain research project (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). An 'insider' is a researcher who personally belongs to the same group as the participants, whereas an 'outsider' does not (Gair 2012). The subject of whether *insiders*—researchers who have a comparable background to the population under study—have an advantage in collecting qualitative data versus *outsiders* who do not have similar backgrounds or experiences. Since the writer is a part of the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter, the insider positionality was employed in this study.

To support this research, the writer had collected several studies prior to the present study that analyzed word-formation processes. A study conducted by Nisa (2016), entitled "Word Formation Process of Non-Standard Vocabulary in Twitter Statuses of Indonesian Dangdut Singers," identified the word-formation processes on Twitter statuses of Indonesian dangdut singers. Another study was conducted by Dharmawan (2017), entitled "Word-Formation Processes of the Register Used by JVAPPE Shopkeepers and Customers at JVAPPE Surabaya" which aimed to describe the word-formation processes of the register used by *JVAPPE* shopkeepers and customers at *JVAPPE* Surabaya, a vaping community which based in Surabaya, Indonesia. Another study that contributed to the field of morphology, specifically word-formation, was conducted by Rahayu et al. (2020), entitled "Investigating New Word Formation In Indonesian users' Twitter posts." The writer of this study aimed to examine the word-formation processes of the new slang contained on Twitter posts.

Based on the elaboration of the previous research, the writer thus found the gap in the research which differs the present study from the previous studies. The present study analyzed an online-based community, focusing on words and phrases that were found in the K-Pop merchandise trading community on Twitter autobases

as the source of data. Furthermore, the present study was expected to provide a new insight that was based on technological advancement since autobases are a new technology-based invention that has not been discovered long ago and only exist on the Indonesian Twitter platform.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

Based on the background above, the statement of the problems that the writer formulated are:

1. What are the types of word-formation processes found in the English register used by the K-Pop merchandise trading community's tweets on Twitter autobases?
2. Why are certain types of word-formation processes more common than other types in the English register used by the K-Pop merchandise trading community's tweets on Twitter autobases?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

In accordance with the research question above, the objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To analyze the types of word-formation processes of the English register found in the K-Pop merchandise trading community's tweets on Twitter autobases.
2. To discover the reason why certain types of word-formation processes are more common than other types in the English register used by the K-Pop merchandise trading community's tweets on Twitter autobases.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study can benefit readers in a variety of theoretical and practical ways. Practically, this study may help learners to enrich their English vocabulary because there are many new vocabularies and morphological features used within the community practice. It is also expected that a better and clearer understanding of those fields of linguistics may guide learners to use the English language in a variety of ways, gain the necessary information, and improve their communication ability. Theoretically, this study is intended to fill the gap of the previous studies which

have yet analyzed the linguistic phenomena of Twitter autobases as well as an online-based trading community. This study is also expected to help students in the English Department of Airlangga University's Faculty of Humanities to read works about word-formation processes in register, as well as serve as a reference for future research in the same field.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

Based on the explanation above, the scope of the study is the tweets posted by the selected K-Pop merchandise trading autobases, which are @jualanengene, @enhypenmart, and @engenejajan. The writer focused on the English words and phrases found in the chosen Twitter and analyzed the word-formation processes. Moreover, the limitation of the study was the amount of data collected. To limit the data, the writer only collected tweets that contain triggers, contain English word or phrase, as well as those that are posted within a specific period of time, from September 15, 2021, until September 20, 2021. This period of data collection was chosen since it coincided with the new album release of the group Enhypen on September 17, 2021. Enhypen is a popular South Korean boy group under Hybe labels whose albums have charted on many music platforms including international platforms such as Billboard.

### **1.6 Definitions of Key Terms**

- Word-formation process: the process of generating new words and meanings (O'Grady and Archibald 2016).
- Register: the language used by groups of people who share common interests or occupations (Holmes 2013).
- Fandom: the state or attitude of being a fan (Merriam-Webster.com 2022).
- Autobase: an account that uses the auto direct message service feature. This feature allows other Twitter users to send DM (direct messages) to the auto base account, and later the DM will be uploaded automatically into tweets from the auto base account (Syam and Maryani 2019).
- Triggers: Triggers are specific keywords that have been determined in advance by the admins of the autobases that need to be put alongside the

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message if the sender wants the message to be uploaded automatically. The trigger word will cause the system to automatically post the message sent to the DM.